



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE visit of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah to Saudi Arabia came at the right time.

Kuwait has recently taken huge steps toward modernizing and developing a series of laws, particularly in the fields of investment and infrastructure, while Riyadh continues to be economically active on multiple fronts.

This makes integration between the two countries

His Highness the Prime Minister, congratulations on your visit to Saudi Arabia

more important than ever to strengthen trade, development, and investment activity.

There is no doubt that Kuwait's delay in joining the Gulf ranks was largely the result of deliberate obstruction by members of previous National Assemblies.

During the past two decades, parliamentary representatives repeatedly obstructed major development projects and legislation, often driven by personal interests, as if Kuwait's future were tied to their individual gains.

Today, with the dawn of a new era and notable progress in various sectors, the opportunity to establish strong partnerships with Gulf Cooperation Council countries, as a prelude to opening up to the world, has become more attainable.

Kuwait possesses substantial capabilities that have long remained underutilized, and now is the time to activate them.

This, without a doubt, requires a solid foundation for investment, and Saudi Arabia, a powerhouse in the region, offers vast opportunities that could serve as a major launchpad for revitalizing relations with neighboring states.

This is especially true given that, over the past ten years, since King Salman bin Abdulaziz assumed power, the remarkable leadership of Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman has propelled the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the forefront of global attention, particularly through the ambitious projects of Vision 2030, the results of which are now beginning to materialize.

In this context, the visit by His Highness the Prime Minister was a strategic investment in every sense, signaling a fresh chapter in areas vital to both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. It comes at a time when Kuwait is positioning itself as a Gulf investment engine, actively working to diversify its sources of income and enhance its gross domestic product, which necessitates strong partnerships with the surrounding region first, and the world second.

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Hiring hits pause

Kuwait's growth story continues in July PMI

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Kuwait's non-oil private sector continued to show solid growth in July, with the support of strong increases in new orders and business activity, according to the latest S&P Global Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) report.

The headline S&P Global Kuwait Purchasing Managers' Index™ (PMI®), which is a composite indicator measuring the overall performance of the non-oil private sector, is based on five main factors - new orders, output, employment, suppliers' delivery times, and inventory levels.

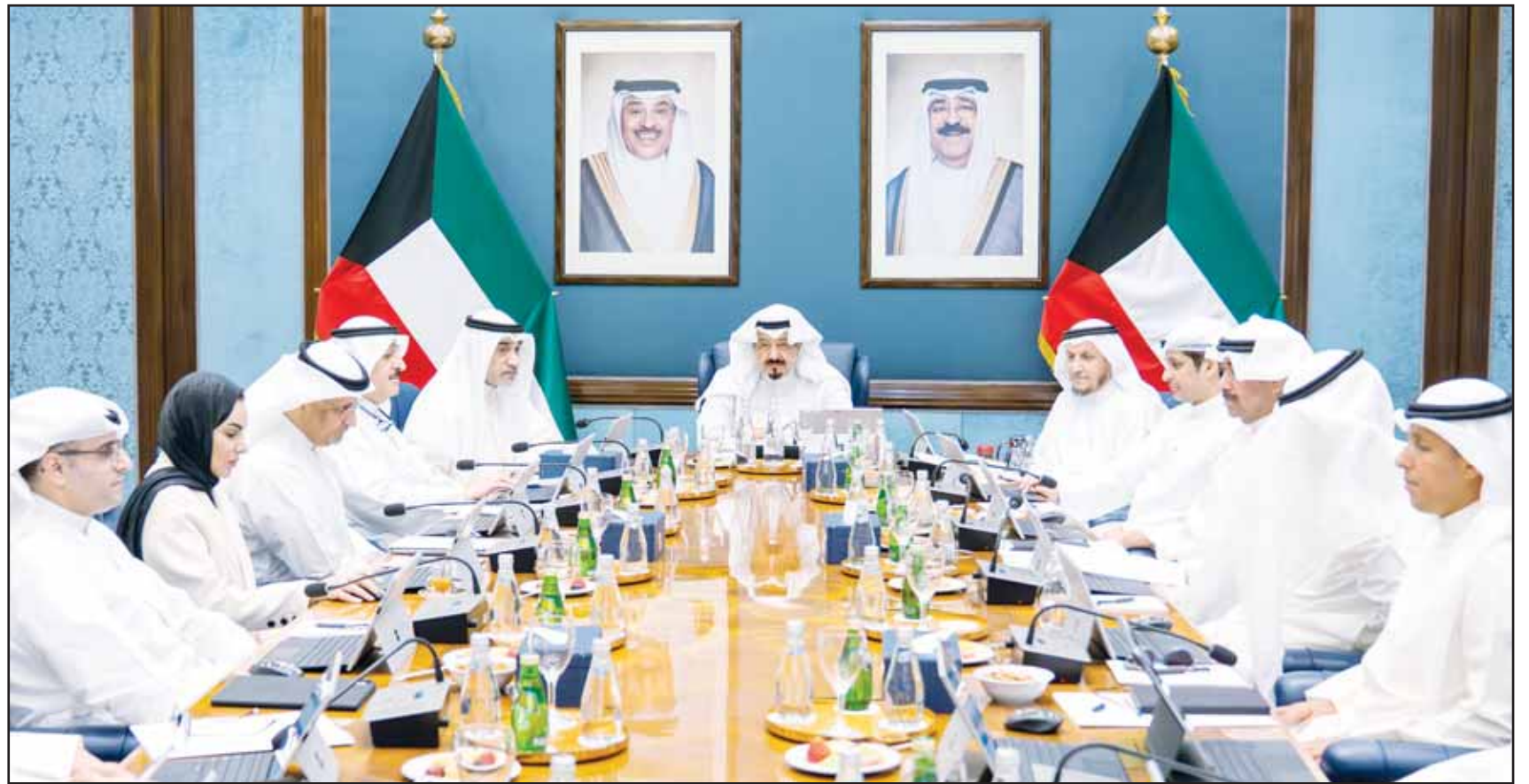
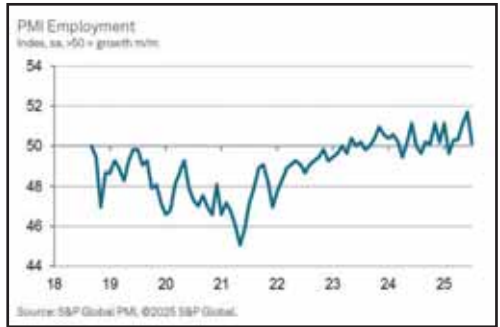
In July, the PMI rose slightly to 53.5 from 53.1 in June, indicating a solid monthly improvement in the health of Kuwait's non-oil private sector.

However, employment levels were largely unchanged following a record surge in hiring in the previous survey period. At the same time, inflationary pressures eased as the third quarter began.

Business conditions in the non-oil private sector have now strengthened for 11 straight months. The latest improvement was achieved by a sharp accelerated rise in new orders, extending the growth period that began in February 2023.

Export orders also increased, though the pace of growth slowed to a three-month low. Respondents attributed the rise in overall demand primarily to advertising campaigns and price discounts.

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PM Diwan photo

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

Justice at full speed as Kuwait blazes through June's caseload

4,214 cases resolved, 173% completion rate tops metrics

By Jaber Al-Humoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: The Court of Appeals recorded remarkable performance in June, both in terms of completion rates and the number of hearings conducted.

The court received a total of 2,036 new cases in criminal and non-criminal categories, and it successfully adjudicated 4,214 cases during the same period.

This highlights the court's accelerated pace of work, and reflects its commitment to achieving prompt justice.

A statistical report issued by the Ministry of Justice, through its Statistics and Research Department, revealed that some judicial departments exceeded completion rates that exceeded normal rates in June.

Administrative cases recorded the highest completion rate at an impressive 173.3 percent, followed by criminal cases in the Capital Governorate, which achieved a completion rate of 152.5 percent.

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MoU sparks new era

KFAS, Youth Authority team up to shape next-gen thinkers

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5, (KUNA): The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Youth Public Authority on Tuesday, aimed at strengthening collaboration in youth empowerment and promoting scientific culture.

KFAS Director General Musaed Al-Yaseen told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that this MoU reflects both organizations' dedication to supporting youth development and expanding opportunities for scientific

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Officials pose for a group photo following the signing of a memorandum of understanding.

Newswatch

US mulls \$15K visa bond test

WASHINGTON, Aug 5, (AP): The State Department is proposing requiring applicants for business and tourist visas to post a bond of up to \$15,000 to enter the United States, a move that may make the process unaffordable for many.

In a notice to be published in the Federal Register on Tuesday, the department said it would start a 12-month pilot program under which people from countries deemed to have high overstay rates and deficient internal document security controls could be required to post bonds of \$5,000, \$10,000 or \$15,000 when they apply for a visa.

The proposal comes as the Trump administration is tightening requirements for visa applicants. Last week, the State Department announced that many visa renewal applicants would have to submit to an additional in-person interview, something that was not required in the past. In addition, the department is proposing that applicants for the Visa Diversity Lottery program have valid passports from their country of citizenship.



8 NBK celebrates the graduation of NBK Tech Wave 2

9 KFH holds H1-2025 earnings webcast



10 Gulf Bank continues driving women's empowerment with WOW program

10 KIB signs agreement with BSK to offer zero-profit tuition installment service

KD5 mn for Gaza relief shows Kuwait's humanitarian might

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Khaled Al-Ajmi said the 'Faz'a for Gaza' urgent relief campaign has become a model of successful integration between government institutions

and Kuwaiti civil society, raising more than KD5 million in total donations.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of Insan Charity Association, whose Chairman Dr. Othman Al-Khamis confirmed a KD1.5 million donation; pushing the total donations to more than KD5 million on the last day.

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USS Canberra drops anchor in Kuwait, rekindling defense ties

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Public Affairs Counselor at the American Embassy in Kuwait Farid Mohamed said the routine visit of the USS Canberra to Shuaiba Port -- the first US Navy ship visit to Kuwait since 2021 -- confirms more than three decades of close defense cooperation

between the United States of America and Kuwait.

In a statement to the newspaper, Mohamed pointed out that the port visit is a manifestation of the shared commitment of the two countries to ensure the security of maritime navigation in the Arabian Gulf. "This visit reflects the role of the US as a reliable partner in protecting the sovereignty of Kuwait and maintaining regional stability," he added.

He disclosed that US Chargé d'Affaires Stephen Butler highlighted three main axes of this strategic relationship -- maintaining an integrated

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Mohamed

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:42	Asr	15:30
Sunrise ..	05:10	Maghrib ..	18:37
Zohr	11:54	Isha	20:02

Local

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.			
By Night: Hot to rather hot and with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	48	37	
Kuwait Airport	48	38	

Abdaly	48	34
Jahra	49	36
Salmiyah	44	36
Ahmadi	46	35
Nuwaisib	49	35
Wafra	47	37
Salmiy	46	31
Managish	48	36

Kuwait, Saudi to deepen strategic ties

Pledge to promote peace, security

NEOM, Saudi Arabia, Aug 5, (KUNA): Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud and His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held talks on Monday in the Saudi city of Neom on strengthening bilateral relations and expanding co-operation in a variety of domains.

The talks were held during the Saudi Crown Prince’s reception of the Kuwaiti Premier and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of their visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

At the onset of the meeting, His Highness the Prime Minister conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and their best wishes for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its people.

His Highness the Prime Minister and Saudi Crown Prince delved into the different aspects of the solid and close cooperation between the two sisterly countries and means for enhancing integration at all levels under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and their brothers in the Kingdom, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

They emphasized the importance of continuing close coordination and consultation to achieve aspirations of the peoples of the two nations for further progress and prosperity.

They affirmed keenness to advance bilateral historical and fraternal relations to broader horizons, deepening the strategic partnership and consolidating joint bilateral action.

Regional

They discussed the latest regional and international developments of common concern, particularly the two countries’ efforts to promote security and peace in the region and the world.

From the Saudi side, the meeting was also attended by Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to the State of Kuwait Prince



PM Diwan photo
Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud receives His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al Saud; Minister of State and Member of the Saudi Cabinet Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad Al Saud and Assistant Minister of Finance Hindi Al-Suhaimi; and Deputy Governor and Head of MENA Investments at the Public Investment Fund Yazeed A. Al-Humied.

From the Kuwaiti side, the meeting was also attended by the Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr.

Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the Managing Director of the Kuwait Investment Authority Saud Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah.

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

Departure

His Highness was seen off by Saudi Minister of State and Member of the Cabinet Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al Saud; Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khalid Al Saud; Acting Charge d’Affaires at the Embassy of the State of Kuwait to the Kingdom Hamad Ibrahim Al-Salloum; and Kuwait’s Consul General in Jeddah and Permanent Representative to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Yousef Abdullah Al-Tunaib.

In a statement prior to his departure, His Highness the Prime Minister expressed his deep thanks and appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, its leadership, government, and people, for the warm welcome and generous hospitality he received during his visit, wishing the Kingdom further stability and prosperity.

Meanwhile, earlier His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation arrived on Monday in the city of Neom for an official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Upon arrival, His Highness was received by the Saudi Minister of State and Cabinet Member; Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud, Acting Charge d’Affaires at Kuwait’s Embassy in Riyadh Hamad Ibrahim Al-Salloum, and Kuwait’s Consul General in Jeddah and Permanent Representative to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Yousef Abdullah Al-Tunaib.

In a statement upon arrival, His Highness the Prime Minister expressed great pride in visiting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, highlighting the deep-rooted historical ties and bilateral relations between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

He emphasized that the visit represents a valuable opportunity to further strengthen the close relations and continue bilateral consultations on various issues serving the interests of both countries and their peoples.

His Highness also praised the policies adopted by the Saudi leadership and government, as well as the Kingdom’s prominent regional and international stances.

‘No clients in remote areas’

Mobile cart owners call it quits in face of curbs

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Faced with difficulties and obstacles, 30 percent of food truck owners have currently ceased operations.

In separate interviews with Al-Seyassah, they listed the challenges that led to this outcome.

The most prominent among them is the refusal to allow parking in vital areas such as markets, tourist zones, and investment zones.

This restriction has deprived them of expected financial returns, especially since the designated areas by the relevant authorities are relatively remote and lack sufficient traffic and activity.

They also requested to be allowed to serve hot drinks with light meals, as they are currently prohibited from preparing coffee with meals.

The details are as follows:

Hamad Al-Enezi, owner of one of the projects, said he faces several obstacles in his business, most notably the lack of sufficient space in vital areas, as they are not allowed to park their food trucks in front of cooperative societies and shopping malls.

He revealed that his profits from this project do not exceed KD 800 per month.

Meanwhile, Hamdan Al-Abdullah believes that mobile cart projects are on the verge of extinction for several reasons, the most important being that a large segment of citizens travel abroad for their summer vacations, coupled with the fact that Kuwait is not a tourist country.

He explained that many citizens do not accept mobile carts parking in front of parks located in private residential areas. Also, some official service agencies refuse to allow young entrepreneurs to park their mobile carts in the squares in front of their buildings. Young Kuwaitis who own carts specialized in printing services also face a lot of problems.

In a related context, Hamoud Al-Ali said obstacles in obtaining licenses are ongoing, and they are no longer allowed to park in vital areas that could boost sales. Most of the locations permitted by the relevant authorities are in places with little to no activity, despite the fact that a young entrepreneur may pay KD 30,000 to purchase a fully equipped cart.

Comply

He called for allowing mobile carts to park in vital areas such as busy and tourist markets like Souk Mubarakia.

In this regard, Haitham Al-Mutairi stated that mobile vehicle owners comply with all health and environmental requirements but must be allowed to park in the most important areas, especially investment zones.

He stated that although there are approximately 3,250 mobile vehicles, parking spaces are limited to only 300, most of which are unprofitable, forcing 30 percent of project owners to cease operations completely.

Al-Mutairi also highlighted other issues they face, such as the ban on transferring ownership of mobile vehicles, which creates further problems, as a young person who completes his project must then apply to the Civil Service Commission to obtain a job.

For his part, a mobile commercial vehicle owner, who preferred to remain anonymous, called for the removal of all obstacles facing

mobile vehicle project owners, especially since their number currently exceeds 4,000 vehicles.

He explained that the problems are huge, particularly because many project owners have obtained loans from the “Fund.” Due to these obstacles, the future looks extremely difficult for some, with several owners having already frozen their activities.

Locations

He affirmed the importance of providing access to vital locations rather than remote ones, noting that out of approximately 340 locations, only about 40 are favorable, while the rest are difficult for conducting business.

In addition, Khaled Al-Majdami, owner of a mobile cart project, said the biggest problem they face is the prohibition on parking in vital locations, despite these projects being considered small businesses.

He emphasized that all parties should support the owners of these projects, especially since they chose this path and have helped reduce the burden on the government by creating jobs.

He expressed hope that the relevant authorities would allow mobile vehicles to park in areas near investment zones that witness crowds of both citizens and expatriates, as well as permit them to operate in major markets without issuing violations against mobile cart owners.

Meanwhile, an informed source at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry explained that the ministry grants mobile cart licenses if the required conditions are met. These conditions include that the applicant must be at least 21 years old and not a government employee, along with the necessity of committing to practice only permitted activities.

The ministry is not strict with mobile cart owners but requires them to obtain licenses, especially since there are convenient options to submit applications online through the ministry’s website.

It also mandates that approved parking spaces must not be violated. Other requirements for selecting locations include ensuring they offer suitable environmental conditions and do not disrupt traffic.

The ministry has provided about 300 parking spaces, and project owners can choose their preferred location.

It requires project owners not to engage in two activities simultaneously, such as preparing meals and making coffee at the same time.

The cart must be equipped with adequate lighting, and the area designated for selling must be thermally separated from the food preparation area.

Also, the mobile cart must not be older than 10 years.

The source stressed that the mission of the ministry’s inspection teams is to protect consumer health and ensure the quality of products offered by these project owners.

He went on to explain that when the ministry receives complaints about carts parking in front of homes and causing inconvenience, it is natural to take action to ensure the comfort and safety of residents. This is especially important since the requirements for approved mobile cart parking locations include access to energy, water, electricity, and sewage facilities.

The source stressed that it is illogical for applicants not to obtain a license according to legal procedures, clarifying that the ministry is not responsible for the rising number of applications, as these projects are considered a type of business governed by supply and demand.

Al-Kout project was not offered to Cabinet: CGC

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Center for Government Communication (CGC) said Tuesday that the reported Al-Kout investment project and its allocated funds, both inside and outside Kuwait, were not presented to the Cabinet.

The Center urged for the need to obtain information from official sources, warning that attributing information to the Cabinet without an official statement is a legal violation subject to accountability.

PAAET-US Embassy to up education process

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah and Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) held a coordination meeting with the US Embassy to discuss joint efforts in the fields of technical education and training, as well as academic accreditation for its specializations and programs.

In a press statement, PAAET disclosed that the meeting began with an introductory visual presentation on the structure of the colleges and institutes of the authority, its vision and academic mission, and its role in qualifying nationals and meeting the needs of the local labor market.

PAAET said the meeting tackled opportunities to build an effective strategic partnership that contributes to supporting academic and technical development efforts; improve the exchange of expertise and training programs; and open new horizons for scholarship students, regular students and trainees to benefit from the pioneering educational and training experiences in the United States.

It stated that the two sides underscored the importance of strengthening bilateral cooperation in areas of common interest, in line with its strategic directions; while reflecting the depth and strength of relations between the two countries, particularly in the educational and cultural aspects.

Other Voices

The compassionate captain of Kuwait Airways

By Ahmad alsarraf

I did not expect to return to writing about Kuwait Airways so soon, but a message from a reader of my recent article in the Arab Times, along with an interview

I came across with a former Kuwait Airways captain, compelled me to revisit the topic.

The reader, a European, wrote, “I read your article about Kuwait Airways in The Arab Times and appreciated its insight. I especially enjoyed the story about the dead horse. Your words resonated with me as both a regular flyer and someone working in aviation.

“I wanted to share this thought - We must learn from the experiences of other Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

“Their companies generate high profits and operate with clear efficiency. I work closely with them, and all have professional CEOs and management teams with extensive airline industry experience, drawn from a range of international backgrounds.

“The truth is that few industries are as global and professionally demanding as aviation, so airline management must be global in both mindset and expertise.

“I understand this may conflict with the goals of ‘Kuwaitization,’ but if the government wants to stop subsidizing a loss-making national carrier, while other Gulf airlines thrive,

earn billions in profits, build strong reputations, and operate from world-class airports, then the only viable solution is to place the airline in the hands of professionals who adhere strictly to sound business rules.”

I replied by saying I understood his perspective, and that I had previously advised more than one Kuwait Airways CEO to seek government approval to amend the regulations that prohibit hiring highly qualified foreign experts, even on a temporary basis, until a capable Kuwaiti CEO can be trained to take over and manage the company efficiently before the foreign expert’s contract ends.

This is exactly what Kuwaiti banks did, and I personally witnessed both the foreign expertise phase and the rise of national talent.

In the early days, most bank leadership teams were American, British, or French. But over time, and through proper training, dozens of outstanding Kuwaiti professionals emerged, including figures like Yousef Al-Awadhi, Yousef Al-Hussaini, Abdullah Al-Sumait, Adel Al-Majed, Imad Al-Sagr, Walid Mandani, and others. I apologize to those I may have unintentionally omitted.

On another note, I recently listened to a podcast interview with a former Kuwait Airways captain. When asked by the host about the reasons behind the national carrier’s decline in performance compared to other Gulf airlines, he responded without hesitation, by explaining that he had served as a pilot at Kuwait Airways for 42 years, and described the company as one filled with compassion, warmth, and generosity.

He emphasized that Kuwait Airways is not

a profit-driven entity, but rather a service-oriented one.

As an example, he pointed to the airline’s humanitarian role during emergencies and natural disasters in various countries, where Kuwaiti citizens were stranded. In such cases, Kuwait Airways stepped in to rescue and return them home free of charge.

He concluded by saying that Kuwait Airways is the best airline in the Gulf and proudly noted that it maintains a spotless safety record, unlike some of its regional counterparts.

The captain either forgot, or chose to overlook, that his remarks amounted to an implicit criticism of the reputation and safety records of other Gulf airlines. By doing so, he suggested they lacked the “love, compassion, and generosity” that Kuwait Airways reportedly shows, including failing to rescue their stranded citizens abroad.

Moreover, his comparison of Kuwait Airways’ safety record with those of other Gulf carriers was flawed, as if implying negligence on their part. This comparison is unfair and unrealistic. Naturally, there will be differences in performance and safety between an airline operating 20 or 30 aircraft and those managing fleets of hundreds.

Kuwait Airways is our national carrier, and we all hope it achieves the highest standards. To do so, it needs to be privatized or at least granted its board of directors greater autonomy to hire international experts to manage the airline, without unnecessary interference by the relevant minister.

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Capital Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor and acting Capital Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah meets Director of the Central Agency for Remedying Illegal Residents Status (CARIRS) Saleh Al-Fadala at the Capital Governorate headquarters.

Call to enhance cooperation between government bodies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Farwaniya Governor and acting Capital Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with Director of the Central Agency for Remedying Illegal Residents Status (CARIRS) Saleh Al-Fadala at the Capital Governorate headquarters on Tuesday.

The meeting took place in a cordial atmosphere where both parties engaged in friendly discussions, touching on several topics of mutual interest.

The visit of Al-Fadala reflected the spirit of cooperation and shared commitment to enhance coordination between government entities.

Al-Fadala expressed his sincere appreciation to the Governor for the warm welcome and hospitality. He underscored the importance of such engagements in strengthening institutional relations and fostering dialogue for the public good.

The visit is part of ongoing efforts to promote communication between national officials, contributing to the exchange of perspectives and the advancement of common goals.

Resurrection of Kuwait from ruins of invasion

“HISTORY has now extinguished the 35th candle marking the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, yet we hardly see a light or glimmer of its remembrance. The anniversary passes quietly, without official recognition, statements, or reflection, unlike the grand spectacle and fanfare that accompany the celebrations of liberation,” columnist **Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The tragedy of the invasion swept away fundamental human and Islamic values, as well as international norms and principles.

“It was an ordeal that shook the world’s conscience, prompting global solidarity with Kuwait from the very first moments of the aggression.



Dr. Al-Tarrah

“Expressing a sense of moral responsibility, the international community stood by the legitimate Kuwaiti government and supported it until the final moments of liberation and the subsequent rebuilding of Kuwait, a triumph for the principles of justice, dignity, and human rights.

“The international stance was not selective, nor was it dictated by the balance of interests and influence.

