



Pages 14-16



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Hawalli leads hotspots

KFF reports 1,304 fires, conducts 3,532 rescues

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (KUNA): Kuwait Fire Force responded to 1,304 fire reports and carried out 3,532 rescue operations across all governorates during the first half of 2025, said Public Relations and Media Director at Kuwait Fire Force Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Ghareeb on Thursday.



Al-Ghareeb

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Ghareeb said that Hawalli topped the fire reports with 215 cases, followed by Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 202 report, Al-Ahmadi 195 report, Al-Farwaniya 183 report, Al-Asima 171 report, and Al-Jahra 147.

Al-Ghareeb pointed out that key causes of fires included electrical overloads, children mishandling flammable items, and arson or suspected arson.

He stressed the effectiveness of the force's proactive response plan, which ensured rapid intervention and safety during emergencies.

Continued on Page 5



Drivers make their way to Kuwait City, braving Thursday's intense heat and hazy roads under the blazing sun.

Photo by Samer Shiqr

Rain looms over weekend

Kuwait feels summer's final breath with Kleibeen onset

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (Agencies): The Al-Ojairi Scientific Center announced that summer is entering its final phase starting Monday, August 11, with the arrival of the "Kleibeen" season, which is considered one of the last periods marked by peak temperatures.

In a press statement, the center explained that the Kleibeen season lasts for 13 days and marks the transition between the intense summer heat and the cooler season known as "Suhail". This period is characterized by intense heat accompanied by rising humidity levels, which help lower temperatures, due to the blowing southern and southeastern winds.

The strong winds known locally as "Al-Sumoom" calm down during this season, allowing the earth's surface to cool.

By the end of the Kleibeen season, weather conditions begin to moderate, and temperatures gradually drop.

The center clarified that the term "Kleibeen" refers to two stars that are part of the Great Dog constellation, known to astronomers. During this time, nights lengthen as daylight hours decrease.

Meanwhile, Kuwait will experience hot and humid weather this weekend,

Continued on Page 5

BANGLADESH ENVOY LEADS EFFORTS TO ASSIST KUWAIT-DEPORTED LABORERS

Kuwait expels 127 Bangladeshi workers following wage protest

Company implicated in past abuses at center of latest deportation row

By JCF

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Exclusive

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: In a disturbing incident that has sparked outrage among the Bangladesh community as reported by Bangladesh's NTV on July 31st that 130 Bangladeshi workers were deported from Kuwait after they approached a local police station to protest five months of unpaid wages.

Instead of receiving help, the workers were reportedly detained and deported on July 30th – a swift and harsh response to what began as a plea for justice. In the aftermath, Al-Seyassah/Arab Times met with the envoy of Bangladesh and the embassy's labor wing chief to investigate the chain of events that led to the deportation of 127 Bangladeshi nationals, highlighting yet another grim chapter of migrant workers.

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times has since launched an in-depth investigation into the matter. In an exclusive interview, the Bangladesh Ambassador to Kuwait, His Excellency Major General Syed Tareq Hussain, offered fresh insight into the troubling episode.

Continued on Page 5



Bangladesh Ambassador to Kuwait, His Excellency Major General Syed Tareq Hussain

'Bay closure hits supply'

Kuwait's fishermen sound alarm over shrinking catch, high costs

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Fish resources are one of the country's renewable natural resources, serving as a staple food for a large segment of the Kuwaiti population and playing a vital role in strengthening national food security.

As a result, the relevant authorities are keen about developing this vital sector and sustainably increasing its production.

Despite the optimism among officials and fishermen about this year's shrimp catch, which appears more abundant than in previous years, Kuwait continues to face major challenges in both production and investment.

These have led to a decline in the availability of shrimp and local fish, particularly popular species such as mead and zubaidi.

In this context, the daily met with several officials and specialists in the marine fishing sector, who confirmed that government efforts con-

tinue to control the market and provide seafood products at reasonable prices.

According to the specialists, some of the regulations imposed by the authorities responsible for managing fishing have caused catch quantities to decline threefold, led to the disappearance of important species from the market, most notably mead, and resulted in price increases for others, especially zubaidi.

Experts called for reconsidering the designated fishing distance, suggesting it be reduced to between 6 and 7 miles instead of 12, while maintaining strict environmental controls to protect coral reefs and ensure the sustainability of marine life.

They also called for opening limited areas within the bay for commercial fishing on a seasonal and controlled basis, aiming to balance environmental protection with food availability.

Meanwhile, the Shift A Supervisor at the Sharq Fish Market, affiliated with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Hamoud Al-Hamdi explained that fishermen face major obstacles that directly affect the availability and prices of fish in the market. These challenges are evident from the daily work and constant interaction with fishermen and consumers.

He said, "We live in a restricted fishing reality, imposed by long-distance requirements and high costs, which negatively impact the market and consumers."

In a press statement, Al-Hamdi explained that the number of daily baskets of fish and shrimp used to reach about 700, but today it has decreased to between 200 and 300 baskets on normal days, and only 400 to 500 baskets during the shrimp season, despite the first days of the season witnessing the injection of good quantities amounting to about 20,500 tons of fish and 17,988 tons of local shrimp.

Continued on Page 5



Group photo during the opening of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) AI Creativity Center.

KUNA photos

Microsoft fuels oil future

Kuwait unveils KOC AI Creativity Center to transform energy sector

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (KUNA): The opening of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) AI Creativity Center is part of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) transformative strategy, which would have a "more than meets the eye" impact on the national energy sector, said Oil Minister Tareq Al-Roumi on Thursday.

Speaking to the press on the sidelines of the ceremony at the KOC's office complex Al-Ahmadi city, Al-Roumi, who is also KPC Chairman, said that there was an intention to link oil fields with AI technology to increase production, enhance operational capacity, and reduce costs.

For his part, KPC CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah said that the center would reduce the number of days required to drill a single oil, adding that all drilling operations would also see an increased operational efficiency.

He stressed that AI technology would not substitute the human factor, which is still required to analyze AI-generated data.

He revealed that Kuwait's production had reached 2.54 million barrels per day in line with the production quotas set by the OPEC+ alliance, adding that plans were set to increase capacity by four million barrels per day by 2035.

Meanwhile, KOC CEO Ahmad Al-Eidan affirmed that the AI center is a strategic step in the company's vision, which came in line with Kuwait's plans for digital transformation and innovation within the energy sector.

Al-Eidan said that KOC saw potential in emerging technologies, including AI, indicating that the company's partnership with Microsoft was more than a technical agreement; it was an integrated system that linked creativity, national expertise, and the best of global practices.