“Perhaps one of the main reasons behind the persistent tension and animosity from certain Iraqi political factions toward Kuwait is Kuwait’s reluctance to annually document the anniversary of the invasion and to highlight its bloody, immoral, and destructive consequences, so that the value of remembrance may extend widely, for indeed, remembrance is beneficial.

“Naturally, commemorating the anniversary of the Iraqi invasion is neither an expression of defeat nor of victory.

“Undoubtedly, Kuwait triumphed, its political leadership was legitimate and gained the support of the international community, without diminishing the crucial role and value of the popular rally around its leadership and the resistance to the Iraqi occupation.

“The truth is that the entire world, with the exception of a few Arab countries, stood with Kuwait, its regime and its people. It was united in support of liberation under the authority of international law.

“This is because Kuwait is a state of institutions, having established the Shura Council in 1921, embraced democracy, and even witnessed the birth of its constitution in 1962.

“As a victim of Iraqi aggression, Kuwait has the right to commemorate the invasion and to address the world, and its brotherly neighbor Iraq, on this painful anniversary for the Kuwaiti people.

“What is sad and regrettable is the lack of official Kuwaiti attention to commemorating the invasion’s anniversary, as well as the government’s failure to invest in the consciences and minds of wise and moderate Iraqis to help reshape the political and media narratives between the two countries.

“Also, Kuwait bears responsibility for not sharing the lessons and experiences learned from the invasion with sisterly and friendly nations, as well as with the allies who stood by Kuwait during this tragic event.

“Media and cultural platforms exist in both Kuwait and Iraq, and these can be harnessed in a constructive and thoughtful manner to address the recurring tensions and unilateral attitudes that occasionally arise.

“Regional and international institutions can play a vital role in strengthening the relationship between the Kuwaiti and Iraqi peoples.

“Each year, when the anniversary of the invasion arrives, a state of denial or partial refusal to acknowledge the Iraqi occupation often dominates the political discourse.

“This approach is a politically misguided way of dealing with the anniversary, during which the Kuwaiti people wrote heroic epics and united around their legitimate leadership.

“The current political and media chaos calls for a rational confrontation, rather than denial, forgetting, or ignoring the invasion and the pain and suffering it caused.

“Kuwait has a powerful political and popular story to share and reaffirm to the world and to its brothers in Iraq.

“Kuwait overcame the Iraqi invasion through popular heroism and the steadfastness of its legitimate leadership. We must no longer approach the memory of the invasion with timidity.

“Kuwait, its political system, and its people triumphed over the tyranny and treachery led by the late Saddam Hussein, with support from Yasser Arafat, then head of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and others.”

Also:

“A Moroccan friend told me 35 years ago that some people in Morocco try to cross the Strait of Gibraltar by sea to reach Spain, but they often fail to take into consideration the dangers posed by high waves from the Mediterranean Sea toward the Atlantic Ocean. As these waves pass through the strait, they grow stronger, frequently capsizing boats and drowning their passengers,” columnist **Ahmad Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“In recent years, the situation in several West African countries has become increasingly unstable due to poverty, violence, and civil wars, forcing many Africans to migrate north, often to Morocco or Libya, in hopes of crossing to Italy.

“In Morocco and Tunisia, migrants gather in secret, temporary camps. There, they pay money to smuggling gangs in hopes of being transported by sea to the Spanish or Italian coasts, where they can find work to support their impoverished families. Some dream of becoming football players in European clubs.

“Under normal circumstances, a traveler pays about 25 euros, or KD 9, to cross the Strait of Gibraltar by ship. But through smugglers, the cost rises to 2,000 euros, which is around KD 740, which many Africans manage to collect only with great difficulty.

“Boat capsizing accidents are frequent, and many die at sea – swept away by waves or caught in violent storms. Among the victims are women and children who cannot swim.

“Italy and Spain spare no effort in rescuing many migrants, and Moroccan naval boats retrieve the drowned. Those who are caught are either imprisoned or deported to their home countries.

“It is well known that after Spain expelled the Arabs from Andalusia, it pursued them into Moroccan territory and occupied two regions - Ceuta and Melilla. Barbed wire fences were erected between them and the rest of Morocco, so that if a migrant entered either region, it was as if they had entered the European Union.

“Some Africans managed to enter Europe illegally, especially during the outbreak of the Syrian civil war.

“Many Syrians fled their country to Turkey and Europe, joined by refugees from Afghanistan.

“However, in 2016, the terrorist organization ISIS mobilized its extremist elements, and carried out bombings that killed several Europeans in France, Belgium, and Germany.

“In response, Balkan countries such as Hungary, Macedonia, Croatia, and Slovenia erected barbed wire along their borders to block the flow of refugees.

“A right-wing movement hostile to immigrants and Islam emerged in France.

In Austria, a hardline government came to power under the young Sebastian Kurz, in alliance with an extremist Hungarian government led by Viktor Orbán.

“Anti-immigrant sentiment spread across Europe. Meanwhile, thousands of Africans continued to cross the Bab al-Mandab Strait on rickety boats, making their way through Yemen’s war zone in hopes of reaching Saudi Arabia to find work.

“From Ethiopia, migrants cross the desert on foot to reach Djibouti or Somalia, where they pay smugglers around USD 300 for a boat ride to Yemen. From there, they head north through Houthi-controlled areas, risking attacks by armed groups. Meanwhile, thousands of Sudanese flee the horrors of war in their country and head to Libya.

“In Tripoli, smugglers demand USD 3,500 to cross the Mediterranean. “The road was difficult. At every point, you had to pay a bribe or face threats. We left one militia state only to enter another. After a long, exhausting, and dangerous journey, we reached Tripoli. But there, I found a reality even harsher than the one we had fled,” one migrant said.”

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

Lawyers cite discrimination, question housing law repeal

‘Principle of justice, equal opportunity violated’

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: A number of lawyers has filed a direct constitutional challenge before the Constitutional Court against Decree-Law No. 83/2025, which repealed

Article 29-bis of Law No. 47/1993 concerning housing care, titled “Whoever Sold His Home.”

The repealed article, introduced under Law No. 2/2015, allowed citizens who had previously sold their homes to reapply for housing through usufruct or rental arrangements, subject to specific conditions, including full

repayment of the housing loan granted by the Kuwait Credit Bank.

The decree justified the repeal by citing a “violation of the principle of justice and equal opportunity,” explaining in its memorandum that the previous article caused unjustified discrimination among citizens and exacerbated the housing application crisis, depriving those who had not previously obtained housing rights.

PAM raids Dahiya Center project

Runaway domestics, sheep-herders caught working

By **Fares Ghaleb**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), in coordination with the Residence Affairs Investigations Department, carried out a joint field inspection targeting a project affiliated with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) in Mutlaa Residential City.

The authority explained that the inspection, conducted under the directives of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, focused on the completion and maintenance of services, infrastructure, and public buildings in the Dahiya Center, implemented by a general trading

and contracting company.

The campaign resulted in the arrest of 36 workers found in violation of the Residency and Labor Law, including 15 domestic workers and 21 sheep farmers.

PAM confirmed that all violators were referred to the Residence Affairs Investigations Department for necessary legal action.

It affirmed the continuation of inspection campaigns in coordination with relevant authorities to ensure a legal, safe, and organized work environment at all sites and projects.

PAM renewed its call to employers to fully comply with applicable laws and regulations and to refrain from employing illegal workers, stressing that inspection teams will continue their efforts to detect violations and take nec-

essary action with firmness.



200 wanted persons held: Weekly statistics issued by the General Department of Emergency Police revealed the arrest of 12 individuals found in possession of suspected narcotics and intoxicants. They have been referred to the Drug Control General Department for further investigation, reports Al-Anba daily.

Also, 200 wanted individuals were apprehended during the same period, and referred to the concerned authorities.

The statistics also revealed the issuance of 5,585 various traffic citations, the impoundment of two vehicles for traffic violations, the seizure of 33 wanted vehicles, and the provision of assistance to some individuals.



The water tank exploded during cleaning with chemicals.

Expat trio perishes in water tank blast

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Three expatriates died when a water tank exploded at Abdullah Port, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source revealed that initial investigations indicate the three workers were cleaning the tank with chemicals and that a chemical reaction occurred, likely due to the high temperature, which caused the explosion and the death of the three workers.

The source added that a forensic team was dispatched to the site to prepare the incident report.

Police patrols and ambulance also rushed to the accident site.

Municipality lifts 29 abandoned, scrap cars distorting public view

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality announced that field teams from the Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy departments are continuing their intensified inspection tours in all governorates to monitor and eliminate violations of municipal cleanliness and road obstruction regulations, reinforcing the oversight role of regulatory bodies, reports Al-Anba daily.

In Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, the Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy Department carried out an exten-

sive field campaign in residential areas for enhancing cleanliness and removing road obstructions that distort the public view.

The campaign led to the lifting of 29 abandoned vehicles, including scrap vehicles, mobile vehicle, and boats.

They also issued 34 citations for public cleanliness and road obstruction violations. In addition, 51 removal notices were posted on abandoned vehicles and non-compliant commercial containers, and 35 old waste containers were replaced with new ones.

Firefighters battle four blazes in past 24 hours

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Firefighters from eight fire stations dealt with four fire incidents over the past 24 hours in different parts of the country, reports Al-Anba daily.

These fire incidents occurred at Jahra Hospital, an apartment in Mangaf, a shop in Shuwaikh Industrial Area, and an under construction tower in the Capital.

Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) disclosed that firefighters from Jahra and Jahra Industrial Area fire stations contained a minor fire in Jahra Hospital at dawn on Monday and evacuated the patients.

It added that firefighters from Mangaf and Fahaheel fire stations extinguished an apartment fire in a building in Mangaf and opened an investigation.

Branded items seized

13 shops sealed for selling ‘fake’ goods

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry’s emergency teams continued their intensive inspection campaigns with a large-scale field operation covering a number of shops in all governorates.

The campaign targeted markets selling counterfeit goods that violate trade laws and regulations.

As a result, more than 10,000 counterfeit items bearing well-known trademarks were seized.

Reports were filed against 13 shops found in violation of regulations, and these shops were subsequently closed pending legal action.

CITRA request reviewed

‘12 meters area around towers is not practical’

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Kuwait Municipality has acknowledged that the newly mandated 12-meter safety distance around telecommunications towers is impractical and limits the number of viable alternative locations for tower installation, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Municipality is currently reviewing the request of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) to revise regulations concerning the installation of public radio communication towers. The authority asked for amendment of the requirements and specifications for installing these towers in all areas, including farms.

CITRA made the request after the issuance of Ministerial Resolution No. 422/2025, which amended certain provisions of Ministerial Resolution No. 206/2009 regulating construction activities. The latest resolution reduced the required safety distance from 20 meters to 12 meters, but the new distance is now calculated from the perimeter fence of the station rather than the antennas – a change that the Municipality considers unfeasible.

According to officials, this adjustment would restrict available locations, making it harder to find alternatives for towers currently installed on residential buildings.

The regulatory authority also pointed out that the resolution did not address its proposal to permit tower installations in farms and barns. CITRA argued that these sites are essential due to the lack of alternative locations nearby that can guarantee adequate service coverage and quality.

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Gov't oversight

PM Office rolls out e-platform

Sources informed the daily that the platform is a central organizational tool for linking officials electronically with the Prime Minister's Office. "This will contribute to enhancing administrative efficiency and facilitating follow up and decision-making processes, particularly regarding the renewal or termination of leadership appointments or the restructuring of boards of directors in various agencies," sources added.

Legal integrity

PAS supports fair sports arbitration

Egyptian Minister of Youth and Sports Dr. Ashraf Sobhy opened the panel with a speech, praising these events to enhance cooperation between Arab countries in the field of sports.

Promoting solidarity and sustainable development

ASEAN marks 58th anniversary, strengthens Kuwait ties

ASEAN identity is not just showcasing symbols such as the common flag, anthem and customs but substantively presenting in many regional and international events and mechanisms forged by ASEAN with the participation of world great powers, through the spirit of cohesion and consensus, through the aspiration for peaceful development, stability, prosperity and everlasting dynamism over many past decades. From only 5 founding countries, ASEAN has grown to 10 member states today and is preparing to welcome Timor-Leste as the 11th member – a living testament to the attractiveness and sustainability of the Association. ASEAN's economic growth in recent years has been quite positive despite lot of acute difficulties. As a whole, ASEAN is currently ranked the 5th largest economy in the world. According to the Asian Development

Since joining ASEAN in 1995, over the past 30 years, Vietnam has become an active member in many activities and fields, especially making important and outstanding contributions in the role of ASEAN Chair (1998, 2010 and 2020), contributing to the overall successes of ASEAN and gradually making Vietnam a solid pillar of the bloc. Currently, the Vietnamese Embassy in Kuwait, which is serving as the Chair of the ASEAN Committee, has also implemented many practical initiatives and activities to enhance the image of the ASEAN Community in general and cultivate friendly relations between Kuwait and all ASEAN member countries.



Dr. Duc Thang Nguyen, Ambassador of Vietnam to the
State of Kuwait

Permanently Promoting inclusion, cooperation and sustainable development

In the context of many global challenges, from climate change, economic crises to geopolitical conflicts, ASEAN has further affirmed

the importance of sustainable and inclusive development. ASEAN's development priorities have always been associated with building strong resilience, internal resources, strengthening regional connectivity and in-depth inter-



The ASEAN Committee in Kuwait

Today, ASEAN has un-
ceasingly and actively ex-
panded cooperation with
international organizations
and countries, including the
State of Kuwait. A signifi-
cant step forward has been
taken by Kuwait's formal
accession to the Treaty of
Amity and Cooperation in
Southeast Asia (TAC) in
2023 – opening new oppor-
tunities to promote bilateral
cooperation. Through indi-
vidual exchange activities as

– the core values of ASEAN
– are a profound foundation
for realizing a sustainable
development and maintain-
ing ASEAN Centrality. In
that spirit, ASEAN con-
tinues to actively promote
multi-faceted cooperation
with Kuwait and the Gulf
countries, and jointly con-
tributing to a peaceful, sta-
ble, and prosperous region.

Kuwait commits to sustainable future

Advancing low-carbon goals

By Zahraa Al-Kadhmi

Coordination

Urban planning efforts, such as Kuwait's Fourth Structural Plan (2040 Master Plan), promote green buildings and healthier living



Tareq Al-Roumi, Minister of Oil

environments.

Kuwait's renewable energy strategy involves three tracks: long-term projects like the Shagaya Renewable Energy Park, short-term solutions, and smaller-scale initiatives requiring all facilities to generate 10 percent of their electricity from renewable sources.

Initiatives

Public parks remain a cornerstone of Kuwait's environmental efforts, offering diverse green spaces across the country.

Kuwait has consistently affirmed its commitment to regional and international environmental agreements and has actively collaborated with global organizations in this field.

In this context, Sami Dimassi, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) representative and Regional Director for West Asia, praised Kuwait's commitment to developing responsive strategies and action plans that address urgent environmental needs.



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Five-day exhibit features 57 photos celebrating culture, nature and everyday life

Photography Arts Society opens vibrant exhibition at Capital Mall



Group photo during the exhibition.



KUNA photos

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5, (KUNA): The Kuwait Photog-raphy Arts Society held a photo exhibition on Monday at Capital Mall to showcase the work of 34 photographers of various ages who presented 57 diverse photographs. Several of these photographs highlighted the beauty of Kuwait, its landmarks, cultural heritage, and natural landscapes.

President of the society Dr. Suad Al-Humr told the Ku-wait News Agency (KUNA) that the exhibition aims to shine a light on Kuwaiti photographic talent.

She said the photographs on display tell a variety of vivid stories, offering different perspectives on Kuwait and the world, and enriching both the visual and cultural experience.

Al-Humr affirmed the society’s commitment to support-ing young photographers and helping them develop their skills. She stressed that photography is not merely an art form, but also a powerful tool for documentation and self-expression. The five-day exhibition showcases a wide range of black-and-white and color photographs, covering subjects such as historical buildings, traditional markets, modern landmarks, natural landscapes, scenes from everyday life, and Kuwait’s rich environmental heritage, along with other diverse themes.



Dr. Suad Al-Humr explains one of the shots.

Officially recognized by the Ministry of Social Affairs in December 2017, the Kuwait Photography Arts Society serves as an official umbrella and a meeting point for pho-tographers, promoting the exchange of expertise and organ-izing exhibitions and a variety of cultural activities.

Continued from Page 1

His Highness

This was reflected in the high-level delegation that accompanied His High-ness the Prime Minister to NEOM, especially amid growing discussions about Kuwait’s involvement in major regional projects, most notably in the Saudi market.

This would represent a major step forward, provided it proceeds without obstacles, as it would establish a strong regional development presence and open the door to investment in various sectors.

Undoubtedly, the role of the private sector in both countries will be a cor-nerstone in this effort, serving to deep-en ties between the two peoples and reinforce the principle of cooperation for integration as outlined in the Char-ter of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

In a world undergoing many chang-es, especially in terms of economic shifts, and in a region as sensitive as ours, strengthening cooperation and integration among GCC countries re-mains the foremost line of defense for this closely connected and homoge-neous group in terms of language, cul-ture, and economic interests.

Hence, the visit of His High-ness Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah to NEOM, which is now a global hub for investors, also reflects the deep-rooted and intimate relationship between the two countries and their peoples.

We say to the leaders behind this visit - while the United States may be the engine of the global train, let us strengthen the movement of com-munication and partnership between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Kuwait.

Justice at

The Capital Court handled the ma-jority of new cases, accounting for 71.9 percent of total new cases, followed by Farwaniya Court with 20.1 percent, totaling 1,591 new non-criminal cases.

Among the 1,591 new non-criminal cases, commercial cases ranked high-est at 26.4 percent, while administra-tive (capital markets) cases registered the lowest at just 0.4 percent.

As of June, there were 3,532 pend-ing non-criminal cases, with com-mercial cases again leading at 37.9 percent. Administrative capital market cases represented the lowest share at 0.3 percent.

Regarding adjudicated cases, the total reached 3,624, with commercial cases accounting for the largest share at 28.9 percent, while administrative cases related to capital markets record-ed the lowest at 0.4 percent.

The overall completion rate for non-criminal cases saw a notable rise, led by administrative cases at 173.3 per-cent. The lowest completion rate was recorded in commercial capital mar-kets cases at 62.7 percent.

As for criminal cases, the report re-corded 445 new cases in June. Felony cases in the Capital ranked highest at 35.5 percent, followed by misdemea-nor cassation cases at 34.6 percent, misdemeanor and municipal violations at 28.8 percent, and felonies related to stock markets at 1.1 percent.

As for the cases currently being heard in criminal courts, they totaled 694, with 323 misdemeanor cassation cases representing the largest share at 46.5 percent, followed by misdemea-nor and municipal violations at 27.1 percent, and felony cases (Capital) at 25.5 percent.

The number of cases adjudicated in criminal courts reached 590, includ-ing 270 felony cases (Capital) at 45.8 percent, while felony cases related to stock markets recorded the lowest at 1.0 percent.

The data also showed that the high-est criminal case completion rate was in felony cases (Capital) at 152.5 per-cent, followed by felony cases (stock markets) at 100 percent. The Court of Cassation recorded the lowest comple-tion rate at just 39.3 percent.

Also:
KUWAIT CITY: Minister of Justice **Nasser Al-Sumait** conducted an in-spection tour of several departments of the ministry, accompanied by the act-ing Undersecretary **Awatif Al-Sanad** and the acting Assistant Undersec-etary **Nouf Al-Qabandi**, to assess work progress and the quality of services provided to clients, reports Al-Seyas-sah daily.

During the tour, Minister Al-Sumait stressed the importance of developing the administrative work environment and modernizing service delivery mech-anisms to enhance performance efficien-cy and enhance beneficiary satisfaction.

His Highness

He also commended the efforts of employees in various departments.

Minister Al-Sumait highlighted the need to continuously improve institu-tional performance and create a stimu-lating work environment that increases employee productivity and supports the delivery of timely justice.

He affirmed the ministry’s commit-ment to supporting national cadres and developing judicial services in line with citizens’ aspirations.

Kuwait’s growth

Some firms also noted consist-ent sales from regular clients, which helped drive another solid rise in out-put during July.

As a result, business activity rose again in July, extending a two-and-a-half-year streak of monthly expansion. However, the rate of growth in out-put was the slowest recorded in four months.

Despite rising demand, staffing lev-els remained unchanged.

The overall stability in employment levels came after a record increase dur-ing the previous month. While some companies brought on additional staff to meet project deadlines, others re-mained cautious due to cost concerns.

Despite a strong rise in new orders, hiring remained subdued, leading to another increase in backlogs of work in July. However, the rate of accumu-lation was slight and the weakest since January.

Companies managed to keep back-logs in check by boosting their input volumes. Both purchasing activity and input stocks rose sharply in July, though at a slower pace than in June.

Some participants noted they had stockpiled inputs in anticipation of expected price hikes in the coming months.

Supplier delivery times continued to improve, but the pace of this improve-ment slowed significantly to its lowest level since March 2024. Several re-spondents reported material and labor shortages among vendors.

On the cost front, inflationary pres-sures softened. Input prices and staff costs rose at their slowest pace in six and four months, respectively. Cost in-creases were linked to factors such as advertising, maintenance, rent, spare parts, and salaries.

In turn, output price inflation also eased in July to a four-month low. Sev-eral respondents noted that discount-ing strategies aimed at securing new orders limited their ability to pass on higher input costs to customers.

Competitive pricing helped bolster confidence in the 12-month outlook for output. Meanwhile, some firms plan to adopt diverse marketing strat-egies, with a particular focus on digital channels.

Despite sentiment dipping to a three-month low, companies remained strongly optimistic about output growth over the coming year.

KD5 mn

Speaking in a televised interview alongside other government officials on Kuwait TV, Al-Ajmi praised the un-precedented collaboration among State agencies, charitable organizations and the Kuwaiti public. He revealed that donations increased from KD3.7 mil-lion to more than KD5 million.

He stated that the campaign was launched under the directives of the political leadership, with the full sup-port of Chairman of the Humanitar-ian Action Committee, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and close monitoring by Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah.

He pointed out that “the suffer-ing in Gaza is severe and continuous. The humanitarian role of Kuwait will always be at the forefront. This cam-paign is a testament to the values we hold dear -- solidarity, compassion and immediate response to those in need.”

The Ministry of Social Affairs -- in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCA), Kuwait Flour Mills Company and various charitable socie-ties, organized the campaign -- which also received strong support from the entire Kuwaiti community. Al-Ajmi affirmed that “once the donation plat-forms were opened, the ministry issued directives allowing all licensed chari-table societies to authorize approved Kuwaiti companies to launch donation links.

Contributions were made through each society’s official website, Zakat

House or the Sahel government appli-cation. A total of five official donation links were activated in different chari-ties. The campaign is considered a new phase of government support for humanitarian work. It is built on the principles embraced by our leaders and now instilled in the hearts of the Ku-waiti people.”

He also disclosed that several com-panies intend to contribute financially to the campaign. “Once their check donations are processed, the final amount will increase further,” he as-serted.

He added that the future support ini-tiatives are being discussed, including the purchase of essential supplies; such as tents, blankets and medical aid for those in Gaza. “Gaza is part of our val-ues and identity. We are always ready to provide all forms of assistance,” he stressed.

Moreover, the Ministry of Social Af-fairs revealed in a press statement that by midnight on Sunday, the campaign collected KD2.03 million through the designated electronic donation portal.

The campaign is part of Kuwait’s ongoing humanitarian efforts in sup-port of the Palestinian people. It aims to provide urgent relief, including basic food supplies, to the families affected by the conflict in Gaza. Do-nations were accepted through the of-ficial campaign link, which closed on Tuesday.

KFAS, Youth

and environmental awareness, as well as building national capacities among young Kuwaitis.

Al-Yaseen explained that the part-nership will be realized through the development and implementation of training programs and initiatives in sci-ence, environment, and education, all designed to equip young people with essential community and environmen-tal skills. He noted that the agreement aligns with KFAS’s policy of building partnerships with national institutions to advance development goals, cre-ate initiatives, and offer volunteer and vocational training opportunities for youth. The MoU also reaffirms their vision to serve as a hub for interactive learning and educational experiences that foster scientific and environmental awareness.

Similarly, Nasser Al-Sheikh, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Youth, highlighted the significance of this partnership and the Authority’s commitment to forging strategic re-lationships with leading national orga-nizations. He emphasized that the MoU will help deliver high-quality programs tailored to the ambitions of young peo-ple, supporting their scientific and intel-lectual growth to meet future aspirations. Al-Sheikh also praised the Scientific Center’s vital role in advancing scientif-ic culture and promoting environmental awareness in Kuwait.

USS Canberra

deterrence posture, securing vital ship-ping lanes for global commerce, and strengthening ties between US naval per-sonnel and their Kuwaiti counterparts.

While no additional naval visits are confirmed at this time, Mohamed stated that bilateral and multilateral na-val exercises remain a cornerstone of defense cooperation; indicating future visits are expected in line with the op-erational schedule.

In another development, Mohamed welcomed Kuwait Oil Company’s re-cent selection of Houston-based KBR to provide front-end engineering de-sign services for the first phase of the South Ratqa Heavy Oil Program. “Although the US government does not make decisions on certain trade matters, we welcome this development as a strong signal of the thriving eco-nomic partnership between the two na-tions,” he asserted.

He affirmed that bilateral trade be-tween the US and Kuwait already surpassed \$4.5 billion annually, with growth driven by advanced engi-neering and engineering services. “The KBR contract is a manifestation of Kuwait’s trust in American expertise and the shared goal of advancing its energy capabilities in a safe, efficient and sus-tainable manner,” he elaborated.

He also specified various opportuni-ties for cooperation in the full energy spectrum. “In conventional energy, U companies remain reliable partners in areas; such as enhanced oil recov-ery, digital oilfield technologies and downstream integration, supporting the economic diversification efforts of Kuwait,” he revealed.

Jahra Hospital launches foot care guide

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Jahra Hospital has launched the diabetic foot disease awareness booklet in seven different languages; targeting diabetics through simple and practical content suitable for all patients.

The hospital stated on its official website that Surgery Department Head Dr. Mohammad Al-Jasmi prepared the booklet to educate patients about the early signs of diabetic foot disease and ways to prevent risks.

It added that copies of the booklet will be dis-tributed to the clinics at the hospital and will be made available digitally.

Provisional List of Debts Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Application No. 2024 / 5 - Restructuring

Pursuant to the decision of the Bankruptcy Judge dated 20 / 2 / 2025, initiating the restructuring procedures of **First Investment Company K.S.C. (Public)** and appointing **Mr. Abdullah Marwan Al-Essa** as the Trustee of the restructuring process to undertake the duties outlined in the Bankruptcy Law No. **71 of 2020**, the Trustee commenced his responsibilities by inviting creditors to submit their claims.

Upon completion of the debt verification process, the Trustee submitted to the Bankruptcy Division the **List of Provisional Debts**, which includes a statement of the amounts he considers acceptable for each claim and those he considers excluded. This list was published in **Al-Kuwait Al-Youm Newspaper on August 3, 2025**, and is detailed as follows:

First – List of Excluded Debts :

No.	Creditor’s Name	Claim Amount (KWD)	Reason for Exclusion
1	Ahmed Salem Al-Mudhaf	29,934.375	A court judgment dated April 23, 2025 rejected the claim due to long-term prescription.
2	Osama Saleh Mohammed Abdulrahman	32,537.000	Case is still pending in the court of first instance, with statute of limitation defenses submitted.
3	National Industries Company	993,862.000	Case is still pending in the court of first instance, with statute of limitation defenses submitted.
4	Direct Aid Society	129,000.000	Case is still pending in the court of first instance, with statute of limitation defenses submitted.
5	Kuwait Achievements General Trading & Contracting Co.	392,415.000	Case is still pending in the court of first instance, with statute of limitation defenses submitted.
6	Green Plateau General Trading & Contracting Co.	350,019.750	Case is still pending in the court of first instance, with statute of limitation defenses submitted.
7	Al-Nafisi National Real Estate Group	101,000.000	Case is still pending in the court of first instance, with statute of limitation defenses submitted.
8	Bader Nasser Suleiman Al-Madhi	43,626.000	Case is still pending in the court of first instance, with statute of limitation defenses submitted.
9	Maryam Abdullah Ibrahim Al-Mutawa	45,000.000	Suspended pending outcome of the restructuring as of April 9, 2025.
Total		2,117,394.125	

Second – List of Admissible Debts:

No.	Creditor Name	Amount Due as of Feb 20, 2025 (KWD)	Grounds for Admitting the Debt
1	Ahmed Saud Mutlaq Al-Zaid	82,997.161	There is an appellate judgment dated 14 November 2022 + Execution File
2	Masaa Real Estate Co. (currently) / Al-Masaa Real Estate Investment Co. (formerly)	1,505,301.000	There is a final judgment in the Court of Appeal dated 10 February 2023
3	Maharat General Trading & Contracting Co.	101,563.500	There is a final judgment by the Court of Cassation dated 28 January 2025
4	Abdullah Hamad Al-Nafisi	155,079.464	There is an appellate judgment dated 29 April 2024
5	Majed Abdulrahman Jasem Al-Hassan	53,282.250	There is a final judgment by the Court of Cassation dated 28 January 2025
6	Mohammed Bader Al-Sayer	166,869.388	There is an appellate judgment dated 15 April 2024 + Execution File
7	Heirs of Saud Abdulaziz Abdulmohsen Al-Rashed	156,377.105	There is an appellate judgment dated 10 February 2022 + Execution File
8	Yousef Khaled Yousef Al-Marzouq	60,555.000	There is a first instance judgment dated 12 April 2021
9	Suleiman Nasser Mutlaq Al-Zaid	54,712.804	There is an appellate judgment dated 10 February 2022 + Execution File
10	Ethadco General Trading Co.	161,765.885	There is an execution file + a record to release the attachment dated 24 April 2025
11	Anwar Holding Group Co.	361,414.067	There is an appellate judgment dated 14 November 2022
12	Amjad Holding Ltd.	17,468,585.184	There is an appellate judgment dated 14 November 2022 + Execution File
13	Abdulwahid Abdulmohsen Abdullah Bin Obeid	17,468,585.182	There is an appellate judgment dated 14 November 2022 + Execution File
14	Madain Real Estate Co.	1,076,101.010	There is an appellate judgment dated 19 December 2024 + Execution File
15	Yousef Jasem Mohammed Bou Rashed	50,529.315	There is an appellate judgment dated 10 March 2022
16	Essam Saud Abdulaziz Al-Rashed	176,785.230	There is an appellate judgment dated 10 February 2022
17	The Securities House Co.	500,000.000	There is a conciliation and settlement agreement dated 11 August 2024
18	Ahmed Hamad Ahmed Al-Hamad	800,000.000	There is a conciliation and settlement agreement dated 27 May 2024
19	Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sanea	25,613.500	There is an appellate judgment dated 14 November 2022
20	Abdulrahman Nasser Abdulmohsen Al-Saeed	200,900.282	There is an appellate judgment dated 5 December 2022
21	Yousef Ibrahim Al-Hajri Sons Group	255,648.000	There is an appellate judgment dated 13 February 2023
22	Yaqoub Yousef Al-Nafisi Sons General Trading Co.	99,180.000	There is an appellate judgment dated 23 April 2024
23	Mashaar Holding Co.	1,099,477.000	There is an appellate judgment dated 10 February 2022
24	Qibla Travel and Tourism Co.	250,300.000	There is an appellate judgment dated 2 April 2024
25	Al-Raya Real Estate Co.	200,391.535	There is an appellate judgment dated 13 March 2023
26	Fawaz Khaled Yousef Al-Marzouq	1,000,233.000	There is an appellate judgment dated 10 February 2023
27	Rasheed Yaqoub Yousef Al-Nafisi	49,440.000	There is an appellate judgment dated 17 September 2024
28	Al-Tijariya Ltd. for General Trading & Contracting	101,564.000	There is an appellate judgment dated 10 February 2022
29	Nouf Real Estate & General Trading & Contracting Co.	1,070,507.064	There is an appellate judgment dated 10 February 2022
30	Al-Bilad Real Estate Investment Co.	305,001.000	There is an appellate judgment dated 10 February 2022
31	Bader Mohammed Abdulkarim Al-Saeed	109,700.541	There is an appellate judgment dated 14 November 2022
Total :		45,168,459.466	

Important Note : Pursuant to Article (111) of the Bankruptcy Law issued under Law No. 71 of 2020, both the debtors and any creditor – even if not listed in the debt schedule – have the right to file an objection with the Bankruptcy Division regarding the debts included in the list, within ten (10) days from the date of the list’s announcement. The Bankruptcy Court shall have jurisdiction to adjudicate the objection.

Mr. Abdullah Marwan Al-Essa
(Trustee of the restructuring process) First Investment Company K.S.C

‘It will take bipartisanship to avert a painful, unnecessary shutdown’

August recess can’t hide tensions ahead for Congress on spending, Trump nominations

WASHINGTON, Aug 5, (AP): Lawmakers have left Washington for the annual August recess, but a few weeks of relative quiet on the US Capitol grounds can’t mask the partisan tensions that are brewing on government funding and President Donald Trump’s nominees. It could make for a momentous September.

Lawmakers will use much of September to work on spending bills for the coming budget year, which begins Oct 1. They likely will need to pass a short-term spending measure to keep the government funded for a few weeks while they work on a longer-term measure that covers the full year.

It’s not unusual for leaders from both parties to blame the other party for a potential shutdown, but the rhetoric began extra early this year, signaling the threat of a stoppage is more serious than usual.

On Monday, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and House Democrat-ic leader Hakeem Jeffries sent their Republican counterparts a sharply-worded letter calling for a meeting to discuss “the government funding deadline and the health care crisis you have visited upon the American people.”

They said it will take bipartisanship to avert a “painful, unnecessary shut-down.”

“Yet it is clear that the Trump Administration and many in your party are preparing to go it alone and continue to legislate on a solely Republican basis,” said the letter sent to Senate Majority Leader John Thune and House Speaker Mike Johnson.

Republicans have taken note of the warnings and are portraying the Democrats as itching for a shutdown they hope to blame on the GOP.

“It was disturbing to hear the Democrat leader threaten to shut down the government in his July 8 Dear Colleague letter,” Thune said on Saturday. “... I really hope that Democrats will not embrace that position but will continue to work with Republicans to fund the government.”

So far, the House has approved two of the 12 annual spending bills, mostly along party lines. The Senate has passed three on a strongly bipartisan basis. The House is pursuing steep, non-defense spending cuts. The Senate is rejecting many of those cuts. One side will have to give. And any final bill will need some Democratic support to generate the 60 votes necessary to get a spending measure



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

to the finish line.

Some Democratic senators are also wanting assurances from Republicans that there won’t be more efforts in the coming weeks to claw back or cancel funding already approved by Congress.

“If Republicans want to make a deal, then let’s make a deal, but only if Republicans include an agreement they won’t take back that deal a few weeks later,” said Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann, R-Tenn., a veteran member of the House Appropriations committee, said the Democratic minority in both chambers has suffered

so many legislative losses this year, “that they are stuck between a rock and their voting base.” Democrats may want to demonstrate more resistance to Trump, but they would rue a shutdown, he warned.

“The reality would be, if the government were shut down, the administration, Donald Trump, would have the ability to decide where to spend and not spend,” Fleischmann said. “Schumer knows that, Jeffries knows that. We know that. I think it would be much more productive if we start talking about a short-term (continuing resolution.)”

Republicans are considering changes to Senate rules to get more of Trump’s nominees confirmed.

Thune said last week that during the same point in Joe Biden’s presidency, 49 of his 121 civilians nominees had been confirmed on an expedited basis through a voice vote or a unanimous consent request. Trump has had none of his civilian nominees confirmed on an expedited basis. Democrats have insisted on roll call votes for all of them, a lengthy process than can take days.

“I think they’re desperately in need of change,” Thune said of Senate rules for considering nominees. “I think that the last six months have demonstrated that this process, nominations is broken. And so I expect there will be some good robust conversations about that.”

Schumer said a rules change would be a “huge mistake,” especially as Senate Republicans will need Democratic votes to pass spending bills and other legislation moving forward.

The Senate held a rare weekend session as Republicans worked to get more of Trump’s nominees confirmed. Negotiations focused on advancing dozens of additional Trump nominees in exchange for some concessions on releasing some already approved spending.

At times, lawmakers spoke of progress on a potential deal. But it was clear that there would be no agreement when Trump attacked Schumer on social media Saturday evening and told Republicans to pack it up and go home.

“Tell Schumer, who is under tremendous political pressure from within his own party, the Radical Left Lunatics, to GO TO HELL!” Trump posted on Truth Social.



Smoke from the Gifford Fire fills the sky as the sun sets over Los Padres National Forest, Calif, on Aug 4. (AP)

Massive wildfire in central Calif threatens homes, injures 3

A massive wildfire on Monday was threatening hundreds of homes in central California after injuring at least three people as it tore through Los Padres National Forest.

The Gifford Fire scorched more than 100 square miles (260 square km) of coastal Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, and was still burning out of control, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known as Cal Fire.

A motorist was hospitalized with burn injuries after getting out of his vehicle and being overrun by flames, said Flemming Bertelson, a spokesperson for the U.S. Forest Service. Two contract employees assisting firefighters were also hurt when their all-terrain vehicle overturned.

The blaze threatened about 450 structures and forced the closure of the highway in both directions east of Santa Maria, a city of about

110,000 people in Santa Barbara County. About 65 miles (105 kilometers) northwest of Santa Barbara and 150 miles (240 kilometers) northwest of Los Angeles, the hilly agricultural region is dotted by sprawling California live oaks and Sycamore trees and is known for its wine industry.

The blaze grew out of at least four smaller fires that erupted Friday along State Route 166 between Santa Maria and Bakersfield. (AP)

Texas and California joust for political advantage in advance of ’26 elections

AUSTIN, Texas, Aug 5, (AP): The nation’s two most populous states - California and Texas - grappled for political advantage in advance of 2026 elections that could reorder the balance of power in Washington and threaten President Donald Trump’s agenda at the midpoint of his second term.

In Texas, Democrats on Monday prevented their state’s House of Representatives from moving forward, at least for now, with a redrawn congressional map sought by Trump to shore up Republicans’ 2026 midterm prospects as his political standing falters.

In California, Democrats encouraged by Gov. Gavin Newsom are considering new political maps that could slash five Republican-held House seats in the liberal-leaning state while bolstering Democratic incumbents in other battleground districts. The move is intended to undercut any GOP gains in Texas, potentially swinging House control and giving Democrats a counterweight to Trump on Capitol Hill.

A draft plan aims to boost the Democratic margin in California to 48 of 52 congressional seats, according to a source familiar with the plan who was not authorized to discuss it publicly. That’s up from the 43 seats the party now holds. It would need approval from lawmakers and voters, who may be skeptical to give it after handing redistricting power to an independent commission years ago.

The rivalry puts a spotlight on two states that for years have dueled over



Speaker of the House Dustin Burrows speaks at a news conference at the Capitol in Austin, Texas, Aug 4, after the Republican-dominated House was unable to establish the quorum of lawmakers required to do business. (AP)

jobs, innovation, prestige - even sports - with the backdrop of clashing political visions - one progressive, one conservative.

After dozens of Democrats left Texas, the Republican-dominated House was unable to establish the quorum of lawmakers required to do business. Republican Gov. Greg Abbott has made threats about removing members who are absent from their seats. Democrats counter that Abbott is using “smoke and mirrors” to assert legal authority he does not have.

The House quickly issued civil arrest warrants for absent Democrats and

Abbott ordered state troopers to help find and arrest them, but lawmakers physically outside Texas are beyond the jurisdiction of state authorities.

“If you continue to go down this road, there will be consequences,” House Speaker Rep. Dustin Burrows said from the chamber floor, later telling reporters that includes fines.

Democrats’ revolt and Abbott’s threats intensified a fight over congressional maps that began in Texas but now includes Democratic governors who have pitched redrawing their district maps in retaliation - even if their options are limited.

Russia drops moratorium on deploying medium and shorter range missiles

MOSCOW, Aug 5, (AP): Russia has declared that it no longer considers itself bound by a self-imposed moratorium on the deployment of nuclear-capable intermediate range missiles, a warning that potentially sets the stage for a new arms race as tensions between Moscow and Washington rise again over Ukraine.

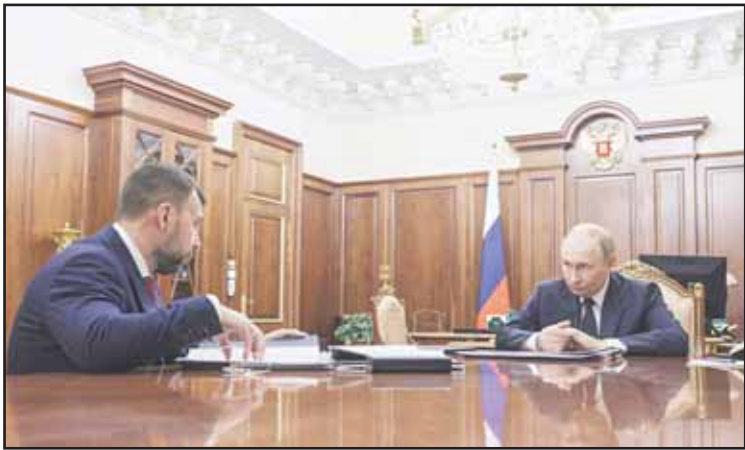
In a statement Monday, the Russian Foreign Ministry linked the decision to efforts by the U.S. and its allies to develop intermediate range weapons and preparations for their deployment in Europe and other parts of the world. It specifically cited US plans to deploy Typhoon and Dark Eagle missiles in Germany starting next year.

The ministry noted that such actions by the US and its allies create “destabilizing missile potentials” near Russia, creating a “direct threat to the security of our country” and carry “significant harmful consequences for regional and global stability, including a dangerous escalation of tensions between nuclear powers.”

It didn’t say what specific moves the Kremlin might take, but President Vladimir Putin has previously announced that Moscow was planning to deploy its new Oreshnik missiles on the territory of its neighbor and ally Belarus later this year.

Asked where and when Russia could potentially deploy intermediate-range weapons, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that it’s not something to be announced in advance.

“Russia no longer has any limita-



Russian President Vladimir Putin, (right), speaks with the head of the Russian-controlled Donetsk region Denis Pushilin during their meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia on Aug 4. (AP)

tions, Russia no longer considers itself to be constrained by anything,” Peskov told reporters. “Therefore Russia believes it has the right to take respective steps if necessary.”

“Decisions on specific parameters of response measures will be made by the leadership of the Russian Federation based on an interdepartmental analysis of the scale of deployment of American and other Western land-based intermediate-range missiles, as well as the development of the overall situation in the area of international security and strategic stability,” the Foreign Ministry said.

The Russian statement follows President Donald Trump’s announcement

Friday that he’s ordering the repositioning of two U.S. nuclear submarines “based on the highly provocative statements” of Dmitry Medvedev, who was president in 2008-12 to allow Putin, bound by term limits, to later return to the office. Trump’s statement came as his deadline for the Kremlin to reach a peace deal in Ukraine approaches later this week.

Trump said he was alarmed by Medvedev’s attitude. Medvedev, who serves as deputy chairman of Russia’s Security Council chaired by Putin, has apparently sought to curry favor with his mentor by making provocative statements and frequently lobbing nuclear threats.

Britain’s first female MI5 spy chief Rington dies

LONDON, Aug 5, (AP): Stella Rington, the first female chief of Britain’s MI5 intelligence agency and later a successful thriller writer, has died, her family said Monday. She was 90.

The first woman to head a UK intelligence agency, Rington was the inspiration for Judi Dench’s portrayal of MI6 chief M in seven James Bond films.

Her family said in a statement that Rington died on Sunday “surrounded by her beloved family and dogs and determinedly held on to the life she loved until her last breath.”

MI5’s current director-general, Ken McCallum, said that “as the first avowed female head of any intelli-

gence agency in the world, Dame Stella broke through long-standing barriers and was a visible example of the importance of diversity in leadership.”

Born in 1935, Rington studied English at Edinburgh University and later worked as an archivist. She was living in India with her diplomat husband in the mid-1960s when she was recruited by



Rington

dia with her diplomat husband in the mid-1960s when she was recruited by

MI5, Britain’s domestic security service, as a part-time clerk and typist in its New Delhi office.

She joined the agency full-time after moving back to London in 1969 and rose through the ranks, overcoming rules that kept the most prestigious roles, such as recruiting and running agents, for men only.

She worked in each of MI5’s operational branches - counterespionage, counterterrorism and counter-subversion - at a time when MI5’s work included sniffing out Soviet spies, infiltrating Northern Ireland militant groups and, controversially, spying on leftists, trade union leaders and other alleged subversives.

Europe

Lithuania names finance minister as interim PM:

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda on Monday accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Gintautas Paluckas’ government and appointed Finance Minister Rimantas Sadzius to lead the interim administration.

The president now has up to 15 days to nominate a candidate for permanent prime minister to Lithuania’s parliament, Seimas. Sadzius will serve as the head of the caretaker government until a new Cabinet is formed.

Paluckas announced his decision to step down on Thursday last week after law enforcement authorities opened two pre-trial investigations into his business activities, amid growing public concerns. He confirmed his decision during an emergency government meeting on Monday morning. (Xinhua)



Sadzius

Wildfire burns 5,786 hectares in Portugal park:

A wildfire in Portugal’s Peneda-Geres National Park has burned 5,786 hectares of protected area, according to preliminary data released Monday by the Institute for

Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF).

The fire that broke out on July 26 in the municipality of Ponte da Barca has been under control since Sunday. It has scorched a total of 7,550 hectares, with 5,786 hectares within the national park, the ICNF said in its latest assessment.

Peneda-Geres National Park spans 69,596 hectares and covers parts of the districts of Braga, Viana do Castelo, and Vila Real.

According to the Lusa News Agency, Augusto Marinho, mayor of Ponte da Barca in Viana do Castelo district, said that nearly the entire portion of the park within his municipality was burned, with only a small portion left untouched. (Xinhua)

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Bulgaria uncovers illegal facility:

Bulgarian authorities have uncovered an illegal marijuana production greenhouse during a fire at a roadside building and arrested one suspect, the Prosecutor’s Office said Monday.

The facility, housed in a two-story building near the town of Haskovo in southeastern Bulgaria, was discovered Sunday morning after witnesses reported a fire, prompting emergency services to respond, the office said in a statement.

Firefighters found a 57-year-old man inside, trying to put out the flames. He was arrested at the scene.

While battling the fire, firefighters discovered that the building had been operating as a clandestine marijuana greenhouse, the statement said. (Xinhua)

NATO to coordinate regular arm deliveries to Ukraine, most will be bought from US

BRUSSELS, Aug 5, (AP): NATO started coordinating regular deliveries of large weapons packages to Ukraine after the Netherlands said it would provide air defense equipment, ammunition and other military aid worth 500 million euros (\$578 million), most bought from the US.

Two deliveries are expected this month. The equipment that will be provided is based on Ukraine’s priority needs on the battlefield. NATO allies then locate the weapons and ammunition and send them on.

“Packages will be prepared rapidly and issued on a regular basis,” NATO said late Monday

Air defense systems are in greatest need. The United Nations has said that Russia’s relentless pounding of urban areas behind the front line has killed more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians.

Russia’s bigger army is also making slow but costly progress along the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line. Currently, it is waging an operation to take the eastern city of Pokrovsk, a logistical hub whose fall could allow it to drive deeper into Ukraine.

European allies and Canada are buying most of the equipment they plan to send from the United States, which has greater stocks of ready military mate-



Emergency workers inspect a damaged car close to the multi-storey residential house that was ruined by a Russian missile Thursday night, killing 31 civilians including five children, in Kyiv, Ukraine on Aug 1. (AP)

riel, as well as more effective weapons. The Trump administration is not giving any arms to Ukraine.

The new deliveries will come on top of other pledges of military equipment.

The Kiel Institute, which tracks support to Ukraine, estimates that as of June, European countries had provided

72 billion euros (\$83 billion) worth of military aid since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022, compared to \$65 billion in US aid.

Dutch Defense Minister Ruben Brekelmans said that “American air defense systems and munitions, in particular, are crucial for Ukraine to defend itself.”

INTERNATIONAL

India and Philippines announce partnership to strengthen trade, maritime cooperation

NEW DELHI, Aug 5, (Agencies): India and the Philippines announced an upgraded strategic partnership Tuesday that they said will deepen trade, defense and maritime cooperation between the two nations.

The countries announced the agreement after bilateral talks in New Delhi between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos.

India's foreign ministry spokesman, Randhir Jaiswal, said the sides also agreed to expand partnerships in space, tourism, culture and digital technologies.

After the talks, Modi said India and the Philippines were "committed to peace, security, prosperity and a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region."

Marcos said the strategic partnership "will doubtless resonate beyond the confines of our bilateral relationship."

"We want to work with you for a free and open Indo-Pacific," he told Modi.

Marcos arrived in India on Monday for a five-day visit as the countries deepen their defense ties. They staged



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, (right), and Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr jointly launch commemorative stamps during the latter's state visit in New Delhi, India on Aug 5. (AP)

joint naval exercises in the disputed South China Sea for the first time on Sunday, a high-profile military deployment that antagonized China.