The cooperation has yielded visible results, which included smart oil wells that depended on accurate data and production numbers, easing the overall pro-



Minister of Oil Tareq Al-Roumi



Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar



President of Microsoft for Middle East and Africa (MEA) Naim Yazbeck

cess of oil excavation and production. The AI Creativity Center will be the cornerstone for the energy industry in Kuwait the upcoming decades, said Al-Eidan who affirmed that investments in developing national cadres and youth would continue to be pursued.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait food subsidies rise 20% in April-May to KD56.4 million

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Subsidies provided by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for various food items increased by 20 percent, amounting to KD56.41 million in April and May -- KD25.10 million in April and KD31.31 million in May; a 4.3 percent year-on-year decrease compared to KD32.70 million food subsidies in May 2024.

Recent statistics from the ministry showed that the group of basic commodities disbursed through the ration card accounted for about 38.6 percent of the value of subsidies for food supplies in April and May, amounting to KD22 million. This increased by 75 percent in May, totaling KD14 million compared to only KD8 million in April -- an annual decrease of 12.5 percent compared to the subsidies provided for basic commodities in May 2024, which amounted to about KD16 million.

Trade support for dairy products and infant nutrition during the two months amounted to around KD2.4 million or 4.3 percent of the total value of subsidies. It states a monthly decrease of 8.3 percent or KD104,000 -- KD1.3 million in April and KD1.1 million in May.

Construction materials accounted for approximately 57 percent of the value of subsidies provided for food supplies during the two months, totaling KD32.2 million -- 2.4 percent

monthly increase, totaling KD16.3 million in May compared to KD15.9 million in April.

The total number of ration cards by the end of May 2025 reached 272,000 -- 2.2 percent annual increase over the 266,000 in May 2024.

The number of individuals benefiting from subsidized food supplies in May reached 229,000 -- three percent annual increase compared to 222,000 in May last year.

The number of trademark registration applications in May reached 1,255 -- a 12 percent increase over the 1,120 applications in April. A total of 1,162 trademarks were published -- two percent more than the previous month.

The number of grievances against a trademark registration decision or suspension of a condition reached 10 -- 233 percent increase. The number of objections to the acceptance of a trademark registration reached 18, and 616 trademark renewal applications during the final year of its protection period -- decreased by 15 percent compared to the previous month.

The number of trademark renewal publication transactions reached 664 -- 16 percent decrease compared to April. The number of license publication transactions reached 18 -- a decrease of 18 percent compared to April.

Continued on Page 5



2 Kuwaiti diplomacy: Style over substance?

8 NBK warns against using public Wi-Fi for banking

8 ABK boosts customer engagement to promote banking updates and data security awareness

Kuwait derails dope dreams

Marijuana, meth ... mayhem

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Drug Control General Department (DCGD) at the Ministry of Interior, under the leadership of Brigadier General Mohammad Qabazard, has dealt a huge blow to drug trafficking dealers through the arrest of two Egyptians and the identification of a third suspect -- a Kuwaiti citizen currently abroad.

Continued on Page 5

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:44	Asr	15:29
Sunrise ..	05:11	Maghrib ..	18:36
Zohr	11:54	Isha	20:00

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Hot, humid and partly cloudy with light to moderate northeasterly wind to southeasterly wind, with speeds of 10-38 km/h with a slight chance for rain that might be thundery at times.
By Night: Hot to rather hot and

Weather
humid with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-38 km/h with a slight chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for fog forming over some areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	45	34
Kuwait Airport	46	31
Abdaly	50	31
Jahra	50	34
Salmiyah	41	32
Ahmadi	43	27
Nuwaisib	43	28

Amir consoles Ghana over 'copter crash deaths

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a condolences cable to Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama after a military helicopter crash in Ashanti province killed Ghana's defense minister, the minister of environment, science, technology and innovation, and several other officials.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir conveyed deepest sympathies and sincere condolences to President Mahama, the friendly people of Ghana and the victims' families, wishing them strength and patience in the wake of the tragedy.

Crown Prince

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See Also Page 7

Other Voices

Kuwaiti diplomacy: Style over substance?

By Abdulaziz Mohammed Al-Anjeri

There is a quiet but growing concern about the direction of Kuwait's diplomacy. This concern does not stem from a single crisis but from a slow and steady unraveling of purpose. The problem is not external pressure or geopolitical obstacles. The issue lies within.

Too often, diplomatic posts are treated as symbolic gestures rather than serious strategic assignments. Individuals are chosen based on surface-level qualifications while deeper attributes like judgment, experience, and policy fluency are overlooked. The result is a foreign service that occupies space but rarely shapes it.

Kuwait today lacks a compelling presence in some of the world's most important capitals. These are places where diplomacy should be sharp and strategic, yet we remain underrepresented or misrepresented. This failure is not due to a lack of resources or opportunity. It reflects a deeper issue of institutional neglect.

Nearly twenty years ago, Kuwait established a Diplomatic Institute with the goal of building a strong and skilled foreign service. Despite having been led by senior officials and backed by public funding, the institute has not delivered on its promise. It has not built a generation of diplomats who are ready for the complexity of today's world. There is little to show in terms of leader-

ship, vision, or capacity.

At the same time, many of Kuwait's most seasoned diplomats have been sidelined. These are individuals who built their careers when cities like Baghdad, Cairo, Beirut, and Damascus were centers of regional influence. Their exclusion today reflects a troubling shift in priorities. Language skills are increasingly treated as the main qualification for foreign service, while decades of hard-earned experience are undervalued.

This is not a personal grievance. It is a call to reflect. Any institution that refuses to recognize its shortcomings cannot hope to correct them. Pretending that all is well only delays the moment of reckoning. And that delay comes at a cost.

Foreign policy is not a performance. It is a serious business that determines how a country is seen, heard, and respected. If we continue to treat it as an afterthought, Kuwait's influence will fade, no matter how rich its history is.

Reform does not begin with policies or plans. It begins with honesty. It requires asking whether the people we send abroad are prepared to protect our interests, build alliances, and respond to challenges with intelligence and authority.

I write with a sense of hope, not despair. Like many writers, I do not expect my words to change the present. But I hope they will matter in the future. One day, a generation will look back and ask why things fell apart. I want them to know that some people saw it coming and chose to speak.

Even in a time of silence, there were still voices trying to make a difference.



Al-Anjeri

Teachers skills developed in push toward science

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: As part of the Ministry of Education's preparations to implement the updated Science curricula in the elementary and intermediate stages for the 2025/2026 academic year, the General Technical Directorate for Science launched a comprehensive field training plan to develop the skills of the teaching staff and familiarize them with the philosophy of developing the new curricula and the mechanisms for implementing them in classrooms.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the official letter of acting General Technical Director for Science Dalal Al-Masoud to the assistant undersecretary for Public Education; in which

she indicated that the training plan is in line with the efforts of the directorate to support the educational sector and qualify its workers, keeping pace with the systematic transformation adopted by the ministry within the framework of curriculum development.



Al-Masoud

Al-Masoud revealed that the plan has two parallel tracks -- one focuses on professional development programs for technical supervisors in educational districts, and the other on localizing training in schools through the heads of Science departments or those in

charge of related tasks, so they are included in school calendars and disseminated to various educational sectors.