India also has supplied its BrahMos supersonic cruise missile systems to Philippines.

Also:

MANILA: The Philippine House of Representatives has filed a motion urging the Supreme Court to reconsider its ruling that blocked the impeachment of Vice President **Sara Duterte**, House Speaker **Martin Romualdez**

said Monday.

In a statement, Romualdez said the House acted "in full compliance with the Constitution" when it transmitted the impeachment complaint against Duterte on Feb. 5.

The motion, submitted through the Office of the Solicitor General, argued that the Court had "misread the facts" and applied new rules retroactively, warning that the decision could undermine Congress's constitutional role and weaken people's right to hold officials accountable.

Asia

Hong Kong issues top rainstorm warning: The Hong Kong Observatory on Tuesday morning issued the black rainstorm warning signal, the fourth time within eight days.

This is the highest level in the observatory's three-tier heavy rain alert system. This indicates that heavy rain has fallen or is expected to fall generally over Hong Kong, exceeding 70 mm in an hour, and is likely to continue. (Xinhua)

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China rescues container ship: China has rescued a foreign container ship that caught fire in the South China Sea, saving the lives of its 25 foreign crew members, the Ministry of Transport said on Monday.

On July 28, four containers on a large Liberian-registered container ship suddenly caught fire approximately 190 nautical miles northwest of Yongshu Reef in China's Nansha Islands, threatening the safety of the crew and international shipping routes, according to the ministry. (Xinhua)

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Teenage girl arrested after Sydney stabbing: A teenage girl has been arrested after another teenager was fatally stabbed north of Sydney.

Police in the state of New South Wales (NSW) said on Tuesday that emergency services were called to reports of a stabbing in Edgeworth, a suburb of the city of Newcastle 110 km north of Sydney, at about 10:20 pm on Monday.

Officers arrived at the scene and found a teenage girl with an injury to her torso.

She was treated by ambulance paramedics before being taken to the hospital in a critical condition, where she later died from her injuries.



Cars drive amid rains on a street in Hong Kong, South China on Aug 5. (Xinhua)

A second teenage girl, who police said was known to the victim, was arrested at the scene and was assisting with inquiries.

Local media reported that the victim was 13 years old and that the girl who was arrested is 14.

As of Tuesday morning, no charges had been laid by police.

NSW Police said in a statement that a crime scene has been established, which will be forensically examined by specialist officers, and that detectives have commenced an investigation into the circumstances of the girl's death. (Xinhua)

'Malaysia only acting as a facilitator ahead of extraordinary meeting'

Thailand and Cambodia talks on positive track: Malaysian defense chief Mohd Nizam

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 5, (Agencies): Thailand and Cambodia have expressed strong commitments to end conflict in secretariat-level discussions, Malaysia's Chief of Defense Forces General Mohd Nizam Jaffar said here on Monday.

The talks, scheduled from Aug 4 to 6 ahead of an extraordinary General Border Committee (GBC) meeting on Aug 7, will also cover the terms of reference for establishing an ASEAN defense attaché monitoring team, Mohd Nizam said. "They (Thailand and Cambodia) are now discussing the prerequisites for the team's deployment. If all goes well, we are expecting a very positive resolution by this Thursday," he told reporters after meeting with both secretariat heads.

He said that Malaysia is only acting as a facilitator ahead of the extraordinary meeting.

The July 28 ceasefire followed economic pressure from US President Donald Trump, who had warned the warring nations that the US would not conclude trade deals with them if the fighting persisted. Washington lowered tariffs on goods from the two countries from 36%

to 19% on Aug. 1 following the truce.

Monday's talks focused on ironing out details to avoid further clashes. Discussions of the decades-long competing territorial claims over the pockets of land near the shared border are not on the agenda.

Thailand and Cambodia have been feuding neighbors for centuries, since both were mighty empires. In modern times, a 1962 ruling by the International Court of Justice awarding Cambodia the land on which the ancient Preah Vihear temple stands marked a new low point in relations, and other border territory remained claimed by both countries.

Fighting erupted in 2011 at Preah Vihear, after which the ICJ in 2013 reaffirmed its earlier ruling, rankling Thailand. Relations deteriorated again sharply in May this year, when a Cambodian soldier was shot dead in a brief fracas in one of the disputed border zones, setting off diplomatic and trade sanctions, one against the other.

Soon after two incidents last month in which Thai soldiers were wounded by land mines in disputed territory - for which Thailand blamed Cambodia



Thai and Cambodian officials sit together in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Aug 4. (Xinhua)

- the two sides downgraded diplomatic relations and fighting broke out, each side blaming the other for starting the armed clashes.

The talks this week will include fi-

nalizing details and scope of reference for an ASEAN monitoring team, Malaysian Chief of Defense Forces Gen. Mohamad Nizam Jaffar said Monday.

Despite some reports of attacks after

the ceasefire came into effect, Nizam said such incidents were typical spillover violence and both sides showed strong commitment during Monday's talks to uphold the ceasefire.

The main session of the General Border Committee on Thursday will be led by Thai Deputy Defense Minister Gen. Natthaphon Nakpanit and Cambodian Defense Minister Tea Sei, who also serves as deputy prime minister, and include observers from Malaysia, the United States and China, officials said.

Despite the truce, tensions have persisted as both countries organized tours of the former battle areas for foreign diplomats and other observers to highlight damage allegedly caused by the other side. The two countries also continue to accuse each other of having violated international humanitarian laws with attacks on civilians and the use of illegal weapons.

The propaganda war continues with accusations, denials, and cries of "fake news," while supporters of each side also tangle on social media.

Each side has blamed the other for starting the fighting and for indiscrimi-

nately targeting civilian sites with long-range weapons such as artillery and rockets, and using prohibited weapons.

The hottest issue is Cambodia's allegations that Thailand has mistreated and tortured a squad of captured Cambodian soldiers. Two wounded members of the 20-man Cambodian group were repatriated on Friday.

However, Thai officials said Monday that the soldiers "qualify as prisoners of war" and "will be released and repatriated only when the armed conflict ends," which it considers a separate matter from last week's ceasefire.

Thai military spokesperson Rear Admiral Surasant Kongsiri said at a news briefing Monday that Thailand has invited representatives from the International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC, and the U.N.'s Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, OHCHR, "to visit the detained Cambodian soldiers on site." Cambodia had called for such access.

Neither the ICRC nor the OHCHR responded to a query from The Associated Press asking about any communications with the two governments.

Brazil's Supreme Court orders house arrest for former president Bolsonaro

SAO PAULO, Aug 5, (AP): Brazil's Supreme Court on Monday ordered the house arrest for former president Jair Bolsonaro, on trial for allegedly masterminding a coup plot to remain in office despite his defeat in the 2022 election - a case that has gripped the South American country as it faces a trade war with the Trump administration.

Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who oversees the case against Bolsonaro before the top court, said in his decision that the 70-year-old former president had violated precautionary measures imposed on him by spreading content through his three lawmaker sons.

Bolsonaro's lawyers said in a statement that he will appeal the decision. They said his words "good afternoon, Copacabana, good afternoon my Brazil, a hug to everyone, this is for our freedom" - broadcast from a cell phone of one of his sons during a Sunday protest in Rio de Janeiro - cannot "be regarded as ignoring precautionary measures or as a criminal act."

The trial of the far-right leader is receiving renewed attention after US President Donald Trump directly tied a 50% tariff on imported Brazilian goods to his ally's judicial situation. Trump has called the proceedings a "witch hunt," triggering nationalist reactions from leaders of all branches of power in Brazil, in-



Supporters of former president Jair Bolsonaro protest in a car caravan, passing a giant screen announcing his house arrest, ordered by Brazil's Supreme Court on Aug 4 in Brasilia, Brazil. (AP)

cluding President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Hours after the decision, the US State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs said on X that the Trump administration "condemns (de) Moraes' order imposing house arrest on Bolsonaro and will hold accountable all those aiding and abetting sanctioned conduct."

"Putting even more restrictions on Jair Bolsonaro's ability to defend

himself in public is not a public service. Let Bolsonaro speak!" the US State Department body said.

Brazil's government has not commented on the case.

Brazil's prosecutors accuse Bolsonaro of heading a criminal organization that plotted to overturn the election, including plans to kill Lula and Justice de Moraes after the far-right leader narrowly lost his reelection bid in 2022.

Modi and Trump once called each other good friends, now US-India relationship gets bumpy

NEW DELHI, Aug 5, (AP): The men shared bear hugs, showered praise on each other and made appearances side by side at stadium rallies - a big optics boost for two populist leaders with ideological similarities. Each called the other a good friend.

In India, the bonhomie between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump was seen as a relationship like no other. That is, until a series of events gummed up the works.

From Trump's tariffs and India's purchase of oil from Russia to a US tilt toward Pakistan, friction between New Delhi and Washington has been hard to miss. And much of it has happened far from the corridors of power and, unsurprisingly, through Trump's posts on social media.

It has left policy experts wondering whether the camaraderie the two leaders shared may be a thing of the past, even though Trump has stopped short of referring to Modi directly on social media. The dip in rapport, some say, puts a strategic bilateral relationship built over decades at risk.

"This is a testing time for the relationship," said Ashok Malik, a former policy adviser in India's Foreign Ministry.

The White House did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

The latest hiccup between India and the US emerged last week when Trump announced that he was slapping 25% tariffs on India as well as an



Students of Gurukul School of Art work on paintings of US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, in Mumbai, India on Aug 1. (AP)

unspecified penalty because of India's purchasing of Russian oil. For New Delhi, such a move from its largest trading partner is expected to be felt across sectors, but it also led to a sense of unease in India - even more so when Trump, on social media, called India's economy "dead."

Trump's recent statements reflect his frustration with the pace of trade talks with India, according to a White House official who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity to describe internal administration thinking. The Republican president has not been pursuing

any strategic realignment with Pakistan, according to the official, but is instead trying to play hardball in negotiations.

Trump doubled down on the pressure Monday with a fresh post on Truth Social, in which he accused India of buying "massive amounts" of oil from Russia and then "selling it on the Open Market for big profits."

"They don't care how many people in Ukraine are being killed by the Russian War Machine. Because of this, I will be substantially raising the Tariff paid by India to the USA," he said.

Argentina's Milei vetoes pension and disability spending increases, citing fiscal deficit pledge

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, Aug 5, (AP): Libertarian President Javier Milei on Monday vetoed an attempt to increase spending on pensions in Argentina and a law expanding protections for people with disabilities, saying the legislation would have undermined his flagship pledge to eliminate the country's chronic fiscal deficit before October's midterm elections.

In publishing the veto decisions, Milei's administration said that Congress last month passed the spending bills - meant to more fully compensate retirees for inflation and offer more financial benefits for people with disabilities - "without determining the source of the funds." It said the bills "contradicted (Milei's) popular mandate" to bring down inflation.

Since coming to power in late 2023, Milei has vetoed all efforts to boost public spending, often wielding the slogan "there is no money" against people's demands that he restore subsidies. The government projects that the additional expenditures, including a 7.2% pension increase, will amount to about 0.9% of gross domestic product this year and 1.68% next year.



Argentine President Javier Milei speaks during the opening ceremony of the Rural Society's annual exposition, in Buenos Aires, Argentina on July 26. (AP)

"This president prefers to tell an uncomfortable truth rather than repeat comfortable lies: There is no money," the government said. Spinning off the slogan of his ally, U.S. President Don-

ald Trump, it added: "The only way to make Argentina great again is with effort and honesty, not the same old recipes."

Last year Milei racked up Argentina's first annual fiscal surplus in 14 years by making painful cuts to social spending and public works. The austerity measures helped drive down Argentina's monthly inflation rate to below 2% in June for the first time in five years, compared to more than 25% when Milei entered office in December 2023.

But the fiscal shock program has also deepened economic misery for many Argentines: Unemployment has climbed, wages adjusted for inflation have declined and prices are still up 40% year-on-year.

Congress can still overturn these vetoes with a two-thirds majority in both chambers, a challenge for Milei's libertarian party, which holds only a small minority of seats.

Milei, whose relationship with lawmakers has been tense ever since he took office, last year managed to win enough votes from his party's closest ally, the conservative PRO bloc, to prevent the pension increases.

IS-linked fighters displace over 46,000 people in northern Mozambique: UN

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Aug 5, (AP): Attacks by insurgents in Mozambique's northern Cabo Delgado province displaced more than 46,000 people in the space of eight days last month, the United Nations migration agency said Monday.

The International Organization for Migration said nearly 60% of those forced from their homes were children. There have been no reports of deaths in the attacks.

In a separate report, the UN's humanitarian office said the wave of attacks between July 20 and July 28 across three districts in Cabo Delgado caused the surge in displacements.

The southern African nation has been fighting an insurgency by Islamic State-affiliated militants in the north for at least eight years. Rwandan soldiers have been deployed to help Mozambique fight them.

The jihadis have been accused of beheading villagers and kidnapping children to be used as laborers or child soldiers. The U.N. estimates that the violence, and the impact of drought and several cyclones in recent years, has led to the displacement of more than 1 million people in northern Mozambique.

Doctors Without Borders said it has launched an emergency response to help thousands of recently displaced people who now live in camps in Chiure, the district that experienced the worst of the attacks.

Also:

BAMAKO, Mali: Four Moroccan truck drivers, who were kidnapped in January in West Africa by the Islamic State



In this image made from video, Mozambican soldiers ride on an armored vehicle in a convoy driving to Mocimboa da Praia, Cabo Delgado province, Mozambique on Aug. 9, 2021. (AP)

group and held captive for months, were released late Sunday, Malian authorities said.

The truckers were traveling 3,000 miles to transport electrical equipment from Casablanca to Niamey, the capital of Niger, before they were reported missing on January 18, 2025, in northeastern Burkina Faso, near the border with Niger.

Kuwaiti oil falls \$2.56 to \$72.47 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil dropped by USD 2.56 to USD 72.47 per barrel on Monday, compared to Friday's USD 75.03 pb, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation announced on Tuesday.

The prices of Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate also declined in the global markets by 91 cents and USD 1.04 respectively, settling each at USD 68.76 per barrel and USD 66.29 pb.

OPEC sees road transport, aviation driving oil demand

VIENNA, Aug 5, (KUNA): The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) expected on Monday that road transport, petrochemicals and aviation are key for future oil demand growth. The transportation sector accounted for more than 57 percent of global oil demand in 2024 and, with minor variations, is projected to retain this share over the entire forecast period, the OPEC said in a

post on X, citing its annual oil report for 2025. Within this sector, the largest incremental oil demand is expected in road transportation and aviation, adding 5.3 million barrels per day (mb/d) and 4.2 mb/d, respectively, it added. A significant demand increase of 4.7 mb/d is also projected in the petrochemical sector, the OPEC indicated.

All Share Index gains 0.38%

Boursa Kuwait closes higher

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait concluded Tuesday's trading session with the All Share Index rising by 32.77 points, or 0.38 percent, closing at 8,583.51 points. The session saw 339.8 million shares exchanged through 26,224 transactions, amounting to a total value of KD 83.3 million (USD 254 million).

The Main Market Index dropped 25.76 points, equivalent to 0.34 percent, finishing at 7,622.44 points, with trading volume at 212.6 million shares from 18,375

transactions, valued at KD 36.7 million (USD 111.9 million). Conversely, the Premier Market Index gained 49 points, or 0.53 percent, ending at 9,247.43 points, with 127.2 million shares traded over 7,849 transactions, for a value of KD 46.6 million (USD 142.12 million). Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index increased by 14.89 points, or 0.20 percent, to stand at 7,587.98 points, with 139.9 million shares traded via 7,225 cash transactions, worth KD 20.11 million (about USD 61.3 million).

Kamco Invest adopts Bloomberg AIM and PORT to boost efficiency

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Bloomberg announced that Kamco Invest, a leading regional asset manager with around \$17 billion in assets under management, has adopted Bloomberg's AIM and PORT Enterprise solutions to optimize its investment operations, improve efficiency, and reduce risk.

Kamco Invest will utilize Bloomberg AIM, a leading order and investment management solution, to optimize front-office processes, from order generation to trade execution and fund holdings reconciliation. Integrated into this workflow is PORT Enterprise, which will provide advanced portfolio and risk analytics, equipping the investment team of Kamco Invest with deeper insights to enhance decision-making and client engagement.

Salah Al Wuhaib, Managing Director of Equity and Fixed Income, said: "As one of the region's largest asset managers, we continuously seek cutting-edge solutions to elevate our investment process. The integration of Bloomberg AIM and PORT Enterprise not only strengthens our commitment to efficiency and data-driven decision-making but also serves as an optimal solution to enhance value creation for our clients."

This expanded collaboration builds on Bloomberg's longstanding relationship with Kamco Invest, which has historically utilized Bloomberg Terminals and its market leading data sets. With the addition of AIM and PORT Enterprise, Kamco Invest has a comprehensive suite of seamlessly integrated buy-side tools, bringing automation and efficiency to both portfolio management and middle-office operations.

Rajiv Mirwani, Head of Middle East & Africa Sales, Bloomberg, said "We are delighted to support Kamco Invest as they transform their investment operations with Bloomberg's buy-side solutions. As a long-term partner to asset managers across the region, we understand the challenges and opportunities they face. By integrating our technology and data solutions, Kamco Invest can enhance decision-making, streamline workflows, and scale efficiently in an increasingly complex investment landscape. We look forward to working closely with their team to drive innovation and operational excellence."

Bloomberg's solutions will support Kamco Invest's front office by improving portfolio management, electronic trading, portfolio construction, optimization, and reporting. For compliance and middle-office teams, it



Salah Al Wuhaib, Managing Director of Equity and Fixed Income, Kamco Invest



Rajiv Mirwani, Head of MEA Sales, Bloomberg LP

will automate workflows such as compliance monitoring, trade reconciliation, and corporate action processing, while also integrating with the back office and custodians to enhance efficiency and transparency.

With this adoption, Kamco Invest is reinforcing its commitment to leveraging advanced technology to deliver enhanced investment management services and its ability to scale assets under management while maintaining operational resilience.

Bloomberg Buy-Side Solutions delivers front-to-back technology workflows for the investment lifecycle through a suite of integrated offerings. Bloomberg AIM comprises multi-asset decision support and portfolio management, order management, trade compliance and post-trade workflows. Bloomberg AIM is used by nearly 15,000 professionals at over 900 client firms globally to manage more than \$22 trillion in assets.

PORT and PORT Enterprise provide portfolio and risk analytics with advanced risk and return attribution models across 15,000 firms globally empowering clients to gain deeper insights into portfolios. Together, these solutions manage integrated workflows of more than 200 shared clients, including over 100 of the world's top asset managers by AUM. For more information, visit Bloomberg Buy-Side Solutions.



Iraqi Prime Minister receives Lebanese Minister of Labor.

KUNA photo

Business

The pioneering and first in Kuwait initiative

NBK celebrates the graduation of NBK Tech Wave 2



Graduation of NBK Tech Academy Wave 2

Najla Al-Sager:

- The Academy is an embodiment of our commitment to enhancing digital talents and increasing technology-field experiences.
- We will continue to invest in digital talents to ensure a continuous flow of distinguished competencies.
- Not only is NBK investing in enhancing its future capabilities but it's also contributing to shaping the future of banking services in Kuwait.
- We aim to prepare a highly tech-skilled banking generation.
- The academy plays a pivotal role in developing digital competencies in Kuwait.

increasing technology-field experiences. This academy plays a pivotal role in developing digital competencies, as it contributed to qualifying the recent graduates and equipping them with the necessary technical and professional skills, further providing for them opportunities to work at the bank's digital and data departments".

Al-Sager also added: "The success of this wave reflects the program's efficiency in preparing a generation of digital leaders. The program has been designed to encompass inclusiveness and innovation and provide exceptional opportunities for the trainees to delve into a wide range of recent tech-related developments through orientation and role alternation, which contributes to aiding them with strategic visions about working at the bank and qualifying them to operate in real workplaces

with remarkable efficiency".

Moreover, she further commented: "We will continue to develop young professionals by equipping them with the necessary skills to cope with the accelerating digital developments to prepare a highly efficient generation of banker from different backgrounds and fields. This consequently will ensure a continued flow of distinguished competencies that contribute to the growth of digital transformation".

Al-Sager emphasized that the NBK Tech Academy reflects the bank's insightful vision and keen interest in the accelerating requirements of the digital age, and its awareness of the importance of developing and nurturing highly skilled talents in vital fields such as information systems and security, data science, and computer science.

Al-Sager also pointed out that not only is NBK investing in enhancing

its future capabilities but it's also contributing to shaping the future of banking services in Kuwait.

NBK is striving to maintain its leadership among private sector institutions that consistently attracts, upsills, and qualifies national talents for the banking sector. Moreover, NBK has the highest employee retention rates and it's the workplace of choice for Kuwaiti talents and competencies, in addition to being the largest national employer among private sector institutions in Kuwait.

It's worth noting that NBK Tech Academy is an integral part of the broader NBK Academy, which was established in 2008 lasting for over 15 years. To date, the academy has graduated 29 waves, many of whom have become key members of the bank's workforce, having paved the way for them to join the banking sector.

Domestic credit grows 2.9% in Q2, 4.6% YTD

Kuwait: Resilient business credit growth and improving household lending in Q2

By National Bank of Kuwait

Domestic credit growth remained solid in Q2 (+2.9%), driving up the YTD increase to 4.6%. Growth in Q2 was lifted by credit for securities purchase and lending to banks and financial institutions while business credit remained broadly resilient and household credit growth improved. Business credit can continue benefiting from the overall improving trend in project awards as seen in 2023-2024, despite a relatively soft H1 this year, and especially in the context of the government's debt issuance plans that should enable higher spending on projects. The recent sharp weakness in the US labor market has materially raised the odds for interest rate cuts in the US, although a pick-up in US inflation could continue to complicate matters for the Fed. Lower interest rates in Kuwait should support credit growth, especially household, but the game changer for household credit will be the potential approval of a housing finance law.

Within business lending (+1.5% q/q, +4.1% YTD), growth so far this year has been broad-based with 'other services' (+7.3% YTD), 'trade' (+5.9%), and 'industry' (+4.5%) in the lead. The heavyweight real estate sector continued its recovery, lifting YTD growth to 3.5%. On the other hand, 'construction', after surging by a CAGR of 16% over 2022-2024, has taken a breather in the last few quarters, with y/y growth falling to just 2.3% while the oil/gas sector disappointed after displaying some early signs of a recovery in late-2024 and early-2025. For project awards, while Q1 and Q2 were both relatively weak, these followed three strong quarters while y/y growth remains positive at 12%. Meanwhile, household credit continued its gradual recovery

with growth strengthening to 0.9% q/q, which lifted the y/y increase to 3.5%, more than double the 1.5% recorded in 2023. We note that in both 2023 and 2024, household credit was much stronger in the second half of the year than in the first half. As mentioned before, credit growth in Q2 was strongly lifted by credit for securities purchase and lending to banks and financial institutions, which in fact have accounted for nearly half of the total credit growth YTD (4.6%).

Private-sector deposits driving overall deposit growth as government deposits continued to drop

Resident deposits inched higher in Q2 lifting YTD growth to 1.7%. This continued to be driven by private-sector deposits (78% of total deposits), which increased by 1.4% q/q (3.4% YTD). The weakness in government deposits continued, as they fell for the third straight quarter, taking their y/y decrease to 11% after increasing by double digits for most of the past three years. Within private-sector KD deposits, CASA have outstripped time deposits for the second straight quarter, and are up by 4.2% YTD. We note that non-resident deposits (8% of total deposits), after falling for three straight years (down a sharp 22% in 2024), made a come-back surging by 38% (KD 1.3 billion) YTD.

US labor market weakness raised odds for US rate cuts but an inflation pick-up could still complicate matters

Following the recent weakness in the US labor market, the futures market is now indicating two-to-three rate cuts before year-end. However, a pick-up in US inflation due to tariffs or upcoming data points showing better-than-feared deterioration in the labor market could put the Fed back in a wait-and-see mode.

Table 1: Credit growth					
Credit	Jun-2025	% growth			
	KD billions	q/q	YTD	y/y	2024
Business	25.1	1.5	4.1	5.9	4.0
of which Real Estate	10.5	0.9	3.5	7.0	5.7
Household	19.6	0.9	1.3	3.5	3.0
Securities	4.4	17.1	17.9	24.3	9.5
Banks & financial instit.	2.6	12.5	16.6	5.7	-3.0
Total domestic credit	51.7	2.9	4.6	6.3	3.6
Non-resident credit	8.1	4.3	4.4	13.1	31.9
Total credit	59.8	3.1	4.6	7.1	6.7

Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

Table 2: Deposit growth					
Deposits	Jun-2025	% growth			
	KD billions	q/q	YTD	y/y	2024
Private sector	40.3	1.4	3.4	4.7	4.5
of which Time dep.	23.1	1.0	3.4	6.7	8.5
of which CASA dep.	15.3	1.8	4.2	2.6	-1.1
Public Institutions	6.6	0.4	0.6	13.5	-2.3
Government	4.4	-6.2	-10.2	-11.2	5.7
Total resident dep.	51.4	0.5	1.7	4.2	3.6
Non-resident deposits	4.6	13.4	38.2	33.8	-22.2
Total deposits	56.0	1.5	4.0	6.1	1.5

Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

Joint business council, labor movement in focus

Iraq, Lebanon discuss boosting economic cooperation

BAGHDAD, Aug 5, (KUNA): Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Al-Sudani held talks on Tuesday with the visiting Lebanese Minister of Labor Mohammad Haidar on mutual cooperation in the economic and investment spheres.

The premier's press office said in a statement the talks between Al-Sudani and Haidar dealt with regional issues, cooperation in the economic, communication sectors, activating the joint business council and regulating

labor movement between the two states.

Al-Sudani expressed support for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and Haidar affirmed Beirut's desire to expand the economic cooperation with Baghdad.

Iraq has supplied fuel to Lebanon to run its power generators and Beirut offers medical treatment to Iraqis at preferential prices.

Net profit reaches KD 342.1 mln, EPS at 19.23 fils

KFH holds H1-2025 earnings webcast

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held the earnings webcast for highlighting the Group’s financial performance and results during H1-2025. The webcast was attended by KFH Group Chief Executive Officer, Khaled AlShamlan, Group Chief Strategy Officer, Eng. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem, and Acting Group Chief Financial Officer and General Manager Investments, Planning and Reporting, Yameen Abdulsattar.

Group Chief Executive Officer – Khaled AlShamlan

KFH Group Chief Executive Officer, Khaled AlShamlan commenced the meeting by shedding light on the Bank’s financial performance for H1-2025.

He said that KFH has reported a net profit to the shareholders of KD 342.1 million for H1 2025. Earnings per share reached 19.23 fils for H1 2025. Net financing income for H1 2025 reached KD 607.3 million, reflecting a growth of 8.7 % compared to the same period last year. Total operating income also saw a significant rise, reaching KD 876 million, with an increase of 6.4% compared to H1 2024. Additionally, Net operating income for the first half of the year reached KD 566.7 million; an increase of 7.9 % compared to the same period last year.

The cost-to-income ratio for H1-25 improved to 35.3% compared to 36.2% for the same period last year. Financing receivables at the end of the first half of 2025 reached KD 20.4 billion, an increase of 7.1 % compared to the end of last year. Total assets at the end of the first half of 2025 amounted to KD 38.5 billion, an increase of 4.9% compared to the end of last year. Shareholders’ equity increased to reach KD 5.6 billion, and depositors’ accounts totaled KD 19.7 billion an increase of 2.7% compared to the end of last year. The capital adequacy ratio remained strong at 18.01 %, well above regulatory requirements, emphasizing the strength of KFH financial position.

AlShamlan added: “KFH continues to lead the banking sector and the Kuwaiti market in profitability. We are proud of this achievement since it comes despite the challenging operating environment and geopolitical tension in the region. Our success stems from carefully implemented plans that ensure sustainable profits and maintain the highest financial indicators, while upholding a solid financial position and performance.”

KFH is consistently enhancing its operational efficiency, increasing revenues, and optimizing its capabilities in line with global standards. This approach will improve asset quality, enhance risk management, and help the bank rationalize expenses.

AlShamlan mentioned: “A key focus area has been enhancing integration across our Group banks. The KFH Group Service Center, which currently provides centralized support for our operations in Turkey and Egypt, has been instrumental in driving operational efficiencies and improving customer service. We plan to expand this model to additional markets in the near future, creating further synergies across our network.”

He pointed out that KFH brand unification strategy reached an important milestone



Khaled AlShamlan



Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem



Yameen Abdulsattar

with the successful rebranding of Ahli United Bank - Bahrain as Kuwait Finance House-Bahrain. This move complements a series of achievements realized under the new brand identity “Beyond Horizons” across the Bank’s major markets, including Kuwait, the United Kingdom, and Egypt. This initiative is part of KFH’s expansion strategy as a global leader in Islamic banking. This launch marks the beginning of a new chapter of integration and excellence in banking services.

In the domestic market, AlShamlan said that KFH continues to play a leading role in financing Kuwait’s economic development. Its diverse Sharia-compliant financing solutions support projects across all sectors, from large infrastructure developments to SME growth initiatives. The Bank maintain its position as the preferred partner for major syndicated financing deals, leveraging its expertise in structuring innovative Islamic financing solutions.

He emphasized that digital innovation continues to be a key differentiator for KFH. The launch of “Fahad”, Kuwait’s first AI-powered virtual banking assistant, represents a significant milestone in KFH digital transformation journey. Additionally, KFH greatly enhanced KFHOnline app, which now offers customers access to over 200 digital banking services, one of the most comprehensive digital offerings in the region.

AlShamlan concluded: “Looking ahead, we remain focused on executing our strategy of sustainable growth through synergies, AI Driven digital innovation, and value creation for all our stakeholders, especially our customers. Our strong financial position, diversified business model, and talented team position us well to capitalize on emerging opportunities while navigating potential challenges in the economic environment.”

Group Chief Strategy Officer – Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem

Meanwhile, KFH Group Chief Strategy Officer, Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem shared insights into Kuwait’s economic landscape and KFH’s strategic progress during the first half of the year.

He said: “Global real GDP growth is forecasted to reach 2.8% in 2025, down from prior estimates of 3.3%, with a modest recovery to 3.0% expected in 2026. This slowdown reflects rising trade tensions, policy uncertainty, and geopolitical risks affecting major economies like the U.S. and China.

Al-Mukhaizeem added: “Kuwait’s economy remains robust, with real GDP growth projected at 1.9% in 2025, rebounding from a 2.8% contraction in 2024. This growth is driven by increased oil production and steady non-oil sector expansion, sup-

AIShamlan:

- KFH demonstrated a robust financial performance with integrated and diversified revenues that support sustainable growth
- KFH's is well-positioned to capitalize on emerging opportunities and face challenges

Al-Mukhaizeem:

- KFH continues to reinforce its leadership in Islamic banking and support Kuwait's economic vision

Abdulsattar:

- KFH achieved comprehensive growth across key financial indicators

ported by diversification efforts and growing private sector participation. Stable sovereign credit ratings of A+ by (S&P), A1 by (Moody’s), and AA- by (Fitch Ratings), underscore confidence in Kuwait’s fiscal and institutional strength.

He mentioned that Kuwait’s project market excelled in H1 2025, with awarded contracts surging 37.5% year-on-year to USD 3.3 billion, driven by increased investments in key sectors such as transport, power, and a revival in upstream oil projects. This momentum is expected to continue in H2 2025, as the government advances strategic projects aligned with Kuwait Vision 2035. Several high-value tenders in oil projects are in progress and anticipated to be awarded.

Al-Mukhaizeem pointed out: “The annual Inflation Rate eased to almost 2.3% in June 2025 down from average of 2.9% in 2024, reflecting the Central Bank of Kuwait’s prudent monetary policy. The Central Bank of Kuwait “CBK” has maintained the discount rate at 4%, unchanged since September 2024, ensuring a balanced approach to economic stability.”

He affirmed that Kuwait’s banking sector remains strong, underpinned by robust regulation and ample liquidity.

KFH delivered exceptional financial results in H1 2025, driven by its diversified business model. With solid capital, innovative digital capabilities, and an expanding regional presence, KFH is well positioned to support Kuwait’s long-term economic vision while reinforcing its leadership in Islamic banking.

On the innovation and technology front, KFH is dedicated to adopting innovative fintech solutions to enhance operational efficiency and customer experience. The Group is strongly committed to fostering synergy across its international branches, prioritizing seamless integration, knowledge sharing, and unified strategies to drive operational excellence and reinforce its global network. KFH continues to expand its global Sharia-compliant banking footprint, capitalizing on its regional presence post-acquisition, and seizing strategic opportunities to enhance its presence in key markets and solidify its status as a leading international Islamic financial institution.

“With the Central Bank of

Kuwait issuing a draft regulatory framework for open banking, KFH is well positioned, given its digital track record and market leadership, building on its success of offering innovative services and seamless digital onboarding platforms,” commented Al-Mukhaizeem.

From a legislative standpoint, the implementation of the Real Estate Developer Law is expected to boost private sector involvement in housing and infrastructure and help ease the housing backlog, while the proposed Mortgage Law is expected to streamline property processes and expand access to long-term, Sharia-compliant housing finance. These reforms foster a transparent and inclusive development model.

Al-Mukhaizeem further noted: “Kuwait’s capital market sustained strong momentum

in H1 2025, with the market capitalization of all listed companies in Boursa Kuwait increasing 23.2% year-on-year to KD 50.5 billion and traded volume recording 25.2 billion shares in Q2 2025 nearly doubling vs Q2 2024. KFH, the largest listed company, saw its market capitalization grow by nearly 23% to KD 14.4 billion, reflecting strong investor confidence in its strategy and performance.

Acting Group Chief Financial Officer and General Manager Investments, Planning and Reporting – Yameen Abdulsattar

Acting Chief Financial Officer and General Manager Investments, Planning and Reporting at KFH Group, Yameen Abdulsattar said that the Group has achieved Net Profit After Tax attributable to Shareholders for the six months ended 30 June 2025 of KD 342.1mn higher by 0.3% compared to H1-24.

He noted that increase in net profit after tax attributable to shareholders is mainly from increase in total operating income and a decrease in net monetary loss, which is partly offset by increase in operating expenses, provision charge and taxes.

Net financing income at KD 607.3mn increased by KD 48.5mn, or 8.7% compared to

same period last year mainly due to increase in financing income by KD 47.3mn and decrease in finance cost and distribution to depositors by KD 1.3mn.

Net Operating income at KD 566.7mn increased by KD 41.3mn, or 7.9% compared to same period last year.

Looking at the total operating income profile, contribution of net financing income to total operating income increased from 67.86% in H1-24 to 69.33% in H1-25 mainly driven by an increase in net financing income.

Cost to income ratio for H1-25 improved, representing 35.30% compared to 36.19% for H1-24.

Looking at provisions and impairments, Group total impairment charge increased by KD 7.5mn compared to H1-24.

KFH cautious approach towards provisioning have contributed to financing provision balance exceeding ECL required as per CBK IFRS 9 by KD 494mn as of 30 June 2025.

On the financial position front, Abdulsattar added that Total Assets at KD 38.5bn increased by KD 1.8bn, or 4.9% in Jun-25 compared to Dec-2024.

Net financing receivables at KD 20.4bn increased by KD 1.4bn, or 7.1% compared to Dec-2024, mainly on account of increase in corporate portfolio.

Deposits for H1-25 at KD 19.7bn have increased by KD 510mn, or 2.7% compared to Dec-2024, mainly due to increase in CASA deposits.

Looking at the funding mix, contribution of customer deposits to total funding as of 30 June 2025 is 64.6% followed by due to banks and FI at 30.5%.

These results reflected growth across all key financial indicators during the period.



KFH headquarters

Sessions held with strong participation from female leaders and employees, supporting growth and inclusion

Gulf Bank continues driving women’s empowerment with WOW program

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: As part of its ongoing commitment to women’s empowerment and fostering an inclusive workplace, Gulf Bank recently organized a series of events under its Women of Wisdom (WOW) program. The events, attended by numerous female leaders and employees, aimed to support women both professionally and personally.

The leadership session titled “The Elegant Power: How Women Lead with Strength and Warmth,” was held at Gulf Bank’s training center in Crystal Tower. The session was facilitated by Dina Al-Waheab, a organizational psychologist, executive coach, and founder of DEEP Consulting and SpeakUp Kuwait.

The session focused on the importance of balancing assertiveness and warmth in female leadership by exploring the psychological and physiological factors that influence leadership behaviors. Key topics included the unique pressures women face in the workplace, the impact of mental health and hormones on leadership style, and practical tools to boost confidence and leadership presence.

Another engaging session titled “Speak Your Brand” was delivered by renowned coach and consultant Rehab Al-Tawari, which drew strong engagement from early career employees across various departments. The session emphasized the power of personal branding in the workplace and encouraged employees to own their narratives, communicate with confidence, and align their values with their professional goals.

In addition, Gulf Bank launched a new wellness initiative for female employees called “Her Balance”, designed to promote work-life balance through regular Pilates Reformer and Barre sessions. This wellness experience supports both physical and mental health.

“Her Balance” also provides an excellent opportunity for employees to connect with colleagues beyond the workplace, fostering teamwork, inclusion, and positivity within the work environment.

peaking about the sessions, Mr. Hamed AlTamimi, Assistant General Manager – Human Resources at Gulf Bank said:

“At Gulf Bank, we believe that a thriving workplace culture is one where employees feel seen, supported, and inspired. Through the Women of Wisdom (WOW) program, we’re creating intentional spaces for dialogue, development, and connection – empowering women across all stages of their careers to grow, lead, and shape our culture....”

He added; “These initiatives reflect Gulf Bank’s clear strategic commitment to supporting female talent and creating a healthy, motivating work environment that enhances productivity and job satisfaction. They also align with the Bank’s broader efforts to advance diversity, inclusion, and build a balanced, sustainable corporate culture”.

Launched in 2017, the Women of Wisdom (WOW) program is a flagship internal initiative aimed at empowering women within the Bank and the wider community. It supports women’s career growth and leadership ambitions through monthly gatherings that discuss topics related to work-life balance and professional development.



Dina Al-Waheab gives the lecture.



Group photo of attendees.

Trump downplays bad data, fires official over jobs report

WASHINGTON, Aug 5, (AP): When the coronavirus surged during President Donald Trump’s first term, he called for a simple fix: Limit the amount of testing so the deadly outbreak looked less severe. When he lost the 2020 election, he had a ready-made reason: The vote count was fraudulent.

And on Friday, when the July jobs report revisions showed a distressed economy, Trump had an answer: He fired the official in charge of the data and called the report of a sharp slowdown in hiring “phony.”

Trump has a go-to playbook if the numbers reveal uncomfortable realities, and that’s to discredit or conceal the figures and to attack the messenger - all of which can hurt the president’s efforts to convince the world that America is getting stronger.

“Our democratic system and the strength of our private economy depend on the honest flow of information about our economy, our government and our society,” said Douglas Elmendorf, a Harvard University professor who was formerly director of the Congressional Budget Office. “The Trump administration is trying to suppress honest analysis.”

The president’s strategy carries significant risks for his own administration and a broader economy that depends on politics-free data. His denouncements threaten to lower trust in government and erode public accountability, and any manipulation of federal data could result in policy choices made on faulty numbers, causing larger problems for both the president and the country.

The White House disputes any claims that Trump wants to hide numbers that undermine his preferred narratives. It emphasized that Goldman Sachs found that the two-month revisions on the jobs report were the largest since 1968, outside of a recession, and that should be a source of concern regarding the integrity of the data. Trump’s aides say their fundamental focus is ensuring that any data gives an accurate view of reality.

Trump has a long history of dismissing data when it reflects poorly on him and extolling or even fabricating more favorable numbers, a pattern that includes his net worth, his family business, election results and government figures:

■ Judge Arthur Engoron ruled in a lawsuit brought by the state of New York that Trump and his company deceived banks, insurers and others by massively overvaluing his assets and exaggerating his net worth on paperwork used in making deals and securing loans.

- Trump has claimed that the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections were each rigged. Trump won the 2016 presidential election by clinching the Electoral College, but he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton, a sore spot that led him to falsely claim that millions of immigrants living in the country illegally had cast ballots. He lost the 2020 election to Joe Biden but falsely claimed he had won it, despite multiple lawsuits failing to prove his case.

■ In 2019, as Hurricane Dorian neared the East Coast, Trump warned Alabama that the storm was coming its way. Forecasters pushed back, saying Alabama was not at risk. Trump later displayed a map in the Oval Office that had been altered with a black Sharpie - his signature pen - to include Alabama in the potential path of the storm.

■ Trump’s administration has stopped posting reports on climate change, canceled studies on vaccine access and removed data on gender identity from government sites.

■ As pandemic deaths mounted, Trump suggested that there should be less testing. “When you do testing to that extent, you’re going to find more people,” Trump said at

a June 2020 rally in Oklahoma. “You’re going to find more cases. So I said to my people, ‘Slow the testing down, please.’”

While Trump’s actions have drawn outcry from economists, scientists and public interest groups, Elmendorf noted that Trump’s actions regarding economic data could be tempered by Congress, which could put limits on Trump by whom he chooses to lead federal agencies, for example.

“Outside observers can only do so much,” Elmendorf said. “The power to push back against the president rests with the Congress. They have not exercised that power, but they could.”

Kevin Hassett, director of the White House National Economic Council, took aim at the size of the downward revisions in the jobs report (a combined 258,000 reduction in May and June) to suggest that the report had credibility issues. He said Trump is focused on getting dependable numbers, despite the president linking the issue to politics by claiming the revisions were meant to make Republicans look bad.

“The president wants his own people there so that when we see the numbers, they’re more transparent and more reliable,” Hassett said Sunday on NBC News.

Jed Kolko, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics who oversaw the Census Bureau and Bureau of Economic Analysis during the Biden administration, stressed that revisions to the jobs data are standard. That’s because the numbers are published monthly, but not all surveys used are returned quickly enough to be in the initial publishing of the jobs report.

“Revisions solve the tension between timeliness and accuracy,” Kolko said. “We want timely data because policymakers and businesses and investors need to make decisions with the best data that’s available, but we also want accuracy.”

Kolko stressed the importance in ensuring that federal statistics are trustworthy not just for government policymakers but for the companies trying to gauge the overall direction of the economy when making hiring and investment choices.

“Businesses are less likely to make investments if they can’t trust data about how the economy is doing,” he said.

Not every part of the jobs report was deemed suspect by the Trump administration.

Before Trump ordered the firing of the Bureau of Labor Statistics commissioner, Erika McEntarfer, the White House rapid response social media account reposted a statement by Vice President JD Vance noting that native-born citizens were getting jobs and immigrants were not, drawing from data in the household tables in the jobs report.

Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer also trumpeted the findings on native-born citizens, noting on Fox Business Network’s “Varney & Co.” that they are accounting “for all of the job growth, and that’s key.”

During his first run for the presidency, Trump criticized the economic data as being fake only to fully embrace the positive numbers shortly after he first entered the White House in 2017.

The challenge of reliable data goes beyond economic figures to basic information on climate change and scientific research.

In July, taxpayer-funded reports on the problems climate change is creating for America and its population disappeared from government websites. The White House initially said NASA would post the reports in compliance with a 1990 law, but the agency later said it would not because any legal obligations were already met by having reports submitted to Congress.

As part of the Bank’s efforts to offer customer-focused financial solutions

KIB signs agreement with BSK to offer zero-profit tuition installment service

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has announced the signing of a partnership agreement with The British School of Kuwait (BSK), allowing parents to benefit from a convenient tuition installment service. This initiative aims to expand access to quality education while offering families a more flexible and manageable approach to covering tuition fees. The agreement was unveiled during a press conference held at the school, attended by KIB’s General Manager of Retail Banking Othman Tawfeq, and BSK’s Founder and Director – Madam Vera Al-Mutawa MBE, along with several representatives from both sides.

Commenting on the new partnership, Othman Tawfeq, General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, stated: “We are proud to partner with The British School of Kuwait, one of the oldest and most prestigious educational institutions in the country, renowned for its long-standing commitment to delivering high-quality education in line with the highest international standards. In recognition of BSK’s vital role in Kuwait’s educational landscape, we are pleased to offer a zero-profit tuition installment plan, designed to facilitate access to quality education and support families in managing their educational expenses with greater ease and flexibility.”

He added: “KIB consistently strives to offer innovative financial solutions that cater to the needs of our customers and the community at large, and this agreement is a clear reflection of that commitment. We understand that education costs can pose a challenge for many families, which is why we were keen to introduce a flexible, zero-profit payment system that offers parents peace of mind and supports better financial planning. This new partnership between KIB and BSK stands as a model of effective collaboration between the financial and education sectors, opening new opportunities for students in Kuwait to access high-quality education.”

On his part, Abdulrahman Al Bahar, Direct Sales Manager at KIB, said: “The installment payment system allows parents to pay tuition fees



KIB, BSK partner on tuition installment plan.

in manageable installments, without any added profit charges. This is what makes the offer truly unique, particularly within the private education sector. More importantly, KIB has ensured that this service is accessible to everyone, with no requirement to transfer salaries to the Bank or be an existing KIB customer. This underscores KIB’s commitment to offering inclusive and accessible banking solutions to a wide segment of society, reflecting its effort to support social and economic development and its new strategy to deepen customer relationships.”

From her side, Mme Vera stated: “This partnership with KIB reflects our commitment at The British School of Kuwait (BSK) to supporting families who are investing in their children’s future. By offering flexible payment options, we’re making it easier for families to access the highest quality education in an environment that nurtures growth, curiosity, and lifelong learning.”

It is worth noting that this agreement is part of a broader series of initiatives and partnerships that KIB is establishing across various sectors in Kuwait, aimed at providing flexible and accessible payment solutions for both citizens and residents. KIB has a strong track record of forging strategic partnerships with leading companies and institutions in diverse fields, including education. This diversity reflects the Bank’s comprehensive strategy to deliver added value to its customers and meet their evolving needs, in line with its main slogan “Bank for Life.”

G7 oil price cap evaded via shadow fleet

Trump urges China, India to stop buying Russian oil

WASHINGTON, Aug 5, (AP): U.S. President Donald Trump is pushing China and India to stop buying oil from Russia and helping fund the Kremlin’s war against Ukraine.

Trump is raising the issue as he seeks to press Russian President Vladimir Putin to agree to a ceasefire.

But cheap Russian oil benefits refiners in those countries as well as meeting their needs for energy, and they’re not showing any inclination to halt the practice.

China, India and Turkey are the biggest recipients of oil that used to go to the European Union. The EU’s decision to boycott most Russian seaborne oil from January 2023 led to a massive shift in crude flows from Europe to Asia.

Since then, China has been the No. 1 overall purchaser of Russian energy since the EU boycott, with some \$219.5 billion worth of Russian oil, gas and coal, followed by India with \$133.4 billion and Turkey with \$90.3 billion. Before the invasion, India imported relatively little



An oil tanker is moored at the Sheshkharis complex, part of Chernomortransneft JSC, a subsidiary of Transneft PJSC, in Novorossiysk, Russia, Tuesday, Oct. 11, 2022, one of the largest facilities for oil and petroleum products in southern Russia. (AP)

Russian oil.

Hungary imports some Russian oil through a pipeline. Hungary is an EU member, but President Viktor Orban has been critical of sanctions

against Russia.

One big reason: It’s cheap. Since Russian oil trades at a lower price than international benchmark Brent, refineries can fatten their profit mar-

gins when they turn crude into usable products such as diesel fuel.

The Kyiv School of Economics says Russia took in \$12.6 billion from oil sales in June. Russia continues to earn substantial sums even as the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations has tried to limit Russia’s take by imposing an oil price cap. The cap is to be enforced by requiring shipping and insurance companies to refuse to handle oil shipments above the cap. Russia has, to a great extent, been able to evade the cap by shipping oil on a “shadow fleet” of old vessels using insurers and trading companies located in countries that are not enforcing sanctions.

Russian oil exporters are predicted to take in \$153 billion this year, according to the Kyiv institute. Fossil fuels are the single largest source of budget revenue. The imports support Russia’s ruble currency and help Russia to buy goods from other countries, including weapons and parts for them.

Swiss President heads to US over tariff dispute

GENEVA, Aug 5, (AP): Switzerland’s president and other top officials were traveling to Washington on Tuesday in a hastily arranged trip aimed at striking a deal with the Trump administration over steep tariffs that have cast a pall over Swiss industries like chocolates and watchmaking.

President Karin Keller-Sutter was leading a delegation to the United States capital after last week’s announcement that exports of Swiss goods to the U.S. will face a whopping 39% percent tariff starting Thursday.

That is over 2 1/2 times higher than the rate on European Union goods exported to the U.S. and nearly four times higher than on British exports to the U.S. Many Swiss companies in industries including watchmaking and chocolates have expressed concern about the issue.

The Swiss government said the trip was “to facilitate meetings with the U.S. authorities at short notice and hold talks with a view to improving the tariff situation for Switzerland.”