She called for facilitating the departure of supervisors, department heads or those assigned relevant tasks to attend training programs, using Form No. 4 at the end of the school day. "This should be done in coordination with the administrations of educational districts, private schools, religious education, and special education schools," she explained.

She affirmed that the plan is a practical step towards raising the efficiency of educational staff in handling the updated curricula; thus, achieving the goal of the ministry to improve the quality of education and its outputs in the next phase.



Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Kuwait Juraj Chmiel talks to the guests.



Photos depict Czech Republic natural beauty.



Photos by Samer Shaqir
Ambassadors appreciate the photo exhibition.

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Kuwait Juraj Chmiel confirmed that direct flights between Kuwait and Prague, operated by Jazeera Airways, will continue until mid-September.

Chmiel made the confirmation during the opening of a photo exhibition at the Czech Embassy. He shared his personal connection to the route; indicating "the flights began in early June. I was on the second direct flight from Prague to Kuwait, and I will also be on one of the final flights of the season."

He revealed that discussions are ongoing with other airlines to explore additional flight routes between Kuwait and the Czech Republic. "We have been informed that some carriers are already studying the Prague route. However, two main factors are essential -- the opening of the new airport terminal and the availability of new aircraft," he stated; emphasizing that

route expansion depends on increased fleet capacity.

On the political and economic aspects, he announced two major events

scheduled for November -- the joint meeting of foreign ministers from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union (EU), and the ninth EU-GCC Trade Forum. He revealed "these events affirm the growing ties between our regions and the Czech Republic's commitment to strengthen cooperation with Kuwait and its neighbors."

He highlighted strong tourism links between the two countries; disclosing that around 8,000 to 10,000 Kuwaitis visit the Czech Republic annually, particularly during summer. "Many Kuwaiti visitors enjoy our famous health resorts and physiotherapy centers. An increasing number of them have started to enjoy hiking in our forests; and visiting our lakes, dams and rivers," he said.

On cultural similarities, he said "I

think Kuwait is very similar to my homeland. I hope we will welcome even more Kuwaiti tourists in the future."

He added light-heartedly, "But I can also confirm that Kuwaitis in the Czech Republic will gain weight, because our food is excellent."

The exhibition at the embassy featured more than 20 photographs depicting the "jewels" of the Czech Republic. "You have pearls under the sea, but I have pearls above ground," the ambassador asserted in a friendly tone, referring to the country's natural and historical landmarks.

He encouraged visitors to explore the walkable cities and medieval sites in his country. "We are a paradise for walking enthusiasts. For example, exploring the large Karlštejn Castle could take hours with its winding paths and hills," he added.

He concluded by promoting one of the most iconic landmarks in his country. "Prague Castle is the largest castle complex in Europe and serves as the seat of the Czech president. It is open to tourists. What is unique is that the president himself sometimes appears, and visitors can even take photos with him. There are many unforgettable experiences waiting in the Czech Republic," he disclosed.



Juraj Chmiel

Gang embezzled rent allowance funds

PAHW dept head, cohorts get long-term jail, fines in graft case

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Court of Cassation has closed one of the biggest corruption cases in the country -- the embezzlement of KD933,000 from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW).

The case centered on the illegal seizure of rent allowance funds through the manipulation of citizens' housing files without their knowledge.

The court sentenced a department head at PAHW to 15 years in prison with hard labor, fined him KD1,934,000 and dismissed him from his position.

The court also upheld the five-year prison sentence imposed on two employees, fined them KD627,000 and dismissed one of them

from his job.

Two other employees were fined KD3,000 each; and one of them was also dismissed from his job, bringing the total number of dismissed staff involved in the case to three.

The case dates back to 2016, when the Legal Department at the authority uncovered a widespread tampering with citizens' rent allowance files; resulting in the unauthorized disbursement of huge sums through the use of their data within their knowledge.



Ex-MP's case referred: The Criminal Court on Thursday decided to refer the case of former MP Mohammad Al-Mutair -- accused of insulting His Highness the Amir -- to the Chief Justice to designate a new circuit.

This decision was taken after the lawyer of Al-Mutair submitted a request to dismiss the

court panel headed by Counselor Abdullah Al-Osaimi.

This is the third such request in the case, as Al-Mutair previously submitted two similar requests before two other circuits, one headed by Counselor Ahmed Al-Sadi and the other by Counselor Hamoud Al-Shami. The case files were referred to the Chief Justice on both occasions for reassignment.

The courts are considering two separate cases against Al-Mutair related to the charge of insulting HH the Amir. One of them is still pending at the Court of Appeals after he obtained an initial acquittal from the Criminal Court.

Case files indicate that the Public Prosecution received a report from the Ministry of Interior based on a complaint from a citizen, who accused Al-Mutair of insulting HH the Amir when he participated in a political seminar.

Pointer in 'green zone' as temps plunge in humid weather surge

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The drop in temperatures and rise in humidity on Thursday helped keep the national power load index within the 'green zone' during peak hours, according to data released by the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

According to the data, the maximum electricity load recorded was 15,837 megawatts -- 1,697 megawatts lower than the summer peak of 17,534 megawatts recorded on June 16.

Reliable sources from the ministry clarified that the recent decrease in demand should not be mistaken for a reason to waste electricity or water. They stressed the importance of continuing to follow the energy-saving guidelines of the ministry, as part of a rationalization campaign launched earlier this summer.

Sources said the Ministry and power

plant workers continue to make round-the-clock efforts to provide stable electricity and water services to the public, especially as the summer heat intensifies and demand increases. They affirmed that the summer season presents ongoing challenges due to delays in maintenance and reduced power plant productivity.

In a related development, the ministry announced its plan to issue a tender for the relocation and operation of a data center to its main facility in line with the ongoing modernization efforts.

Furthermore, the ministry is moving forward with its plan to build a new administrative complex in Mutla'a Residential City, which is included in 2025/2026 budget. The new administrative complex shall consist of the, Technical Services Sector, Electricity Distribution Networks Sector, Customer Services Sector, and Water Operation and Maintenance Sector.

Kuwait book fair to be held from Nov 19 to 29

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi discussed the preparations for the 48th session of Kuwait International Book Fair.

The fair is planned on November 19-29, under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

During the first meeting of the fair's organizing committee, the minister reviewed readiness for this great event in a way that shows Kuwait's cultural position, and keeps pace with developments in knowledge and information technology fields.

Plans and ideas of the program associated with the fair have been displayed in order to enrich the event with activities to meet audience's needs.

The meeting also focused on media and marketing plans, in addition to relevant financial and administrative measures.



Al-Mutairi



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor and acting Capital Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah with his guests.