Keller-Sutter, who also serves as Switzerland’s finance minister, has faced criticism in Swiss media over a last-ditch call with President Donald Trump before a U.S. deadline on tariffs expired Aug. 1. She was leading a team that includes Economy Minister Guy Parmelin.

The trip comes a day after Switzerland’s executive branch held an extraordinary meeting Monday during which it was “keen to pursue talks with the United States on the tariff situation,” the government statement Tuesday said.

Iconic show reboots with familiar faces and new challenges

Hank Hill returns to a changed world in new ‘King of the Hill’

NEW YORK, Aug 5, (AP): Hank Hill is back and he’s the same ol’ Hank Hill, but a lot of things around him have changed.

The lovable animated hero of “King of the Hill” has returned from a 15-year lull and he isn’t sure what boba tea is, how ridesharing works and is confused by all-gender bathrooms. “What kind of food is poke?” he asks his wife, Peggy.

Hank and Peggy have returned to their hometown of Arlon, Texas - and our TV sets - but a lot has happened over the years and they’re stepping into a world they doesn’t always recognize.

“Hank, have things changed here more than we thought?” Peggy asks, worried, in the first new episode. “Did we make a mistake coming back?”

Hulu is definitely hoping not, reuniting many of the same writers and voice cast who turned the propane-loving, Hill into one of TV’s few blue-collar icons. The first 10 episodes hit Hulu on Monday.

Saladin K. Patterson, the executive producer and showrunner for the new season 14, hopes the original fans will return to see how Hill copes in the modern day.

“That’s always key because you want that core fan base to validate what you’ve done because they’re like the gatekeepers in a way,” he says. “So when they sign off and say, ‘OK, they didn’t mess it up, it’s still the same special show,’ I think other people who may be unfamiliar with it, or even on the fence, feel like, ‘OK, well, now we want to like it.’”

Viewers will learn that Hank and Peggy have been in Saudi Arabia all this time, where he served as “assistant manager in charge of Arabian propane and Arabian propane accessories.” Their son Bobby, now 21, is the chef of a “down home, German-Asian fusion” restaurant. (Sample dish: Grilled mackerel with a side of mustard pretzel.)

Hank and Peggy have retired and he happily rejoins his line of friends drinking cans of beer in an alley. Boomhauer gives him a hug and Dale has grown even more paranoid, becoming “an election-denier-denier.”



This image released by Hulu shows, characters, (from left), Peggy Hill, voiced by Kathy Najimy, Bobby Hill, voiced by Pamela Adlon, and Hank Hill, voiced by Mike Judge, from the animated series ‘King of the Hill.’ (AP)

Bill has let himself go, staying indoors and living off Amazon deliveries. “I finished Netflix, Hank. Did you know that when you get to the end of Netflix, you get something called ‘a wellness check?’” Viewers in the second episode hear Tom Petty’s “Runnin’ Down a Dream,” a nice nod to the late rocker’s embrace of the show when it first appeared.

“The writers have found that balance between the vintage ‘King of the Hill’ that we adore and the new - and letting them coexist,” says Pamela Adlon, who

voices Bobby.

Creators Mike Judge, the mastermind behind “Beavis and Butt-Head,” and Greg Daniels, who would go on to co-create “The Office,” helped Patterson navigate this world, which they shepherded during its first 13 seasons, airing from 1997 to 2009.

The show’s tone maintains its gentle mocking of modern life, from hipsters and their craft ales to bike lanes. Hill at one point shakes his head over modern outdoor grills having sensors and app connections: “I shouldn’t have to call technical support to make a burger.”

Patterson says the humor is grounded in real life. “I do have a barbecue grill that is Wi-Fi- and Bluetooth-enabled. I have three devices to run it, but I’m calling tech support because I have guests coming over and the meat needs to be done,” he says. “And I do think over the pandemic, my wife finished Netflix.”

While there are changes, some things are immutable. “Hank’s still going to drink beer. Dale’s still going to be a conspiracy theorist. Bill’s still going to be a lovable sad sack,” says Patterson. “Those core character things had to be the same. I had a pastor who told me one time, ‘Grown folks don’t change.’”

Viewers will see in upcoming episodes if Hank - a happy propane seller and garage tinkerer - can really ever retire and watch as Hank’s friends navigate new chapters. They’ll also explore the relationship between an adult Bobby and his parents.

“He’s of age now and it’s really kind of cool because you see the similarities and all the attributes that he took from his parents that he wasn’t even aware of when he was a boy - or didn’t want to have anything to do with - and now he’s using them to keep his business going and move himself forward,” says Adlon.

While debates have raged over where Hank Hill sits on the political spectrum, his creators argue he represents a sensible, common-sense middle. He follows the rules and does the best he can without hurting anyone.

People

‘Stay jailed’

Combs’ bail bid rejected

NEW YORK, Aug 5, (AP): **Sean ‘Diddy’ Combs** can’t go home from jail to await sentencing on his prostitution-related conviction, a judge said Monday, denying the rap and style mogul’s latest bid for bail.

Combs has been behind bars since his September arrest. He faced federal charges of coercing individuals into participating in illegal activities under the influence of drugs, which he allegedly recorded.

He was acquitted last month of the top charges - racketeering and sex trafficking - while being convicted of two counts of a prostitution-related offense.

In denying Combs’ \$50 million bond proposal, Judge Arun Subramanian said the hip hop impresario hadn’t proven that he did not pose a flight risk or danger, nor shown an “exceptional circumstance” that would justify his release after a conviction that otherwise requires detention.

Combs’ arguments “might have traction in a case that didn’t involve evidence of violence, coercion or subjugation in connection with the acts of prostitution at issue, but the record here contains evidence of all three,” the judge wrote.

Prosecutors declined to comment on the ruling. Messages seeking comment were sent to Combs’ lawyers.

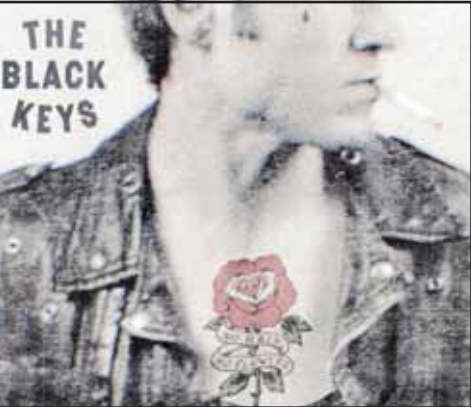
The conviction carries the potential for up to 10 years in prison. But there are complicated federal guidelines for calculating sentences in any given case, and prosecutors and Combs’ lawyers disagree substantially on how the guidelines come out for his case.

The guidelines aren’t mandatory, and Subramanian will have wide latitude in deciding Combs’ punishment.

The Bad Boy Records founder, now 55, was for decades a protean figure in pop culture. A Grammy-winning hip hop artist and entrepreneur with a flair for finding and launching big talents, he presided over a business empire that ranged from fashion to reality TV.

Prosecutors claimed he used his fame, wealth, and coercion to manipulate two former girlfriends into participating in prolonged, drug-fueled activities.

During the trial, four women testified that Combs had beaten or sexually assaulted them. Jurors also watched video of Combs hurling one of his former girlfriends, R&B singer Cassie, to the floor, repeatedly kicking her and then dragging her down a hotel hallway.



This album cover image released by Warner Music shows ‘No Rain, No Flowers’ by The Black Keys. (AP)

Gaming



This image provided by Janzen Madsen shows the Roblox game called ‘Grow a Garden.’ (AP)

‘Grow a Garden’ takes the gaming world by storm

Millions join Roblox’s virtual garden craze

NEW YORK, Aug 5, (AP): Whether it serves as a chill escape from the onslaught of the real world or simply a way to beat vacation doldrums, a viral Roblox game about gardening has become the surprise hit of the summer.

‘Grow a Garden’, created by a 16-year-old in a few days, has shattered records for the most concurrent players of any game in history, beating out video games that take years and millions of dollars to develop.

And there’s no one to shoot, fight or race. If your last attempt at cultivating vegetables was FarmVille in 2010, don’t worry - your tomatoes will grow even if you never water them.

‘Grow a Garden’ is as simple as its name suggests - players can fill a plot of land with plants and animals, harvest and sell, trade or steal each others’ bounty. The game is low stress, with an aesthetic reminiscent of Minecraft and a soundtrack of soothing classical tunes such as Mozart’s Rondo Alla Turca playing in the background. Its popularity has further cemented Roblox’ place not just in the gaming world but in popular culture - for better or for worse, it’s where the kids hang out.

“The word I keep hearing used over and over to describe this particular game is that it’s chill, which is just such a nice alternative. I get a lot of sort of that Animal Crossing vibe from it. You know, like you can check in, you can check your gardens, you can get some new seeds, you can plant them,” said Betsy Bozdech, editorial director at the nonprofit Common Sense Media. “I have an 11-year-old son who (plays it) and he says to him the big difference is that a lot of games have a big giant objective that you have to do, but in Grow a Garden, you can just kind of hang out and do what you want.”

Coincidence or not, Grow a Garden soared to popularity around the same time that Take-Two Interactive announced it would delay the launch of its wildly anticipated Grand Theft Auto 6 until next year. In late June, the gardening game logged 21.6 million concurrent players, surpassing Fortnite’s previous record of 15.2 million according to Roblox. Analysts who follow Roblox’s stock say Grow a Garden is helping boost the company’s revenue and will push the company’s quarterly earnings numbers above Wall Street’s expectations.

While it’s not clear if the GTA audience flocked to this simple gardening game to pass the time until then, the timing reignited the age-old debate about who gamers are and what titles are taken seriously by the video game establishment. It happened with Candy Crush, with puzzle games, with Animal Crossing. Are people who play cozy games true gamers? Or is the title reserved for the folks who shoot enemies in Call of Duty or drive around creating mayhem in GTA?

“There’s a huge percentage of gamers that play Roblox and the actual industry just views it as like this esoterically immature platform of weird gameplay habits,” said Janzen Madsen, the New Zealand-based CEO and founder of Splitting Point studios, which acquired the game from its teenage creator. “Well, I actually think in five years this is what player expectation is gonna be. And because you guys haven’t embraced it, like you’re not gonna know how to make games.”

To start growing your garden, you’ll need a Roblox account. The game will start you out with an empty plot and some money - shekles - and a starter seed. From there, you can plant seeds, harvest and sell your crops and buy more seeds, animals or tools for your garden. While

it is possible to play the game without spending real-world money, it will take longer. Once you sell enough crops, you earn money to buy more expensive seeds beyond basic carrots and blueberries.

“For me, I just, I really want to get all the rarest stuff. I’m a completionist, so I want everything and that’s what’s fun for me,” said Leah Ashe, a YouTuber who plays Grow a Garden and other popular games to an audience of 5.3 million. “It’s really cool because you can come together because the seed shop is global, so everybody’s shop is the exact same. So you can work with other people and be like, ‘Oh my gosh, the sugar apple is in stock. Get online!’ The seed shop updates every five minutes, so there’s always something pulling you back into the game.”

For Roblox, which has faced a backlash for not doing enough to protect kids on its gaming service, Grow a Garden has served as something of a reprieve - along with new safety measures such as chat restrictions and privacy tools.

New players get help from more established peers who send them gifts and let them know when rare seeds become available in the seed shop.

Bozdech said that “if you have the right supervision and guidance,” Roblox can be a positive experience for kids, allowing them to create their own designs or practice coding, for instance.

“Something like Grow a Garden, particularly, is a nice opportunity maybe for parents and kids to play together,” she said.

And perhaps the slow cultivating of a magical garden can benefit parents too.

“It’s hitting a nerve, you know?” Bozdech said. “People need an escape from the world, I think we all do.”

Variety

SAN FRANCISCO: The Levi’s brand, in collaboration with global icon **Beyoncé**, has debuted The Denim Cowboy, the final installment of the year-long Levi’s Reimagine campaign. The film weaves together the three previous chapters, revealing the campaign as more than a reinterpretation of iconic Levi’s advertisements - it is the creation of a new narrative centered on empowerment and rewriting the rules. Shown throughout The Denim Cowboy are Levi’s icons and hero pieces from the new Beyoncé x Levi’s denim collection that serve as the film’s uniform and latest cornerstone of the partnership with Beyoncé, highlighting the brand’s denim lifestyle leadership.



Beyonce

Set to an exclusive edit of the “Levi’s Jeans” soundtrack from the Grammy Award-winning album, Cowboy Carter, the 90-second film includes new scenes and extended cuts from the previously released Laundrette, Pool Hall and Refrigerator films - all inspired by classic Levi’s advertisements from the ‘80s and ‘90s. Once again, the Levi’s brand partnered with Grammy Award-winning director Melina Matsoukas to bring this vision to life. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: A shooting erupted during a music festival after-party in downtown Los Angeles, killing two people and wounding six others early Monday, authorities said. Authorities first responded around 11 p.m. Sunday to shut down a “big party” after officers saw a person possibly armed with a gun go inside a building in a downtown warehouse district, said Officer Norma Eisenman. That person was arrested at the scene, she said.

The party had been promoted on social media as an unofficial after-party for Hard Summer, a weekend techno-music festival held at Hollywood Park, about 9 miles (14 km) away in Inglewood, KTLA-TV reported.

Shortly after officers had cleared the area, police received a report of shots fired around 1 a.m. When the officers returned, they found one person dead and learned multiple people had been struck by gunfire, Eisenman said in an email.

A male victim died at the scene and a female victim died at a hospital, Eisenman said. Six people were taken to hospitals in unknown condition, she said.

A man told KABC-TV that his 29-year-old son was one of the two people killed. “This senseless violence and loss of life is devastating and those who are responsible must be held accountable,” Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said in a statement. “There will be no tolerance for violence in this city. My thoughts are with the victims and their families.”

There was no information about a suspect or a motive. Investigators remained at the scene for hours.

Tyrone Laney, who lives in a temporary housing encampment around the corner from where the shooting occurred, said the partygoers returned about an hour after police broke up the gathering late Sunday. He said he heard thumping music, and then, around 1 a.m., a burst of gunfire from what sounded like an automatic weapon.

“It was pretty clear and loud. ... You knew that if those bullets landed in somebody, that they weren’t walking away from the situation,” Laney told the Los Angeles Times. (AP)

Black Keys’ new album puts feel-good spin on turbulent year

NEW YORK, Aug 5, (AP): The Ohio alt-rock band the Black Keys are finding their way home on their 13th full-length LP, “No Rain, No Flowers.”

The journey hasn’t been easy. Last year, the Grammy-winning duo underwent a fiery, public split with their management after their arena tour was unceremoniously canceled. But on “No Rain, No Flowers,” guitarist and vocalist Dan Auerbach and drummer Pat Carney put a feel-good spin on their recent career turbulence. The album pulls the raw blues, psychedelia, garage rock and roots music of their 23-year discography into a single package.

Discerning fans won’t have to look hard for nods to their rough 2024. The opening track

begins with a synthesizer-infused post-punk riff that leaves a sense of both inner peace and simmering resentment. After warning “There’s evil people in this world/Live long enough and you will be burned,” Auerbach’s easygoing voice assures that “Baby, the damage is done/It won’t be long ‘til we’re back in the sun.”

Their fourth album in five years marks a return to the prolific pace they maintained early on in their career. Underdogs no more, the critically acclaimed duo’s tenure shows itself on this album, in a mix of trusted creative partners and long-admired new collaborators.

And perhaps truer to their name, this iteration of the Black Keys includes a lot more piano. The band says they’ve never worked with

someone who writes on the piano like Rick Nowels, who appeared on Lana Del Rey’s Auerbach-produced album “Ultraviolence.”

Hip-hop producer Scott Storch plays keyboard on the groovy “Babygirl,” which is part-power pop, part-Rolling Stones with its sharp rhythmic piano and lyrical self-assertiveness. He’s also on “Make You Mine,” where Auerbach’s upper register and a string section push the band as close to Bee Gees’ disco as they’ll get.

But they’re at their best with moody, trance-inducing tracks like “Down to Nothing,” where Auerbach’s guitar elicits the feeling of yearning that’s remained a constant throughout their catalog.



Dancers showcase a dance battle during a street dance show in Karamay, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Aug. 3. (Xinhua)

Global artists bring ballet, musicals to Xinjiang Festival

Int'l dancers strum cross-cultural chords in China

URUMQI, Aug 5, (Xinhua): Over the weekend, streets and parks across northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region sprang to life as performers from the 7th China Xinjiang International Ethnic Dance Festival erupted into vibrant flash mobs, pulling eager crowds into the pulsing rhythms.

Running from July 20 to Aug. 5, the festival featured 52 performances by 24 art groups from home and abroad, staged across the region's main venue in Urumqi and six branch locations, namely, Ili, Hotan, Aksu, Karamay, Hami and Alaer.

Renowned art groups from eight countries, including Kazakhstan, Cambodia, the United States and Italy, brought a rich mix of dance dramas, ethnic operas, musicals, ballet, and modern dance to the festival.

The Italian art troupe Balletto di Milano joined Xinjiang dancers for a thrilling flash mob at Urumqi's iconic Grand Bazaar. As the Italian performers moved through the bustling streets, they were captivated by the vibrant and varied dances of the Xinjiang ethnic artists.

After performing excerpts from "Carmen" and "Romeo and Juliet," the Italian dancers joined the lively swirl of Xinjiang folk dance.

"Absolutely amazing," exulted Anastasia Zappa, a member of the ballet troupe, after joining the impromptu performance with Xinjiang dancers. "I'd love to learn Xinjiang's dances and share our passion with Chinese audiences."

"The people here are so enthusiastic. I am completely infected by the enthusiasm of their dances," she added.

Agnese Omodei Sale, art director and choreographer of the "Carmen" troupe, recalled her thrilling visit to the Urumqi Peking Opera House, where she watched opera actors rehearsing.

"Immersing in diverse cultures here has been unforgettable. I love to return to Xinjiang to discover more of its people and stories," she said.

Actors from the Dance Troupe of Uzbekistan's National Grand Theatre "Tumor" have been regular participants in the Xinjiang dance festival.

"We had performed in Urumqi before, but this is our first time in Hotan in southern Xinjiang," said Sharipova Zilola Alimbaevna, deputy director of the theatre. "Dance has been our shared language as we exchanged ideas with local performers these days."

For the first time since its launch in 2008, the festival was held outside the regional capital, Urumqi, with its magic reaching well beyond the city's theatre stages.

Over the weekend, Karamay -- a well-known oil town in northern Xinjiang -- hosted a street dance show with multiple performances across commercial centers and parks, bringing together dozens of acclaimed local and international street dancers.

Meanwhile, Urumqi hosted a square dance competition that drew 24 teams from across the city's districts. Their performances celebrated everything from everyday workers' lives and harvest festivals to legendary heroes. Participants ranged from retirees and schoolchildren on summer break to people from all walks of life.

Dante Puleio, art director of New York's Limón Dance Company, expressed admiration for Xinjiang's rich culture and vibrant people, noting that he was deeply impressed by the unique qualities of the local dance performances.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Shi Zhongming, director of the Urumqi Cultural Center, said Xinjiang has witnessed a blend of its folk art with ballet, opera and modern dances by artists and dance enthusiasts from around the world.

"Through this event, Xinjiang has demonstrated its openness, confidence and inclusiveness in the cultural sphere," he added.

Music

Singer reflects on life's ups and downs in new album

From meat plant worker to country star, Zimmerman is figuring it out

NEW YORK, Aug 5, (AP): His is a Cinderella story.

Before the big tours and country music award nominations, Bailey Zimmerman was growing up in the small town of Louisville, Illinois, working at the local meat processing plant and laying gas pipeline. Then, in 2020, he decided to upload videos of himself singing to social media - Black Stone Cherry's "Stay," and, later, an original.

He quickly garnered a fan base on TikTok. It wasn't overnight, but it was fast. Soon, he inked a deal with Warner Music Nashville and released his debut full-length, 2023's "Religiously. The Album." It peaked at No. 7 on the all-genre Billboard 200 chart and was certified two-times platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America. Now comes Friday, when he follows it up with a sophomore offering, "Different Night Same Rodeo."

Recreate

"I don't know what I'm doing," Zimmerman, 25, tells The Associated Press through a smile. "I randomly got into music in 2020, 2021, and I'd never sang before. I'd never wrote songs before."

After "Religiously. The Album." did well - something he didn't see coming - Zimmerman found himself trying to recreate it while writing for his second album. "It just didn't work," he says. "I just found myself not really writing that great of songs because I'm trying to write other songs that have already been written."

So, he took a step back, and asked himself: "What am I trying to do with my music? And what is the whole goal of this next album?" The answer was simple: He wanted to tell stories from his life.

"You didn't know what you were doing the first time. And you don't know what you're doing now," he told himself. "So just write songs that you love and try to write songs that you feel like people can relate to, you know, stories from things I've been through."

On "Different Night Same Rodeo," those stories are told in big-hearted ballads ("Hell or High Water"), good time stomps ("New to Country") and varied collaborations, including with country star Luke Combs ("Backup Plan"), the rising pop voice the Kid LAROI ("Lost"), and Diplo ("Ashes"). He's always been open to such eclectic collaborations, anchored in his raspy, charismatic tone - Zimmerman's highest charting song to date is "All The Way," a hip-hop-country hybrid he features on with



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

rapper BigXThaPlug.

For his second album, Zimmerman wanted to make sure he worked with artists he had true relationships with. For Combs, he knew the singer would be perfect for the fiery "Backup Plan" - he just never thought he'd meet him. Then, Combs invited Zimmerman to perform at his Hurricane Helene relief benefit "Concert for Carolina." They hit it off, and the rest is history. The Kid LAROI ("We're like the same person," Zimmerman says) and Diplo ("Sometimes things just feel like God's plan," he says) were partnerships that also happened organically.

"When I collaborate, I just want it to be a real friendship," he says.

"And I want it to feel real, because it comes across not real when it's not."

For an artist who describes himself as "dealing with a little bit of impostor syndrome," he seems to know, at least intuitively, what works for himself and his fans.

"The main reason I write music is so people know they're not alone and that I've been through the things that they've been through, too," he says. "I think that's what I started my whole career on, was people relating to me kind of 'therapy writing.'" he says. "Different Night Same Rodeo" - it's the fluctuation of life. It's the ups and the downs, the mountains, the valleys, but we're still on a good vibe."

BAYREUTH, Germany, Aug 5, (AP): Less than 41 hours after his final bows for singing the title role of "Lohengrin" at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Piotr Beczala was 150 miles (241 kilometers) away at the Bayreuth Festpielhaus for a different production of the same Wagner opera.

Wagner's roles are among the most punishing in classical music, and breaks of two or three days between performances are customary to allow for vocal recovery. Beczala earned thunderous ovations on Wednesday in Munich and Friday at Bayreuth.

"I was a little under pressure because Christian Thielemann is coming back to Bayreuth for this production," the 58-year-old Polish tenor said, citing his desire to please the conductor. "We did it in 2018 and '19 so, yeah, I agreed with this crazy schedule."

Beczala and the cast for the revival of Yuval Sharon's 2018 Bayreuth production arrived July 12 for four hours of blocking at a studio, then had a 7 1/2-hour final dress rehearsal the following day in the auditorium built to Wagner's specifications.

Rehearsal

He traveled to Munich on July 14 for a recital four days later at the 150th Munich Opera Festival followed by "Lohengrin" in Kornél Mundruczó's 2022 staging on July 27 and 30. Beczala drove back to Bayreuth the next morning for a 3 p.m. music rehearsal with Thielemann, who led Beczala's first Lohengrin in 2016.

There were three more performances at Bayreuth through Aug. 9.

"Having sung Lohengrin in a different production previously, he carries a mature interpretation that can adapt fluidly to different directorial visions," Bavarian State Opera general director Serge Dorny said. "His preparation for both stagings was meticulous, and we knew that he would approach each performance with total professionalism and focus."

Lohengrin, a mysterious knight, arrives to unite the divided people of Brabant and defend the noblewoman Elsa from the false accusation she murdered her brother. He agrees to marry her on the condition she never ask him his name or origin.

Beczala also has sung Lohengrin in Dresden, Vienna, New York, Paris and Zurich.

Mundruczó and Sharon, like many contemporary directors, abandoned Wagner's 1850 stage directions that have Lohengrin arrive and depart on a boat pulled by a swan.



This image released by Bayreuth Festival shows tenor Piotr Beczala during a dress rehearsal of the 2025 revival of Yuval Sharon's production of Wagner's 'Lohengrin' at the Bayreuth Festival on July 13, 2024. (AP)

"He is not necessarily coming as a God-sent person," Mundruczó said. "It's more like someone who we are choosing, so somehow it's one of us."