Farmers, citizens air grievances in meeting with Farwaniya Gov.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Farwaniya Governor and acting Capital Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah recently received Kuwaiti farmer Eid Sari Al-Azmi and Dr. Ahmad Al-Sultan at his office in Farwaniya Governorate to discuss ways to develop the agricultural sector.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, they discussed establishing cooperation frameworks with Farwaniya Governorate to develop ornamental agriculture and expand afforestation along the governorate's roads and public spaces.

Al-Azmi presented some development ideas and suggestions aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity.

The governor stressed that Kuwaiti farmers are a national resource deserving of full support.

Stressing the need to remove all obstacles the farmers face, Sheikh Athbi

praised their vital role in promoting and spreading agricultural culture throughout the country.

Meanwhile, the governor also received citizens Dabis Al-Dabis, Badr Al-Daban, and Hussein Bin Ghayam, who presented several complaints and suggestions aimed at alleviating the challenges faced by residents.

Sheikh Athbi expressed his keen interest in their proposals, and affirmed the governorate's commitment to coordinating with relevant authorities to overcome obstacles affecting citizens and improve service quality.

At the end of the meeting, the visitors thanked the governor for his warm reception, ongoing support for community initiatives, dedication to resolving problems, responding to citizens' suggestions, and serving the people of Farwaniya Governorate.

diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Kuwait solicits Lebanese to come work in Kuwait

“IN THE early 1970s, I was building the house I am living in today. One part of it had a canopy with a red-tiled roof, which was a new trend at the time. Although the roof area wasn’t large, installing the tiles was a delicate and tedious job. Time passed, and a strong storm hit, shifting some of the tiles. I didn’t bother trying to fix them myself and instead brought in a skilled worker to replace what had been damaged,” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“One day, I came home and was surprised to find the displaced tiles had somehow returned to their proper place, as if nothing had ever happened. I asked the household, but no one knew anything about those tiles being repaired.



Hassan Ali Karam

“Days went by, and one evening, I was standing with a friend outside his shop on Tunis Street when an unknown hand grabbed my arm from behind. A man greeted me warmly, like an old friend. I turned to see who it was, and without waiting for me to speak, he explained that he had passed by our street, noticed the broken tiles, fetched a ladder, climbed up, and fixed them.

“I couldn’t just thank him. I kissed his head and forehead in appreciation for his beautiful gesture. Then I reached into my pocket to pull out my wallet and asked him how much the work had cost. He took my hand and said, “Nothing, it’s my duty.”

“I experienced this act of integrity half a century ago with a Lebanese worker who hadn’t come to Kuwait for charity or humanitarian work, but simply to earn a living for himself and his family, whether they lived here in Kuwait or back in Lebanon.

“Now I ask - how many resident workers today, whether Arab or Asian, uphold the same values as that Lebanese worker? I’m not saying none do, but if they exist, we don’t see them.

“This comes from my own experience with foreign workers in recent years, especially after the liberation of Kuwait and the end of the crisis. Sadly, trust has become rare, almost like a lost currency. There are many bitter experiences that, if you go through them, could lead to stress-related illnesses, colon problems, high blood pressure, and more.

“Our experience with Lebanese workers has earned them our trust, even when they are new. They are the kind of workers to whom the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) referred when he said, “God loves that when one of you does a job, he does it well.”

“In contrast, the majority of today’s workers, especially in construction and marketing, unfortunately do not work with the same level of care or conscience. Many show little regard for God or their employers, whether they work for contracting companies, the government, or the private sector.

“During his visit to Lebanon, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah invited Lebanese citizens to work in Kuwait. He noted, based on his position, that the Lebanese community tends to cause fewer problems and expressed hope in increasing their numbers.

“I asked one of the well-informed brothers about the reason why the Ministry of Education does not hire Lebanese teachers? He replied with two reasons. The salaries offered to teachers in other Gulf countries are nearly double those in Kuwait. They also provide housing and education for their children, and these benefits are largely unavailable here.

“I told my Lebanese friend that our Ministry of Education must find solutions if that’s the case, because Lebanese teachers are among the most qualified, particularly in science subjects and foreign languages.

“The recent visit by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah to Lebanon was not for leisure, but an official visit to understand the needs of our sister country, especially under the current difficult circumstances facing the Lebanese, particularly those living near the border.

“One point worth noting is that the well-known elegance of the Lebanese did not stop a social media user from calling for 50,000 Lebanese to be brought to reside in Kuwait.

“We and the Lebanese, even if we don’t share borders, are bound by common pains, the pains of a small nation in an unstable region. Perhaps the most painful of all is the suffering at the borders.”

Also:

“The resignation of a finance minister, any finance minister, in any country, is never a normal event. It does not go unnoticed, especially when the minister is responsible for public finances, the economy, and investment,” columnist **Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“Such a resignation has repercussions on the markets and the economy.

There must be clear reasons behind it, and these should be explained in a reassuring government statement. A simple announcement of the resignation is not enough, leaving ambiguity and uncertainty in the markets and the economy.

“Irrespective of the reasons behind this resignation, which we hope will be explained, public finances have long suffered from chronic imbalances accumulated over decades. The general budget remains tied to traditional financial practices and has yet to be developed into a program-based budget.

“Every successive finance minister has focused on cutting spending, while the deficit continues to grow. We hope the current term at the ministry will not be prolonged, as it urgently requires a fresh vision and advanced methods.

“His Highness the Prime Minister is certainly aware of this, given his extensive experience with the ministry and his understanding of its technical complexities and specialized nature.

“Although the reasons for the resignation remain unclear, and while we acknowledge the efforts of the resigned minister, we have not seen any significant financial or economic reforms during the recent period, despite the deep structural imbalances affecting our national economy. Public finances, which suffer from even more severe distortions, have also seen no real reform.

“Development challenges remain unaddressed, economic mismanagement continues, and citizens are left uncertain about the future of the economy and their livelihoods.

“To this day, the government operates without a clear work plan. Its vision for the national economy is a repetition of long-standing rhetoric about transforming Kuwait into a financial and commercial hub.

“We have no clear understanding of how this will be realized, especially in a consumer-driven economy crippled by low productivity and heavily dependent on oil revenues and imports. Yes, we possess substantial oil reserves, a significant sovereign wealth fund, steady income, economic experts and specialists, and qualified human resources.

“Yet despite all this, we still lack a strong, balanced, and reliable economy. What we need, now more than ever, is good, effective, and well-governed economic management. Not tomorrow, but today. Allah is the Gran-

tor of success.”

“In our societies, the concepts of “leadership” and “management” often overlap in practice, despite the clear distinction between those who lead the vision and those who manage resources,” columnist Major General **Faisal Musaed Al-Jazzaf** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“A leader without executive tools becomes a mere theorist, while a manager without a leadership compass becomes an implementer without purpose.



Al-Jazzaf

“The fundamental flaw in our institutions is not a lack of capability or vision, but rather the weak integration between courageous leadership and competent management.