Monika Pormale designed stark white sets for Munich that included hilly, grassy areas in the first act. Beczala nearly slipped but caught his balance in time.

Anna Axer Fijalkowska costumed Lohengrin in cream as a common man rather than medieval finery: jeans, sweatshirt and loafers.

"I go, to be honest, on airplanes more elegant than that," Beczala said, laughing.

Anna Brunnlechner, the revival stage director, didn't mind the compressed practice period.

Intense

"I prefer a very intense time, also with a bit of adrenaline, than a very long rehearsal time where you can talk every detail," she said.

Bayreuth's sets and costumes were by the married artists Neo Rauch and Rosa Loy, dominated by the color Delft Blue - even Beczala's wig. Their Lohengrin is dressed like a 1930s electrician wearing a shirt and tie with overalls, arriving in a transformer and clutching a lightning bolt for a sword.

Sharon, in an email to assistant director Eva-Maria Abelein he shared with the AP, called the opera "the story of the decay of the angel."

"Lohengrin is a bringer of light, and he is humble at first - he is a

servant of a higher force," he wrote. "But the idea of a year of bodily pleasure, joy, love, four seasons ... He can't resist it. And the character we see in Act II is arrogant, full of himself, and much closer to violence. In Act III, he is brutal with his new wife - because that's what he thinks humans do."

Beczala took over for the 2018 production premiere when Roberto Alagna withdrew 27 days before the first performance.

"Piotr is really exceptional," Abelein said Saturday. "He took one wrong position last night and then he came off saying, 'I'm so sorry about this.' I said, 'Piotr, it's not important at all because the way he acted is important.'"

Wolfgang Schilly, another Bayreuth assistant director, provided Beczala some special assistance for this year's opener. Beczala was thinking about "In fernem land (In a distant land)," the third-act aria when Lohengrin reveals his name to Elsa.

"I could give a thousand dollars for just a little water before the aria but there's no space," Beczala recalled telling him Thursday.

Schilly had a tiny hole punctured in the set wall between where oversized insect wings were pinned, then inserted a straw attached to a bottle. An appreciative Beczala was able to sip.

"I'm not so sure that Neo Rauch is happy that we make a hole in his art," Beczala said, smiling.

Artist uses old structures to share stories of identity

Aussie artist creates a massive mural in a small US town

MINOT, N.D., Aug 5, (AP): High atop a massive grain elevator in the middle of Minot, North Dakota, artist Guido van Helten swipes a concrete wall with a brush that looks more appropriate for painting a fence than creating a monumental mural.

Back and forth van Helten brushes, focused on his work and not bothered by the sheer enormity of his task as he stands in a boom lift, 75 feet (23 meters) off the ground, and focused on a few square feet of a structure that stretches over most of a city block.

"When you use these old structures to kinda share stories and use them as a vehicle to carry an image of identity, it becomes part of the landscape," he said. "I've found that people have really adopted them and become really super proud of them."

The work on the former Union Silos is van Helten's latest effort to paint murals on a gigantic scale, with earlier projects on structures

ranging from a dam in Australia to part of a former cooling tower at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in Ukraine. Although he has created murals throughout the world, grain silos in the U.S. Midwest have been among his most frequent sites.

"I do enjoy the opportunity to uncover stories that are often kinda considered out of the way or flyover communities," he said.

Van Helten has been creating murals for years, working increasingly in the U.S. over the past seven years and around the world. The 38-year-old Brisbane native's interest in regional communities began in earnest after a mural he created years ago on a silo in an Australian town of 100 people. The new idea, he said, drew interest, and he began a series of commissions around Australia and the U.S.

He uses a mineral silicate paint formulated to absorb and bond with concrete, and it lasts a long time. He mixes tones specific to the color of the wall and subtly layers the work



Artist Guido van Helten poses for a photo on July 14, 2025, in front of the grain elevator and silos in Minot, N.D., where he is painting a large mural. Behind him is the boom lift he uses to ascend the structure. (AP)

so it blends in.

"I love the coloring of these build-

ings, so I don't want to fight with them, I don't want to change it, I don't want it to be bright. I want it to become part of the landscape," he said.

It's not a quick process, as van Helten initially meets with residents to learn about a community and then spends months slowly transforming what is usually the largest structure in a small town. He began painting in Minot in May with plans for a 360-degree mural that combines photography with painting to depict the people and culture of an area.

The Minot elevator and silos were built in the 1950s and were an economic center for years before they ceased operations around the early 1990s.

Van Helten isn't giving too much away about what his Minot mural will depict, but said he has been inspired by concepts of land and ownership while in North Dakota, from ranching and the oil field to Native American perspectives. Minot is a city of nearly 50,000 people and sits near the Bakken oil field and Fort Berthold Indian Reservation.

"It is really when you boil down to it in many ways about land and how different cultures interpret that and connect with it, and I feel it's really interesting in North Dakota because it is really such a big, open land," the artist said.

Much of the mural is still taking shape, but images of a barn and female figures are visible.

Property owner Derek Hackett said the mural is "a great way to take what is kind of a blighted property and be able to give it a facelift and kind of resurrect its presence in our skyline."

Soon the mural will be visible from almost anywhere in town, he said.

The mural project is entirely donation-funded, costing about \$350,000, about 85% of which is already raised, said Chelsea Gleich, a spokesperson for the project.

"It is uniquely ours, it's uniquely North Dakota and you'll never be able to find a piece just like this anywhere else," she said.

'The world nearly beat polio'

Fake records, imperfect vaccine, missteps aided polio's comeback

KARACHI, Pakistan, Aug 5, (AP): For the past decade, Sughra Ayaz has traveled door to door in southeastern Pakistan, pleading with parents to allow children to be vaccinated against polio as part of a global campaign to wipe out the paralytic disease. She hears their demands and fears. Some are practical - families need basics like food and water more than vaccines. Others are simply unfounded - the oral doses are meant to sterilize their kids.

Amid rampant misinformation and immense pressure for the campaign to succeed, Ayaz said, some managers have instructed workers to falsely mark children as immunized. And the vaccines, which must be kept cold, aren't always stored correctly, she added.

"In many places, our work is not done with honesty," Ayaz said.

The World Health Organization and partners embarked on their polio campaign in 1988 with the bold goal of eradication - a feat seen only once for human diseases, with smallpox in 1980. They came close several times, including in 2021, when just five cases of the natural virus were reported in Pakistan and Afghanistan. But since then, cases rebounded, hitting 99 last year, and officials have missed at least six self-imposed eradication deadlines.

Infectious

Afghanistan and Pakistan remain the only countries where transmission of polio - which is highly infectious, affects mainly children under 5, and can cause irreversible paralysis within hours -- has never been interrupted. The worldwide campaign has focused most of its attention and funding there for the past decade.

But in its quest to eliminate the disease, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative has been derailed by mismanagement and what insiders describe as blind allegiance to an outdated strategy and a problematic oral vaccine, according to workers, polio experts and internal materials obtained by The Associated Press.

Officials have falsified vaccination records, selected unqualified people to dole out drops, failed to send out teams during mass campaigns, and dismissed concerns about the oral vaccine sparking outbreaks, according to documents shared with AP by staffers from GPEI - one of the largest and most expensive public health campaigns in history, with over \$20 billion spent and nearly every country in the world involved.

In Afghanistan and Pakistan - which share a border, harbor widespread mistrust of vaccines, and have weakened healthcare systems and infrastructure - local staffers like Ayaz have for years flagged problems to senior managers. But those issues, along with concerns by staffers and outside health officials, have long gone unaddressed, insiders say.

Officials tout the successes - 3 billion children vaccinated, an estimated 20 million people who would have been paralyzed spared - while acknowledging challenges in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Remote villages



A health worker administers a polio vaccine to a child in Karachi, Pakistan, April 21, 2025. (AP)

are hard to reach, some cultural and religious authorities instruct against vaccination, and hundreds of polio workers and security staff have been killed because of their alignment with a Western-led initiative.

Dr. Jamal Ahmed, WHO's polio director, defended progress in those two countries, citing workers' tailored response in resistant pockets.

Ahmed said he believes authorities will end the spread of polio in the next 12 to 18 months. Its latest goal for eradication is 2029. The campaign says about 45 million children in Pakistan and 11 million in Afghanistan must be vaccinated this year. Children typically need four doses of two drops each to be considered fully immunized.

Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta, who has served on advisory groups for WHO, the Gates Foundation and others, said campaign officials should listen to the criticism of its tactics.

Internal WHO reports reviewing vaccination drives in Afghanistan and Pakistan over the past decade - given to AP by current and former staffers - show that as early as 2017, local workers were alerting significant problems to senior managers.

The documents flagged multiple cases of falsified vaccination records, health workers being replaced by untrained relatives and workers improperly administering vaccines.

On numerous occasions, WHO officials noted, "vaccinators did not know about vaccine management," citing failure to keep doses properly cold. They also found sloppy or falsified reporting, with workers noting "more used vaccine vials than were actually supplied."

According to an August 2017 report from Kandahar, Afghanistan, local government authorities and others interfered in choosing vaccinators, "resulting in the selection of underage and illiterate volunteers."

Vaccination teams worked "in a hurried manner," reports said, with "no plan for monitoring or supervision." A team in Nawzad, Afghanistan, covered

just half of the intended area in 2017, with 250 households missed entirely. Village elders said no one visited for at least two years.

Vaccine workers and health officials in Afghanistan and Pakistan confirmed the issues in the documents and told AP it's hard for campaign leadership to grasp the difficulties in the field. Door-to-door efforts are stymied by cultural barriers, unfounded stories about vaccines, and the region's poverty and transience.

Vaccinate

"Most of the time when we go to vaccinate and knock on the door, the head of the house or the man is not at home," said one worker, speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to talk to the press. "Many people find it offensive that a stranger knocks on the door and talks to a woman."

Some workers find families have moved. Occasionally, they say, the encounter abuse.

"We have shared these problems with our senior officials," the worker told AP. "They know about it."

In an email response to AP's questions about officials' knowledge of the issues, WHO polio director Ahmed noted "operational challenges" in Afghanistan and Pakistan and said the program has "robust monitoring and evaluation processes."

Worker Ayaz described "fake finger marking" - placing the ink used to show a child is vaccinated on their pinky even when no vaccine has been given.

"There is so much pressure," Ayaz said. Before the first polio vaccine was developed in 1955, the disease - spread mostly from person to person, through contaminated water and via fecal particles - was among the world's most feared, paralyzing hundreds of thousands of children annually. People avoided crowded places during epidemics, and hospital wards filled with children encased in iron lungs after the virus immobilized their breathing muscles.

Kuwait launches national genome project

Dasman Diabetes Institute adopts special strategy to treat diabetes

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5, (KUNA): Dasman Diabetes Institute has unveiled a comprehensive strategy to establish Kuwait's National Genome Project, which blended genetic data according to lifestyle and environmental factors that may lead to developing diseases namely diabetes.

Dr. Faisal Al-Rifai, the center's Director General, explained the strategy in a press statement, noting that excerpts were published by the renowned journal, Genetics Review Nature.

Dasman Institute's vision is distinguished with a method, different from the conventional genome projects, integrating the genetic information with living and ecological factors with such

Dr. Faisal Al-Rifai, Director General of Dasman Diabetes Institute

approach deepening understanding of complex diseases namely the second type of diabetes, Dr.

Al-Rifai said.

The institute has drawn up this strategy after a series of workshops, conferences, specialized initiatives namely the precision medicine workshop that had been held in coordination with American academics.

Dr. Al-Rifai underscored the high significance of the institute effort at this level amid hike of diabetic and obese cases in Kuwait, mentioning aggravating non-genetic factors such as the hard climatic conditions and pollution.

The institute conducts scientific researches, works out innovative programs, provides comprehensive education for improving life of the patients and stem spread of the disease in the country.

Epidemic devastated over 20 species

Experts solve sea star mass kill mystery

WASHINGTON, Aug 5, (AP): Scientists say they have at last solved the mystery of what killed more than 5 billion sea stars off the Pacific coast of North America in a decade-long epidemic.

Sea stars - often known as starfish - typically have five arms and some species sport up to 24 arms. They range in color from solid orange to tapestries of orange, purple, brown and green.

Starting in 2013, a mysterious sea star wasting disease sparked a mass die-off from Mexico to Alaska. The epidemic has devastated more than 20 species and continues today. Worst hit was a species called the sunflower sea star, which lost around 90% of its population in the outbreak's first five years.

"It's really quite gruesome," said marine disease ecologist Alyssa Gehman at the Hakai Institute in British Columbia, Canada, who helped pinpoint the cause.

Healthy sea stars have "puffy arms sticking straight out," she said. But the wasting disease causes them to grow lesions and "then their arms actually fall off."

The culprit? Bacteria that has also infected shellfish, according to a study published Monday in the journal Nature Ecology and Evolution.

The findings "solve a long-standing question about a very serious disease in the ocean," said Rebecca Vega Thurber, a marine microbiologist at University of California, Santa Barbara, who was not involved in the study.

It took more than a decade for re-



In this photo provided by the Hakai Institute, researcher Alyssa Gehman from the Hakai Institute counts and measures sunflower sea stars in the Burke Channel on the Central Coast of British Columbia, Canada, in 2023. (AP)

searchers to identify the cause of the disease, with many false leads and twists and turns along the way.

Early research hinted the cause might be a virus, but it turned out the densovirus that scientists initially focused on was actually a normal resident inside healthy sea stars and not associated with disease, said Melanie Prentice of the Hakai Institute, co-author of the new study.

Other efforts missed the real killer because researchers studied tissue samples of dead sea stars that no lon-

ger contained the bodily fluid that surrounds the organs.

But the latest study includes detailed analysis of this fluid, called coelomic fluid, where the bacteria *Vibrio pectenicida* were found.

"It's incredibly difficult to trace the source of so many environmental diseases, especially underwater," said microbiologist Blake Ushijima of the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, who was not involved in the research. He said the detective work by this team was "really smart and significant."

Deep sea livestream sparks science calls

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, Aug 5, (AP): Transparent-faced fish drift through dusky waters. Snowlike flecks of dead plants sift down from the world above. Soft sponges peek through the soot of the seafloor. Only occasional mutters among marine biologists break the thick silence.

Somehow, this livestream of sea life in the South Atlantic has Argentines hooked.

The researchers behind this remotely operated vehicle filming life-forms 4,000 meters (13,000 feet) undersea told The Associated Press on Monday that they never expected their wonky deep-sea expedition to become such a social media sensation.

The video feed has attracted more than 1.6 million views a day on YouTube, dominated TV news broadcasts and even sparked a national conversation about the defunding of Argentine science under libertarian President Javier Milei.

"It was a huge surprise for us," said expedition leader Daniel Lauretta. "It's something that fills our hearts because we want to spread the word."

Outfitted with high-definition cameras and state-of-the-art sensors, the roving robot captures the enigmatic organisms of Mar de Plata's submarine canyon with exceptional clarity

and detail for the first time.

The region, where the warm current from Brazil meets the cold current coming up from the Falkland Islands, is known for its little-studied biodiversity.

In dives lasting around eight hours a day, the camera encounters an array of surprising creatures lurking in the inky depths off the coast of Buenos Aires: An orange starfish so bright it drew comparisons to Patrick of "SpongeBob SquarePants" cartoon fame, a sea cucumber viewers nicknamed "sweet potato," a deep sea crab that looked like a hairy spider.

"The colors, the zoom capability - that really amazed me," Lauretta said. "I think that feeling reached the public too."

Often peaking at some 50,000 simultaneous viewers, the livestream from the deep-sea research vessel kicked off last week and runs until Aug. 10.

Argentine researchers and American experts from the nonprofit of former Google CEO Eric E. Schmidt, the Schmidt Ocean Institute Foundation, use the vehicle to map the underwater gorge, collect samples and identify scores of new species at a depth below the reach of sunlight, where scientists have only begun to scratch the surface when it comes to understanding marine life.

China tests high-resolution CT scanner

SHANGHAI, Aug 5, (Xinhua): A Shanghai-based medical-device firm has launched clinical trials for its innovative CT scanner, which decodes every captured photon to produce sharp, detail-rich images and usher in a new era of personalized, precision diagnostics.

The domestically developed photon-counting spectral CT from Shanghai United Imaging Healthcare is currently undergoing clinical evaluations at both Zhongshan Hospital and Ruijin Hospital in the city.

Harnessing semiconductor detectors for highly efficient direct photon-to-electric conversion, the system generates multi-spectral imaging that maps tissue components -- such as iodine, calcium, water and soft tissue -- in exquisite detail, according to the company.

"Conventional CT transforms X-rays into visible light via scintillator detectors, producing images akin to black-and-white photos that cannot deliver true, color-coded precision

imaging," explained Du Yanfeng, president of the CT Division at United Imaging Healthcare.

"Photon-counting spectral CT's ultra-high resolution allows us to spot lesions earlier and clearly," said Yan Fuhua from Ruijin Hospital's radiology department.

Since the heart never stops beating, it's the toughest organ to image, Yan added. "This new 'camera' can sharply reveal vessels and the heart's structural details, offering more insight into cardiac anatomy and function."

This technology offers significant research potential for early detection of cerebrovascular diseases, dementia and more, said Zeng Mengsu, head of radiology at Zhongshan Hospital.

The new CT scanner can also slash radiation exposure by 60 to 70 percent, with some organs seeing reductions of up to 80 to 90 percent, dramatically enhancing exam safety, Du said.

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De'Aaron driven to add to San Antonio championship legacy

Spurs, Fox agree to four-year, \$228m extension

SAN ANTONIO, Aug 5, (AP): De'Aaron Fox says he has vivid memories of many of the San Antonio Spurs' championship runs, just from being a basketball fan.

He now wants to find out how it would feel as a player.

Fox signed a four-year, \$228 million maximum contract extension, cementing his status as a key part of what the Spurs are trying to build around All-Star center Victor Wembanyama.

The Spurs announced the signing, and a person familiar with the financial terms confirmed those details to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity since the team did not make the numbers public.

Fox, in remarks distributed by the team, said he's driven to add to the Spurs' championship legacy.

"Just being able to be part of an organization like this ... you come in here and you feel that. You feel that in the environment. You feel that in

the fans," Fox said. "And then you go into the practice facility or you go into the arena and you see those banners hanging ... there's nothing you can do besides try to build on that."

Fox is under contract this season for the final year of his five-year, \$163 million deal. The extension starts in 2026-27.

ESPN first reported the agreement.

The move was expected after the Spurs made a big splash at the trade deadline last season by getting Fox from the Sacramento Kings. Fox has career averages of 21.5 points and 6.1 assists in eight NBA seasons. He averaged 19.7 points and 6.8 assists in 17 games with the Spurs last season. Fox missed the final 18 games due to surgery to repair the extensor tendon in his left fifth finger.

"What'll be different going forward is fans will see me play with 10 fingers," Fox said.



In this file photo, San Antonio Spurs guard De'Aaron Fox (4) shoots against Memphis Grizzlies forward Jaylen Wells in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Memphis, Tenn. (AP)

NCAA: talks ongoing about 2027

'No expansion of tournaments beyond 68 teams this season'

WASHINGTON, Aug 5, (AP): The NCAA men's and women's basketball tournaments will not expand beyond 68 teams in 2026, but future growth remains on the radar.

"Expanding the tournament fields is no longer being contemplated for the 2026 men's and women's basketball championships," Dan Gavitt, NCAA senior vice president of basketball, said in a statement on Monday. "However, the committees will continue conversations on whether to recommend expanding to 72 or 76 teams in advance of the 2027 championships."

NCAA President Charlie Baker has said adding teams could add value to the tournament, and he said the NCAA already has had "good conversations" with TV partners CBS and Warner Bros., whose deal runs through 2032 at the cost of around \$1.1 billion a year.

The NCAA Tournament expanded from 64 to 68 teams in 2011. The change introduced the First Four round, a set of pre-tournament games in which the four lowest-seeded at-large teams and four lowest-seeded conference champions compete for spots in the traditional 64-team bracket.

Baker indicated in May that the current formula has flaws and said it would be beneficial to give more opportunities to worthy teams.

"If you have a tournament that's got 64 or 68 teams in it, you're going to have a bunch of teams that are prob-

ably among what most people would consider to be the best 68 or 70 teams in the country that aren't going to make the tournament, period," Baker said then. "The point behind going from 68 to 72 or 76 is to basically give some of those schools that were probably among the 72, 76, 68, 64 best teams in the country a way into the tournament."

Coaches have expressed different opinions about an expanded bracket. Tom Izzo, Nate Oats and Dan Hurley have indicated they like the field at 68 but Texas coach Sean Miller told CBS Sports he wouldn't mind expansion.

"Never before has the tournament felt more even, with few exceptions," Miller said. "On any given night in a 40-minute game, it's just amazing what can happen. I think adding depth to that will only make what's already good even better."

SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey said the league backs expansion "but you just don't jump into it."

"So, if there are reasons from a broadcast point, a financial point, logistics point or competitive realities that don't support expansion, again, we're going to be fine," he said at SEC football media days last month. "But I think this is the right direction to at least explore."

Kansas coach Bill Self said fellow Big 12 coaches seem to favor an NCAA tourney expansion. The Big 12 had seven bids in 2025, half the total of the SEC.

"There was a little bit that was brought forth and the consensus among the coaches, even though it was very little, would be in favor of that," he said earlier this year. "I don't know if you could make it where it was totally equitable all the way across the board for everybody."



In this undated handout photo provided by Tulane Athletics, Asaf Friedler practices for the 2024-25 season at Tulane University in New Orleans, La. (AP)

Prairie View A&M becomes just latest Division I college to eliminate tennis

WASHINGTON, Aug 5, (AP): This should be an exhilarating moment for college tennis.

Wimbledon featured a record 26 current or former college players in men's singles and nine more in the women's draw. TCU's Jack Pinnington Jones and San Diego's Oliver Tarvet, who reached the second round, played for their college teams just this spring. Ben Shelton, a 2022 NCAA singles champion at Florida, reached the quarterfinals.

All of this is occurring as the threat of elimination faces numerous tennis programs.

Prairie View A&M became just the latest Division I college to eliminate tennis when it announced Monday it was dropping its men's and women's programs.

According to the International Tennis Association, which governs college tennis, other Division I schools cutting tennis since 2023 include Central Arkansas (women), Eastern Illinois (men and women), Lindenwood (men), Louisiana-Monroe (women), Radford (men and women), St. Francis College (men and women), San Francisco (men and women), Seattle (men) and UTEP (women).

Former San Francisco men's player Asaf Friedler noted the Dons hadn't even finished the 2024 season when the athletic director emailed about a meeting the following day, where they learned the program would be dropped in a matter of weeks.

Friedler remembers players crying at practice later that day.

He said a recruit had committed to San Francisco just a couple of days before the announcement, a sign that even coaches were caught off guard.

"We were all like in shock," Friedler said. "We didn't know what to say. We looked at each other and we were very confused."

During the pandemic, nearly two dozen men's or women's tennis programs were eliminated.

But the latest cuts come as colleges across the country deal with the hard choices and financial realities of the \$2.8 billion House settlement. Revenue sharing tends to favor football and basketball, and there are roster caps. The calculations are different for each school.

David Mullins, CEO of the ITA, says college

tennis is a great pathway to the pros.

"Our position within the tennis industry has never been better," Mullins said. "But on the other side, we're dealing with all these things happening with the NCAA model. Probably the challenges that we're facing from the collegiate side domestically have never been greater."

John Hartwell, who announced Monday that he was stepping down as Louisiana-Monroe's athletic director to pursue other opportunities, noted earlier this summer that schools opting into the settlement must sponsor at least 16 sports. Louisiana-Monroe had 17 sports before eliminating women's tennis.

"Probably a factor for some folks is the squad size, that probably has something to do with it," Hartwell said. "Facilities are a challenge, too. I think those are probably key components. But I also think a lot of these schools that have more than required 16 sports are analyzing everything cost-wise."

Cutting tennis saved Louisiana-Monroe about \$250,000. Hartwell said the scholarship funds that went to tennis now will be directed toward the school's other women's teams.

Roster size also leaves tennis vulnerable. Dropping a different sport with more team members leaves more athletes disappointed.

"When you're cutting a sport, it's not a fun position to be in," Central Arkansas athletic director Matt Whiting said. "You have to factor in numbers in those situations. (Tennis) certainly has a smaller roster."

Schools that eliminate tennis programs general-



In this file photo, Jack Pinnington Jones of Britain returns to Flavio Cobolli of Italy during their second round men's singles match at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London. (AP)

ly allow players to remain on scholarship throughout their time at the school. Many choose to transfer, searching for a new school while adjusting to a new country. Mullins estimates about 60% of the players on Division I teams generally come from outside the U.S.