“We need field leaders who understand their environment, are skilled at reading people, and invest in their teams instead of draining them with bureaucracy.

“To bridge the gap between theory and practice, I propose five measures:

1. Test leadership competence before appointment, not after, using objective tools that assess vision and motivate accountability.

2. Build small, multi-skilled implementation teams directly connected to outcomes rather than titles.

3. Conduct periodic accountability, not to defame, but to enhance progress, through public evaluations of projects and initiatives every three to four months.

4. Empower field workers, as those involved in implementation are best suited to lead planning, not the other way around.

5. Link rewards to impact, not attendance. Recognize achievements based on results, not on who spends the most time in the office.

“Effective leadership is not measured by words, but by decisions that create real change and leave a lasting impact. Today, we urgently need decision-makers who see reality as it truly is, not as they are told, and who move forward without waiting for a green light, becoming instead the guiding light for their institutions.

“We pray to Almighty Allah to have mercy on our righteous martyrs, to protect our beloved Kuwait, and to bless the efforts of all those working for its progress, under the leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince. May Allah protect and preserve them all.”

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

Parrots & canaries headed for Kuwait seized at Lagos airport

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Customs officials at Lagos International Airport in Nigeria said they seized more than 1,600 parrots and canaries being transported to Kuwait without a permit – one of the largest seizures of its kind in years, reports *Al-Rai* daily.

In a press statement, Customs Service revealed that airport officials intercepted the shipment of birds, which included ring-necked parrots and yellow-fronted canaries on July 31.

Nigeria, which has become a hub for the smuggling of wildlife and their products, is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Michael Oye, a customs inspector at Lagos Airport, disclosed that the bird shipment had no CITES permit and other required documents to prove its legality.

He added in a press statement that “no illegal shipment escapes my supervision at the airport. Customs officers are deployed everywhere to detect and intercept them.”

He went on to say that the Customs Service is investigating those responsible for the illegal shipment, adding that the birds will be handed over to the National Parks Authority.



Empty capsules for what?: Shipments that arrived from the People’s

Republic of China containing approximately 5,591,000 empty capsules suspected of being used for illegal purposes have been seized, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

The General Administration of Customs explained that Air Cargo Customs inspectors, during routine inspections, grew suspicious of two shipments, one labeled “plastic parts” and the other “medical items”. They checked to discover that the shipments contained empty capsules labeled “Pfizer PGN300”, associated with the drug Lyrica, which is classified as a psychotropic substance. Such substances can only be imported in compliance with strict legal regulations.

A comparison between the actual shipment contents and the customs clearance documents and invoices revealed significant discrepancies in the description of the goods provided by the company.

After consulting with the Air Cargo Health Department, specialists confirmed that the capsules are prohibited from entering the country, and that the invoices did not accurately reflect the shipments’ contents.

A commercial seizure report has been filed, and the shipments have been confiscated pending appropriate legal action.



Al-Seyassah photo
MoCI inspector sealing a shop.

Ahmadi shops raided

Fake bags, shoes, belts seized in MoCI swoops

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Emergency teams from the Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry closed a number of retail, gift, and luxury goods stores in Ahmadi.

According to informed sources, the closure followed the seizure of approximately 1,858 counterfeit items, including handbags, shoes, and women’s belts, which were confiscated.

They affirmed that the campaign is part of periodic inspection tours conducted nationwide by emergency teams to tighten controls on commercial fraud and ensure compliance with regulations and laws related to commercial oversight and consumer protection.



KFF photo
Fire-fighters battling the printing press blaze.

Printing press on fire

KFF shuts down over 50 facilities in East Ahmadi

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) conducted a comprehensive inspection campaign in East Ahmadi Industrial Area Three; resulting in the closure of over 50 facilities found to be in violation of fire safety and prevention regulations, reports *Al-Jarida* daily.

The campaign was carried out in coordination with several government bodies; including the Ministry of Electricity and Water, Ministry of Commerce, Public Authority for Industry, Environment Public Authority and Kuwait Municipality.

The joint effort aimed to identify and address safety breaches in commercial and industrial establishments.

In addition to the closures, 122 warnings and official notices were issued to various shops and facilities for failing to meet the safety standards set by KFF and its partner agencies.

Meanwhile, fire broke out recently at a printing press in Shuwaikh Industrial Area but without any casualties, reports *Al-Jarida* daily.

Firefighters from the Shuwaikh Industrial, Shaheed, and Isnad fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the fire before it spread further. Authorities are currently investigating the cause of the blaze.

Court overrules PIFSS decision

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Civil Division in the Court of First Instance has ruled in favor of a citizen in a real estate dispute, ordering the annulment of a preliminary sale contract signed in June 2013 between the plaintiff and the defendant for a residential unit under construction in Hawally.

The court ordered the defendant to return the full contract amount of KD105,000 to the plaintiff; along with moral compensation of KD5,001. It also instructed the defendant to pay legal expenses and KD200 in attorney fees.

The plaintiff was represented by Attorney Mishari Al-Shammari, who argued that his client honored all contractual obligations by paying the agreed amount in full, with the expectation that the unit would be delivered upon completion of construction. However, the defendant breached the contract by refusing to register the agreement or hand over the property; causing substantial financial loss and psychological distress to the plaintiff.

Al-Shammari submitted official documents to the court, including a copy of the preliminary sales contract and receipts proving full payment. The defendant, despite being formally notified, failed to appear at any of the trial sessions.

The court referred the case to the Department of Experts at the Ministry of Justice. The report of the department confirmed that the defendant is liable for the full amount of KD105,000. The court further affirmed that the plaintiff met all contractual obligations, while the defendant’s refusal to fulfill his responsibilities is a clear breach.

Citing established legal principles and jurisprudence, the court ruled to annul the contract and award financial restitution and compensation to the plaintiff; in accordance with the legal provisions governing binding contracts. These provisions entitle the aggrieved party to seek contract cancellation and damages when the other party fails to meet their obligations without justification.



PIFSS suffers setback: The Court of Appeals overturned the decision of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) to charge a Kuwaiti businesswoman a debt exceeding KD15,000; indicating that the claim is time-barred under the five-year statute of limitations.

The case started when the plaintiff purchased a commercial company in 2013. The company previously registered with a specific insurance number under the former ownership. After the sale, PIFSS assigned a new registration number to the company under the new owner. However, in 2023, the plaintiff was unexpectedly notified that the institution merged the two records, canceled the new number, and reinstated the old one -- holding the new owner liable for debts incurred by the previous owners.

Kuwaiti jailed 3 years for inciting lewdness

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Criminal Court sentenced a citizen to three years in prison with hard labor and fined him KD5,000 for violating public morals and inciting others to engage in debauchery and immorality through the video clips he posted on his Snapchat account.

Confidential investigations conducted by the Cybercrime Department in the Interior Ministry confirmed that the accused committed immoral acts. The evidence included documented recordings and electronic correspondence that convicted him of publicly inciting deviant behavior.