Alex Aldaz, who is from Spain and played for Eastern Illinois this year, said his team got the news after the season already had ended and many of them were already back in their home countries.

"Their faces were like they didn't know how to react," Aldaz said. "They were lost... sad and angry."

Aldaz is now at Mercer. Friedler, who is from Israel, played for Tulane this past season. Many of their former teammates at their original schools weren't as fortunate.

Many college tennis programs don't have facilities on campus, forcing them to rent local courts. Whiting said Central Arkansas had a facility on campus that required an estimated \$1.5 million to \$2 million in repairs. Hartwell said Louisiana-Monroe's tennis facility needed about \$750,000 in improvements.

Mullins said the U.S. Tennis Association has offered grants to colleges opening full-service tennis centers to foster the sport's growth in their communities. Those schools then can make money by renting out their courts when their teams aren't using them.

South Carolina is the latest school to attempt this, hiring Dainyell Fox as the Carolina Tennis Center's operations manager within the past year. Fox has started organizing tennis lessons and classes while also exploring other potential revenue options.

"Our goal isn't going to necessarily put us completely in the black, but it reduces the financial footprint of men's and women's tennis," South Carolina deputy athletic director Judy Van Horn said.

The list of former Gamecocks includes Francisco Cerundolo, who is in the top 25 of the ATP rankings. Just as a growing number of former major-conference players succeed on the pro circuit, the struggle to survive is real for plenty of smaller programs.

"Our position is strengthened with each passing Grand Slam," Mullins said. "But on the other side, we have all these challenges here domestically that we're not able to control."

Wallabies hooker Porecki retires

SYDNEY, Aug 5, (AP): Hooker David Porecki, who was a late injury withdrawal from Australia's lineup for the third test against the British and Irish Lions last weekend, has announced his retirement.

Rugby Australia issued a statement saying the 32-year-old Porecki, who sustained a heel injury last week, was retiring immediately and ending a career that included five seasons in Britain with Saracens and London Irish from 2015.

He returned to Australia and the New South Wales Waratahs ahead of the 2021 Super Rugby season, and made his test debut a year later in a win for Australia against England in Perth.

Porecki was part of Australia's 2023 Rugby World Cup squad and became the 88th Wallabies captain after an injury to Will Skelton, leading the team in three of its four pool matches at the tournament. Two-time champion Australia was eliminated in the group stage for the first time ever at a Rugby World Cup, hastening a change of coaching staff and leadership.

Injury sidelined Porecki in 2024 but he returned to the Wallabies squad last month and started against Fiji in Aus-

tralia's first test of 2025.

His 21st and final test was at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on July 26, when the Lions clinched the three-test series with a contentious late try.

"Rugby has given me so much to be thankful for and has been such a massive part of my life for so long but it feels like the right time for me to turn the page and start a new chapter," Porecki said in the Rugby Australia statement.

Australia's list of injuries continues to grow just four tests in the international season, although there has been some positive news for the Wallabies with a potential return for Allan Ala'alotoa during the Rugby Championship.

Initially set to undergo shoulder surgery after sustaining an injury in Melbourne, Ala'alotoa is instead back in Canberra completing intensive rehab in the hope of rejoining the Wallabies for the four-nation tournament.

The 31-year-old prop is expected to be sidelined for six to eight weeks, giving him a chance of returning for the Sept. 13 test against Argentina in Sydney or the first match against New Zealand in Auckland two weeks later.

Best of the Rest

Silva faces lengthy injury layoff: Veteran Fluminense defender Thiago Silva could be sidelined for up to eight weeks due to a hamstring strain, the Brazilian club said on Monday.

Silva sustained the injury during Fluminense's 1-0 home victory over Gremio in Brazil's Serie A on Saturday.

Scans on Monday showed the 40-year-old had suffered a grade two tear of the right hamstring, for which he is already undergoing treatment, the Rio de Janeiro club said.

Silva will miss matches in the Serie A, Copa do Brasil and Copa Sudamericana.

Fluminense is currently ninth in the 20-team Brazilian top flight standings with 23 points from 16 games, 14 points behind leaders Flamengo. (Xinhua)

Carrascal eager for 'huge' opportunity: Colombia international midfielder Jorge Carrascal said he did not hesitate to accept an offer to join Brazilian giant Flamengo.

The 27-year-old was presented to the media on Monday after agreeing to a four-year deal reportedly worth 12 million euros (14 million U.S. dollars).

"It has been very exciting and also very stressful because of the difficulty of the transfer," Carrascal said of the two-month negotiation process between Flamengo and his former club, Dynamo Moscow.

"I didn't need time to think about it and made it known straight away that I wanted to come. It's something that motivates me."

It took a long time for the deal to be finalized but I always remained positive," Carrascal made 64 appearances across all competitions for Dynamo Moscow following his 2023 move from CSKA Moscow.

He said he is already looking forward to playing for the Rio de Janeiro club at the iconic Maracana Stadium.

"This is a huge opportunity for any player," said Carrascal, who has been capped 19 times for Colombia's national team.

"It's a team that competes and wins titles. I know about Flamengo's beautiful history and its importance in South American football."

I believe I made the right decision."

Carrascal is Flamengo's fourth signing of Brazil's mid-season transfer window, joining Saul, Emerson Royal and Samuel Lino. (Xinhua)

Lyon completes the signing of Sulc from Plzen

Leverkusen extends Schick's contract until 2030

LEVERKUSEN, Germany, Aug 5, (AP): Bayer Leverkusen has extended a contract for Czech Republic striker Patrik Schick until 2030, the German Bundesliga club said.

Schick's original deal was to expire in 2027.

The announcement came after a string of key players left the club this off-season.

They include midfielder Granit Xhaka, attacking midfielder Florian Wirtz, right back Jeremie Frimpong and defender Jonathan Tah - all crucial to Leverkusen's league and cup double

in 2024. Also, coach Xabi Alonso departed for Real Madrid.

Schick was Leverkusen's top scorer last season with 27 goals in 45 games and scored a total of 64 goals in the Bundesliga for the club since his arrival in 2020.

Former Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag, who was appointed in May to replace Alonso, is faced with a big rebuild due to the departures.

Leverkusen's off-season spending so far has gone on American attacking midfielder Malik Tillman from PSV

Eindhoven and former Liverpool defender Jarell Quansah, while the club's also signed Brentford's highly-rated goalkeeper Mark Flekken.

"Bayer 04 is working hard to assemble a top team for the future," Schick said. "I firmly believe that we will continue to play a significant role in the Bundesliga and in Europe."

Czech Republic international Pavel Sulc has completed a move to French club Lyon from Viktoria Plzen.

Both clubs confirmed the transfer

for a fee of 10 million euros (\$11.6 million) on Monday.

The offensive midfielder scored 15 goals and had nine assists last season for Viktoria in the Czech league, having netted 18 goals and added six assists the previous campaign.

In July, he won the Czech Republic's Golden Ball award for the first time for being the best player of the 2024-25 season.

The 24-year-old Sulc has played 14 international games for the Czech Republic, scoring four goals.

Barca opens disciplinary proceedings against German

Barcelona-Ter Stegen rift deepens amid medical report controversy

MADRID, Aug 5, (Xinhua): The relationship between FC Barcelona and goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen continues to worsen, with the club opening disciplinary proceedings against the goalkeeper.

Barca has taken the move after Ter Stegen reportedly refused to sign a medical report the club was going to send to La Liga's Medical Commission over the 33-year-old's back injury.

Ter Stegen had an operation on his back last week, with the goalkeeper posting on social media that he expected to be out of action for around three months. However, Barcelona's medical report estimates he will be sidelined for five months.

The difference is vital to Barcelona, because if La Liga accepts Ter Stegen will be out of action for over four months, the club would be able to drop him from its first-team squad and use 80 percent of his salary to register new players under La Liga's financial fair play rules.

Currently, Barcelona is unable to register new signings Joan Garcia, Rooney Bardghji and Marcus Rashford in its squad. Wojciech Szczesny and Gerard Martin are also unregistered following new contracts, with Martin promoted from the B-team.

With other avenues of income still to supply the necessary funds, Barcelona needs the money from Ter Stegen's salary to register at least some of the

five before its La Liga opener against Mallorca on August 16. However, for the moment, Ter Stegen is unwilling to back down, knowing that if he does so, he has no chance of playing until January, even if he is fit at the end of October.

The problem for Barcelona is even worse given that Ter Stegen and Inaki Pena are currently Barca's only two registered goalkeepers, with Pena not part of coach Hansi Flick's plan. That makes it more vital than ever that the club finds some way of registering Garcia and Szczesny, but the pressure on a goalkeeper who has played 422 times for the club is creating a conflict that shows no signs of ending.



Zverev reaches semifinals in Toronto

Canadian teenager Mboko advances at National Bank Open



Alexander Zverev, of Germany, hits a backhand return to Alexei Popyrin, of Australia, during their quarterfinal match at the National Bank Open men's tennis tournament in Toronto. (AP)

TORONTO, Aug 5, (AP): Top-seeded Alexander Zverev rallied to defeat No. 18 Alexei Popyrin of Australia 6-7 (8), 6-4, 6-3 to reach the semifinals of the National Bank Open.

Zverev, the 2017 tournament champion, will face No. 11 seed Karen Khachanov of Russia, who beat No. 26 Alex Michelsen of the U.S. 6-4, 7-6 (3).

Zverev, a German who is ranked No. 3, advanced to his 75th ATP Tour semifinal. He is looking for his 25th tournament title and eighth in an ATP 1000 Masters tournament.

The other quarterfinals are Tuesday. Second-seeded Taylor Fritz will take on No. 6 Andrey Rublev of Russia, while No. 4 Ben Shelton is slated to meet No. 9 Alex de Minaur of Australia. Both semifinals go Wednesday ahead of Thursday's title match.

Popyrin took the first set when his gentle backhand volley after a long rally grazed the top of the net and dropped for the winning point - much to the delight of

his fans, including one with an inflatable yellow kangaroo.

Zverev responded by immediately firing a ball completely out of Sobey's Stadium in frustration, but quickly regrouped to go up 2-0 in the second set.

Popyrin grabbed a break of his own before holding serve at 4-4. Zverev, who won the Canadian title in Montreal eight years ago when he defeated childhood idol Roger Federer, took a 5-4 lead and then again broke his opponent to even the match.

Ousted at the quarterfinal stage of last year's tournament, Zverev got another break to go up 2-0 in the third set before serving out the match.

The 28-year-old, who lost to top-ranked Jannik Sinner in the final at this year's Australian Open and made the French Open quarters, improved to 4-0 all-time against Popyrin, including a third-round victory at the Paris Olympics.

Zverev has two tournament wins on clay this year, and is the highest-ranked player competing in a Toronto field lacking some significant star power after Sinner, No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz, No. 5 Jack Draper and No. 6 Novak Djokovic all skipped the hard-court event.

The 25-year-old Popyrin, ranked No. 26, had his nine-match winning streak in Canada snapped.

Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko advanced to her first career WTA Tour semifinal with a 6-4, 6-2 win victory over Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro on Monday night at the National Bank Open.

Two days after ousting No. 1 seed Coco Gauff in just 62 minutes, there was no letdown for the 18-year-old from Toronto.

After taking a back-and-forth - and error-filled - first set, Mboko was broken in a sluggish start to the second set but broke back in the fourth and sixth games to take a 4-2 advantage.

Mboko is the first Canadian to reach the WTA 1000 event's semifinals since Bianca Andreescu's title run in 2019. She's also the youngest woman to reach the semis since Belinda Bencic's 2015 win in Toronto.

Mboko will face Elena Rybakina, who led Marta Kostyuk 6-1, 2-1 when the Ukrainian was forced to stop playing because of an apparent arm injury.

Rybakina, the No. 9 seed from Kazakhstan, converted three of her 10 break-point chances in the quarterfinal

matchup at IGA Stadium. The players shook hands at the 54-minute mark before the 24th-seeded Kostyuk exited the court in tears.

After the third game, Kostyuk's trainers wrapped her forearm in medical tape.

In a breakthrough year, Mboko has surged from outside the top 300 to a career-high No. 85. That number is projected to climb to at least No. 55, according to WTA live rankings.

After two injury-plagued years, Mboko - who had shown promise as a junior - opened the season with a 22-match win streak and captured five titles on the lower-tier ITF Tour.

She then qualified for her first Grand Slam main draw at the French Open, reaching the third round, before stunning 25th-seeded Magdalena Frech in the first round at Wimbledon.

And the upsets keep coming.

In Montreal, Mboko has rattled off wins over 79th-ranked Kimberly Birrell, No. 23 seed Sofia Kenin, 39th-ranked Marie Bouzkova and Gauff, who is ranked No. 2.

Her latest victory boosted her record to 25-8 against higher-ranked players and 51-9 in all competitions.

CECAFA Kagame Cup set for September return in Tanzania

KAMPALA, Aug 5, (Xinhua): Twelve teams from the Council of East and Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA) region will feature in the CECAFA Kagame Cup from September 2 to 25 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

CECAFA Executive Director Auka Gecheo told Xinhua on Tuesday that one guest side from southern Africa will also be invited. "We are excited that the tournament will return to Tanzania next month and will be more competitive than it was last year," said Gecheo.

Reigning domestic champion Vipers SC will represent Uganda at the tournament, which will also be used as a platform for teams to prepare ahead of the 202526 CAF Champions League.

Vipers communication manager Abdu Wasike said that the team has

already embarked on preparations ahead of the new season and the Kagame Cup.

"We are looking forward to taking part in the tournament in Tanzania where many of our new players will also be tested," added Wasike.

The regional tournament is also supported by the Rwandan President Paul Kagame, an ardent football fan who has injected prize money worth 60,000 U.S. dollars annually for over a decade.

The other teams expected to take part will come from South Sudan, Zanzibar, Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Djibouti and Tanzania.

Zambia Premier League side Red Arrows lifted last year's Kagame Cup after defeating Rwanda's APR FC in the final at the KMC Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

Partey granted conditional bail

LONDON, Aug 5, (AP): Former Arsenal soccer player Thomas Partey was granted conditional bail on Tuesday after appearing in court charged with five counts of rape.

The 32-year-old midfielder, who has also been charged with one count of assault, appeared at Westminster Magistrates' Court, London. The alleged offenses, between 2021-22, relate to three women.

The conditions of Partey's bail include that he cannot contact any of the women and must notify police of any permanent changes of address or international travel.

Partey is a free agent after his contract at Arsenal expired at the end of June. He is reportedly set to join Spanish team Villarreal.

"I understand he's no longer employed in this country and playing in Spain now," chief magistrate Paul Goldspring said.

Partey arrived at court wearing a dark zip up sweater and carrying a suit jacket. In court, he stood with his arms behind his back in the dock.

His lawyer Jenny Wiltshire previously said he "denies all the charges against him" and that he welcomed "the opportunity to finally clear his name".

Police said the investigation was opened in February 2022 when it first received a report of rape. Partey was charged July 4 - days after his Arsenal contract expired.

He is due to appear at the Old Bailey Sept. 2.



Former Arsenal footballer Thomas Partey leaves Westminster Magistrates' Court where he is charged with five counts of rape and one count of sexual assault, in London. (AP)

Kazma bolsters squad with Al-Saad signing

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 5: Kazma officially signed Fahad Saad Al-Saad from Qadsiya to strengthen its first volleyball team ahead of the new season.

This move follows Kazma's renewal of Brazilian coach Cacaratto's contract and the addition of Brazilian professional Costa, as the club looks to build a competitive squad for the upcoming season.

Meanwhile, with the conclusion of the previous volleyball season, several players have parted ways with their clubs. Notably, Jasem Al-Sabbagh - a standout player - has ended his stint with Kuwait Club after four successful seasons in which he helped secure several domestic titles. Al-Sabbagh is currently



Fahad Saad Al-Saad

reviewing multiple offers from local clubs as he considers his next move.

In a similar development, set-

ter Abdullah Al-Assaf has ended his contract with Al-Shabab Club, making him a free agent. Given his strong reputation in

the setter position, several local teams are expected to compete for his signature in the coming days. Additionally, Mohammad Al-Ali has also terminated his contract with Salibikhat Club.

On the national front, Kuwait's junior national volleyball team opened its training camp in Egypt with an impressive 3-0 victory over the Egyptian junior team in their first friendly match. The camp is part of preparations for the 17th Arab Junior Volleyball Championship, scheduled to take place in Jordan from August 14 to 26.

Kuwait was drawn into Group B alongside Bahrain, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq. Group A includes Egypt, the UAE, Libya, Lebanon, and host nation Jordan. The team is led by national coach Mohammad Abdulrazzaq, with assistant coach Mishal Al-Subti.

Louisiana-Monroe athletic director John Hartwell resigns

MONROE, La., Aug 5, (AP): Louisiana-Monroe athletic director John Hartwell resigned after two years and six months on the job.

An announcement made by the university said Hartwell, who was hired in February of 2023, will be "pursuing other professional opportunities."

"We appreciate what John has done for ULM Athletics over the last few seasons and wish him and his family all the best," ULM President Dr. Carrie L. Castille said.

"There is a plan in place, and we will be making that plan known as soon as the logistics are finalized," she added. "My commitment to ULM

Athletics and the Sun Belt Conference is unwavering, and we will continue to find ways to win on the field, on the court, in the community, and in the classroom."

ULM finished last in the Sun Belt Conference in men's basketball and baseball last season, and its 2024 football team went two games below .500.

Hartwell said in a one-sentence statement that he was grateful for the support he'd received from "student athletes, coaches, senior staff, donors, alumni, and all of Warhawk nation."

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Napoli's Kevin De Bruyne plays the ball during a friendly soccer match between Napoli and Brest at the Teofilo Patini Stadium in Castel Di Sangro, Italy. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait U-19 ready to make mark in Egypt



Kuwait U-19 players pose for a group photo.

Blues launch World Championship campaign against Sweden

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

CAIRO, Aug 5: Kuwait's under-19 national handball team begins its journey in the 11th IHF Men's Youth World Championship today in Cairo, Egypt. The tournament runs until August 16, with Kuwait opening its campaign against Sweden at 12:45 pm in Group A. Portugal and Austria also compete in the same group.

Today's schedule features 14 matches as part of the preliminary round, with 32 teams divided into eight groups:

- Group A: Sweden, Kuwait, Portugal, Austria
- Group B: Hungary, Switzerland, Morocco, Kosovo
- Group C: Serbia, Spain, Croatia, Algeria
- Group D: Iceland, Brazil, Kenya, Saudi Arabia
- Group E: Germany, Slovenia, Uruguay, Faroe Islands
- Group F: Norway, France, Argentina, Mexico
- Group G: Egypt, Japan, South Korea, Bahrain
- Group H: Denmark, Tunisia, Czech Republic, USA

This marks only the second edition of the championship featuring 32 teams, following the 2023 tournament in Croatia.

Despite facing a challenging group, Kuwait aims to start strong. The team prepared extensively with an overseas training camp in Croatia and Slovenia, where they played a series of friendly matches to elevate their performance ahead of the world stage.

Al-Qadsia announced the signing of Tunisian handball talents Rayan Zriat and Jihad Arar to bolster their roster for the upcoming season starting in September.

These acquisitions reflect the club's determination to compete for all major titles in the forthcoming campaign.

Zriat arrives after three successful seasons with Shabab Al Ahli in the UAE and is regarded as one of Tunisia's top players. Arar, familiar with Al-Qadsia after a previous short stint following his move from Qatar's Al-Ahli last season, has also played for Qatar's Al-Rayyan and Tunisia's Espérance.

Additionally, Al-Qadsia secured goalkeeper Ahmed Al-Farhan on a free transfer. Al-Farhan is recognized as one of the best goalkeepers in Kuwait and has represented several local clubs. Earlier this season, the club also added star player Nawaf Al-Shammari from Kuwait Club.

Kuwait Club heads to Prague with 26 players

Al-Arabi gears up for AFC playoff with second friendly against Baniyas in UAE

DUBAI, Aug 5: Al-Arabi Club is set to play its second friendly match of the Abu Dhabi training camp this evening at 6:30 p.m. against Baniyas of the United Arab Emirates.

Al-Arabi opened its friendly, with a narrow 2-1 defeat to Hatta. The team will wrap up its camp in Prague, Czech Republic, running through August 28. The camp will include four friendly matches as the team prepares to defend its domestic titles.

Led by Montenegrin coach Nebojsa Jovic, Kuwait Club is gearing up for the 2025-2026 season, which kicks off on September 12 with a Zain Premier League opener against Al-Tadamon. The team also aims to retain the Crown Prince Cup and Super Cup.

Nebojsa has named a 26-man squad for the



Al-Awadhi participates in Al-Arabi's final training sessions.

Prague camp, featuring key local players alongside notable international signings:

Local players: Sami Al-Sanea, Mishari Ghanam, Fahad Hamoud, Fahad Al-Hajri, Reda Hani, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Ali Hussein, Yousef Al-Khubayzi, Ibrahim Kamil, Abdulrahman Kamil, Faisal Zayed, Amr Abdel Fattah, Mohammed Daham, Mohammed Fareeh, Ahmed Alaa, Yousef Nasser, Ahmed Al-Zanki, Saud Al-Houshan, Dhari Al-Otaibi, Khaled Al-Rashidi, and Hamoud Al-Sanousi.

Foreign players: Henock Baka (Congo), Mohamed Marhoon (Bahrain), Arsen "Malik" Zola (Congo), Yassine Khenissi (Tunisia), and Sam Morsy (England).

Al-Tadamon officially began preseason training under new Portuguese head coach Miguel Leal, as the team prepares for its league opener against Kuwait SC on September 12.

The Farwaniya club has bolstered its squad with four foreign signings: French duo Jonathan Bamba and Zakaria Slimani, Portuguese midfielder Pedro, and Syrian attacker Ahmad Al-Dali.

Additionally, Al-Tadamon secured several local reinforcements, including Abdulmohsen Al-Ajmi, Salman Al-Ajmi, Turki Al-Mutairi, and Ali Fadhel.

Ashkanani shows appreciation to Sheikh Isa bin Ali for support



Ashkanani presents a commemorative shield to Sheikh Isa in a special ceremony.

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MANAMA, Aug 5: Kuwait basketball team player Hussein Ashkanani has expressed deep gratitude to Sheikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa, Vice President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee, for generously covering the cost of his recent surgery in Bahrain.

Ashkanani sustained a severe shoulder dislocation during Kuwait's match against Egypt in the Arab Basketball Championship, which concluded last week in Manama. The injury required immediate surgery, which was fully sponsored by Sheikh Isa as a gesture of hospitality and care for Bahrain's tournament guests.

In appreciation, Ashkanani presented a commemorative shield to Sheikh Isa in a special ceremony attended by Kuwait Basketball Federation President **Dari Burgess**, team delegation head Owaid Al-Enezi, and team manager Mohammed Al-Hassawi.

Trump establishes task force for 2028 Olympic Games preparation in Los Angeles

WASHINGTON, Aug 5, (AP): President Donald Trump established a task force on the 2028 Olympic Games being held in Los Angeles.

Trump signed an executive order on Tuesday to make the task force official, the White House said.

Trump has said that the Los Angeles Summer Games are

among the events he's most looking forward to in his second term. The 2028 Games will be the first Olympics to be hosted by the U.S. since the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Trump "considers it a great honor to oversee this global sporting spectacle," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a statement,

calling sports one of the president's "greatest passions."

LA28 president and chair Casey Wasserman said the task force "marks an important step forward in our planning efforts and reflects our shared commitment to delivering not just the biggest, but the greatest Games the world has ever seen in the summer of 2028."

Best of the Rest

Betis signs Deossa: La Liga side Real Betis on Monday announced an agreement with Mexican club Monterrey to sign Colombian midfielder Nelson Deossa.

Deossa is expected to sign a contract through June 2030 for a fee of about 13 million euros (15 million U.S. dollars).

The 25-year-old impressed at the recent FIFA Club World Cup, prompting Betis to move quickly for the left-footed midfielder, known for his long-range shooting. He is expected to help fill the gap left by U.S. international Johnny Cardoso, who

joined Atletico Madrid earlier this summer, although Deossa offers a different style in midfield.

Real Sociedad also moved in the transfer market, with the San Sebastian club close to signing Portuguese international winger Goncalo Guedes from Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Guedes is in San Sebastian for a medical ahead of a deal worth about five million euros. The 28-year-old will return to Spain after impressing at Valencia from 2017 to 2022, before joining Wolves for about 30 million euros.

He struggled in the Premier League and was loaned to former club Benfica, before spending last season at Villarreal, where he made 17 La Liga appearances. (Xinhua)