The Cybercrime Department confirmed in its report that the defendant’s actions are considered a blatant violation of societal values and a serious breach of the law; hence, the need to impose the maximum penalty to serve as deterrence and to protect the moral fabric of society.

In another session, the Criminal Court, headed by Counselor Al-Duwaihi Mubarak Al-Duwaihi, sentenced an Egyptian anesthesiologist working at a government hospital to seven years in prison with hard labor and ordered his deportation after serving the sentence.

The court convicted him of harassing a patient while she was asleep under anesthesia. Case details indicate that the doctor took advantage of the patient’s condition in the operating room and harassed her. He contacted her by phone after she left the hospital, flirting with her and asking her to contact him if she needed painkillers.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendant with committing an indecent act by exploiting his profession. His conviction was based on the victim’s complaint, witness statements, detective investigations, and his confession during interrogation.



Professor acquitted: The Court of First Instance acquitted a university professor of a KD 200,000 debt claimed by a businessman, who alleged it was owed under a previous agreement for marriage and for her to bear the costs of an in vitro fertilization (IVF) child before he backed out.

The case was filed by the woman through her defense counsel Lawyer Ali Matar Al-Wawan after her ex-husband issued a travel ban against her based on a debt acknowledgment they had signed.

The plaintiff insisted that the acknowledgment did not represent a real debt but was merely a guarantee related to the agreement between them to marry and have a child via IVF.

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Al-Wafra grid link activated

West Doha bids open

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) has confirmed that a Kuwaiti delegation inspected its Al-Wafra substation on the second day of operation.

The delegation inspected the equipment and systems installed using the latest technologies; including monitoring, analysis and fault prediction devices.

The substation is the first and largest project in the GCC electrical interconnection expansion with the State of Kuwait. It aims to achieve five main objectives: save installed capacity, taking into consideration the remarkable increase in electrical load during summer; increase interconnection capacity to transfer greater capacity in emergency situations to member states; enhance the security and stability of the network; provide more opportunities for electrical energy exchange to stabilize economical grid operation, especially in summer; and enable the integration and maximum utilization of renewable energy.

The project includes the following:

- Construction of dual overhead lines to connect the station to the Fadhili station in Saudi Arabia;
- Conversion of a dual overhead line from Al-Zour to Al-Wafra, a 400-kilovolt overhead line network with Iraq;
- Supply of switchgear, electrical reactors, and measurement and control systems to construct and expand the transformer stations in Al-Wafra, Al-Fadhili and Al-Faw;
- New electrical facilities to enhance the network connected to the Al-Wafra station, enabling it to accommodate a capacity of up to 2,500 megawatts.

The station is located in the Al-Wafra, covering an area of 62,000 square meters. It connects Kuwait to the GCCIA network through four overhead lines -- 256 kilometers long, extending from the Al-Wafra station in Kuwait to the Fadhili station in Saudi Arabia, and providing a connection capacity exceeding 3,000 megawatts.

The interconnection lines also extend from there to Al-Faw station in South Iraq, serving as a link between the GCCIA network and Iraq, and from there to Türkiye and Europe in the future. The station contributes to strengthening the national electrical grid, ensuring sustainable energy supplies at all times, and supporting and stabilizing the national grid in Kuwait.

The visiting delegation included representatives from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, headed by Faisal Al-Sumait; representatives from the Joint Operations Company, headed by the Deputy Director General; and representatives from Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED). They were accompanied by CEO of GCCIA Ahmed Al-Ibrahim, Executive Vice President for Networks at the authority Mohammed Al-Sheikh, and the station's working team.

Meanwhile, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) opened bids for the supply, installation, operation and maintenance of the West Doha Seawater Reverse Osmosis Desalination Plant, along with equipment, to increase the alkalinity of the produced water (Phase II), to produce 60 million imperial gallons per day.

The lowest bid was KD14.2 million, followed by KD164.8 million and a third bid worth KD174.1 million.

Rabaa Al-Hammadi – a lawyer who does not forsake justice ... and a shooter who never misses the target

By Suzanne Nasser
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Day after day, Kuwaiti women continue to prove their ability to excel in all fields, and affirm their competence in taking on every task assigned to them or that they choose themselves.

The daily held an interview with a young Kuwaiti woman who stands out as an exceptional role model for her success and creativity in two entirely different arenas - law and shooting sports.

She is Rabaa Al-Hammadi, a lawyer who has forged an impressive harmony between the sound of the gavel in the courtroom and the crack of a bullet on the shooting range. She hits the mark in one and uncovers the truth in the other.

Rabaa Al-Hammadi exemplifies the Kuwaiti woman who not only overcomes challenges but transforms them into platforms of boundless creativity and milestones of achievement.

Question: Why did you choose law? What shaped this early interest?

Answer: Since childhood, I believed that everyone deserves a voice. For those who don't have one, someone must represent them. For me, law is more than a profession. It is an emotional calling, an innate instinct I pursued through study and practice. It is a responsibility and a mission before it is a career path.

Q: Do you think today's generation still views law as a noble mission? Or has it become just a lucrative profession?

A: The legal profession is inherently noble. It is about achieving justice and restoring rights. It is true that many are drawn to it today, but the difference lies in intention. Those driven by humanitarian motives will find a depth in law that is unmatched. Those chasing quick glamor may not endure the weight of its challenges.

Q: From law to shooting sports, that is a rare leap. How did it start?

A: My journey into sports was not planned. I worked with the testing team at the Kuwait Anti-Doping Agency and often visited sports federations. That is where shooting caught my attention. I enrolled in a refereeing course



Photo by Mohammad Morsi
Rabaa Al-Hammadi

and earned an international license. Gradually, I began participating in local and international championships until I was selected to lead the women's team at the Shooting Federation. That's when my real journey began.

Q: Is the passion in administration the same as that of an athlete in the field?

A: The passion may be shared, but a team manager bears the weight of the results and must be mentally present in every detail. Sometimes I feel my enthusiasm even exceeds that of the players, because their success reflects the hard work done behind the scenes.

Q: How do you see the state of women's sports in Kuwait?

A: Women's sports in Kuwait are developing steadily but still lack media and financial support. There is also a need to strengthen social awareness of the woman's role in competitive sports. Kuwaiti women today have the tools, but we just need more space and more opportunities.

Q: How do you balance your work as a lawyer with your role in shooting sports?

A: Organization is the key to success. Both fields demand intense mental focus.

Law taught me decisiveness, while shooting taught me discipline and precision. They complement each other, and I find myself fully engaged in both.

Q: Do your legal skills help in managing the team?

A: Absolutely. The legal profession instilled in me strong decision-making abilities, leadership skills, and a competitive spirit, all of which were essential in building a cohesive team and achieving meaningful results.

Q: What is your message to young Kuwaiti girls?

A: Don't be afraid of failure. Every stumble is a step toward growth. Don't wait for permission. Follow where your passion leads you. Success is not defined by gender.

Q: Is there a moment in your journey you will never forget?

A: My first court plea as a lawyer. I was overwhelmed with anxiety, but I overcame it. That moment was a turning point that gave me a deep sense of confidence. Since then, I have realized that true achievement is born out of challenge.

Q: What about the first case you ever won?

A: It was an indescribable feeling. A legal victory has its own unique satisfaction, especially when you see the relief and gratitude in your client's eyes. It is one of those moments when a lawyer truly feels their mission is fulfilled.

Q: And what about the feeling of victory in shooting competitions? Is it different?

A: Victory in court is a triumph of justice. On the shooting range, it is a song of patriotism. There is a difference between a personal joy and one you offer your country. Each has its own flavor, and each achievement carries its own emotional and national weight.

Q: What are your aspirations?

A: To leave a positive impact on those around me. Whether in law or in sports, I hope to be a source of inspiration, and help build a generation that is unafraid of ambition and undeterred by challenges.

Q: A final word for our readers?

A: I thank the daily for giving me this platform. And to every woman I say - Determination and passion will open doors you never imagined. Never give up on your dreams, and don't let anyone set your limits.



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Support spans 11 states despite conflict

Kuwait-based fund provides vital aid to more than 9.5m Sudanese

PORT SUDAN, Aug 7, (KUNA): Aid provided by a Kuwait-based fund has reached more than 9.5 million people across Sudan during the first half of this year, Kuwait's ambassador in Khartoum said on Wednesday.

The Patients Helping Fund Society, the second largest healthcare aid provider in Sudan after the African nation's health ministry, has been operating in Sudan since 1985 with its services unhampered despite recent conflicts there, according to Dr. Fahad Al-Thefeeri.

The fund's efforts are in addition to a humanitarian aid bridge Kuwait has launched that has brought tons of aid to the impoverished Arab country, while a number of Kuwaiti charities are pursuing humanitarian initiatives there, added the ambassador.

As the Society continues to expand its aid coverage, some 9.5 million people in Sudan, alongside some 11 states, have been the beneficiaries of its healthcare services, its Sudan-based office's chief executive Abdulmajeed Fadhluallah said.



KUNA photos
Dr. Fahad Al-Thefeeri, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Sudan.

In addition to the aid, the Fund is also involved in reconstruction efforts dealing with healthcare institutions in Sudan, helping gear up these facilities with cutting-edge and modern equipment that are instrumental in saving lives, added the official, thanking Kuwait for the unimpeded assistance.

Sahel app introduces electronic admission for PAAET 2025/2026

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Yousef Kazim, official spokesperson for the unified government e-services app "Sahel", announced the launch of the first electronic service of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), which allows students to submit admission forms directly through the Sahel app, reports Al-Rai daily.

Kazim described this as a huge leap forward for the platform, due

to PAAET's efforts to facilitate this service for students wishing to enroll in PAAET's programs and majors for the 2025/2026 academic year.

He explained that male and female students wishing to enroll in PAAET's colleges and institutes can now access this service under the "Services" menu in Sahel app, and submit their admission forms during the announced application periods.

Kuwait HH Amir congratulates Côte d'Ivoire on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Alassane Ouattara, on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished President Ouattara good health and well-being, as well as further progress and prosperity for Côte d'Ivoire and its people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Alassane Ouattara, on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished President Ouattara good health and well-being, and continued progress and prosperity for Côte d'Ivoire and its people.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Alassane Ouattara, on his country's National Day.

Digital access now mandatory

MoE boosts transparency with Citizen Service Office reforms

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei has stressed the need for cooperation with the Citizen Service Office affiliated with the Ministry of Education; affirming that a liaison officer has been assigned to receive 'right to access information' requests, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the circular issued by Al-Tabtabaei stating, "Circular No. 25/2024 was issued on Nov 10, 2024 regarding the responsibilities of the Citizen Service Office, and Circular No. 30/2024 was issued on Dec 5, 2024 regarding the automation of citizen service transactions, and assigning the office to receive all transactions related to grievances, complaints, and



Al-Tabtabaei

requests for the 'right to access information' through the official website of the ministry and transmit them electronically to the relevant authorities in the ministry. In order to complete the aforementioned tasks on time, please commit to nominating a liaison officer from each organizational unit in the ministry. This officer will be responsible for receiving requests for the right to access information and coordinating with the Information Systems Department to organize a training course on the right to access mechanism and how to handle such requests. This will enable the Citizen Service Office to complete administrative procedures on time and comply with the right to access law through the relevant program available on the website of the ministry." The circular warned that any organizational unit, which does not comply with its provisions will be subject to legal action against the person responsible. It called on all sectors in the ministry to adhere to the provisions of this circular and implement it from the date of issuance.

MoE advances math curriculum overhaul

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Acting Head Supervisor of Mathematics at the Ministry of Education, Dalal Al-Hajraf, affirmed that the ministry is making steady progress in developing the educational process, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

She explained that this progress is based on the



Al-Hajraf

vision of the educational leadership, represented by Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, who is committed to updating curricula in line with modern scientific and educational principles. These updates follow national standards that consider learners' needs and anticipate future requirements, in line with the goals of "New Kuwait 2035" vision.

The curriculum development process, especially in mathematics, aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for contemporary life, and enhance their role as active contributors to community development.

Al-Huwailah and Al-Taher discuss disability support

Kuwait, UN deepen social development ties

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of State for Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah discussed on Thursday with the UN Secretary General's Representative and Resident Coordinator in Kuwait, Ghada Al-Taher, ways to strengthen strategic cooperation in social and humanitarian fields.

In a press statement, Minister Al-Huwailah said the meeting touched on several areas of mutual interest, particularly social development, support for persons with disabilities, and preparations for the Second Global Summit for Social Development, as well as the 11th meeting of GCC Ministers of Social and Development Affairs.

She affirmed Kuwait's commitment to advancing cooperation with the United Nations, praising the organizations vital role in supporting development and humanitarian programs at both regional and international levels.

For her part, Dr. Al-Taher expressed appreciation for Kuwait's role in humanitarian and social efforts, affirming her commitment to continuing cooperation in implementing joint initiatives.



KUNA photo

Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Al-Huwailah with UN Secretary-General's Representative Ghada Al-Taher during strategic talks.

PAHW studies law to enhance family stability through loans

SAB probes DGCA tenders for airport upgrades

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) is currently studying new concepts and proposals related to the real estate financing law, in preparation for a final draft that meets citizens' needs, takes into account the legal and social aspects of home ownership, and supports family stability.

According to informed sources, one of the most prominent proposals is to allow Kuwaiti women to join their husbands in obtaining a mortgage loan, provided this is optional and not mandatory.

Some citizens prefer this option as it strengthens the couple's partnership in owning the property, and promotes greater security and family stability.

PAHW is also studying the possibility of including a non-Kuwaiti wife in the loan alongside her husband. However, this proposal requires extensive legal review in cooperation with relevant authorities to assess its compatibility with existing legislation and financing mechanisms.

The sources confirmed that PAHW is approaching these concepts with great caution and deliberation to ensure they are in line with the legal framework and to achieve fairness among citizens, adding that the amended law is nearing implementation.

Meanwhile, the State Audit Bureau (SAB) is currently reviewing four requests submitted by the Directorate

General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) related to tenders and contracts for the operation, maintenance, and development services at Kuwait International Airport; with a total estimated value of KD3.819 million.

Reliable sources revealed that SAB will review and study these requests, in preparation for taking a decision on them in the coming period. Sources indicated that some of the requests are related to contract extensions; while others are regarding new operation and maintenance contracts.

Sources said one of the requests is the extension of the contract for project management services to implement the 2012 Master Plan projects at Kuwait International Airport. Sources disclosed that the directorate requested approval for a second extension of the contract, valued at KDI.3 million.

Sources stated the other tenders are for operating engineering control

rooms and maintaining the associated equipment and devices valued at KDI.338 million; maintaining the automated baggage inspection system for weight areas one and four in Terminal One (T1) valued at KD589,000; and a contract for maintaining the baggage inspection system in weight areas two and three and the arrivals hall valued at KD592,000; bringing the total value to KD3.819 million.

Sources confirmed that SAB is currently analyzing the technical and financial aspects of each tender, ensuring that all requirements are met before issuing its final decision. They pointed out that through these contracts, the DGCA intends to develop the technical infrastructure of the airport and raise the readiness of operational devices and equipment; as part of its plan to keep pace with the growing travel demand and improve the level of services provided to passengers.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait expels

127 Bangladeshi workers were deported from Kuwait after staging a protest over five months of unpaid wages. The group had gathered outside Fintas police station to file a formal complaint against their employer, a move that prompted swift action from Kuwaiti authorities. In addition, 50 Indian and 30 Nepali expatriates were also detained during the protest, though it remains unclear whether they have been deported. The deportees were not even allowed to return to their accommodations to collect their personal belongings before being escorted to the airport and forcibly repatriated to their home countries. Three Bangladeshi nationals are still being held in custody due to unresolved financial disputes.

The controversy centers on a Kuwaiti-based company that has a history of delaying employee wages. A similar situation occurred in November 2024, when the same company failed to pay salaries, prompting workers to reach out to the Bangladeshi Embassy. At that time, intervention by the embassy resulted in all dues being cleared.

However, from March to July this year, workers again went unpaid. The company assured the workers that they will be paid and from one month it went to 5 months unpaid, hence this time the workers chose not to approach their respective embassies or the Public Authority for Manpower, opting instead to head straight to the local police station – a decision that proved costly. In Kuwait, the law strictly prohibits expatriates from participating in mass protests. Instead, they are advised to report grievances to their respective embassies and, in cases of labor disputes, file complaints with the Public Authority for Manpower.

On July 27th, around 8:30 p.m., Mr. Mohammed Abdul Hussein, the labor wing in-charge at the Bangladeshi Embassy – well known for his regular visits to worker accommodations – was alerted to the unfolding crisis and began closely tracking the situation. The embassy, responsible for safeguarding the interests of more than 300,000 Bangladeshi workers in Kuwait, responded swiftly to the incident.

A formal petition was filed with the Kuwaiti authorities, and the company owner was contacted. He agreed to pay one month's salary immediately and promised to settle the remaining dues over three installments. However, the workers, already frustrated and disillusioned, rejected the offer.

The Bangladeshi Embassy urgently appealed to the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower, requesting a halt to the deportations. The embassy stressed that the workers were unaware of Kuwaiti legal procedures and that their

deportation without compensation would be a grave injustice.

Despite assurances that salary payments would be processed on July 28th and 29th, the situation escalated rapidly. On the night of July 30th, the embassy received a call from one of the workers en route to the airport, confirming they were being forcibly deported without even allowing them to collect their belongings from their residence.

In response, officials from the labor wing of the Bangladeshi Embassy rushed to the airport to offer moral and legal support. Workers were urged to make a Power of Attorney as soon as they reached Bangladesh, authorizing the embassy or a trusted representative in Kuwait to pursue their outstanding wages and collect their belongings on their behalf.

Repeated attempts to contact the company during the deportations were met with silence.

Ambassador Hussain has since taken the matter up with senior Kuwaiti officials, including the Ministry of Interior and the Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower, as well as the company's management. (Meeting is scheduled this week)

The Ambassador stated that the embassy bears the responsibility of ensuring that deported nationals and their families receive any unpaid wages, recover their personal belongings, and verify whether those deported have been blacklisted or banned from re-entering Gulf countries. The embassy is also in touch with those who are deported.

The Bangladeshi Embassy in Kuwait holds monthly public meetings where expatriates can voice their grievances. Workers may also contact the mission directly via email – available on their official website: <https://kuwait.mofa.gov.bd>. The Ambassador personally addresses many of these cases, particularly those involving unpaid wages or passports withheld by companies.

In several past instances, the embassy has successfully resolved numerous disputes by warning errant sponsors that failure to comply with labor laws could lead to their companies being blacklisted from future manpower agreements with Bangladesh.

Furthermore, newly-arrived workers are briefed on Kuwaiti labor regulations through information booklets and orientation sessions organized by the embassy.

As the situation continues to develop, attention now turns to whether the affected workers will receive their long-overdue wages and if the deported Bangladeshi nationals will be given an opportunity to return to Kuwait for employment in the future, in the spirit of continued cooperation and mutual respect between the two nations.

Marijuana,

The operation led to the arrest of two Egyptian suspects, identified as A.R. and H.J. Authorities also identified a Kuwaiti citizen -- A.A. -- as a third suspect in the case. Legal procedures are currently underway against him, although he is residing outside the country.

During the raid, the security officers confiscated 30 kilograms of marijuana, 500 grams of shabu 150 grams of opium, 50 grams of chemical substances, 10 grams of heroin, five methadone tablets and three electronic weighing scales from the Egyptian suspects.

The ministry confirmed that legal action has been against the two suspects, who were referred to the concerned authorities. Investigations are ongoing regarding the third suspect who is currently outside the country.

Kuwait's fishermen

The requirement of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) to stay 12 nautical miles away from the nearest land, including Kuwaiti islands such as Failaka and Kubbar, is one of the most significant challenges. This rule forces fishermen to sail for about an hour and a half before they can start fishing, which increases fuel and operating costs.

Also, fish often gather close to land, and moving farther away reduces their abundance. Fishermen primarily avoid coral reefs because they damage fishing nets and hinder the trawling process.

Reducing the distance to 6 or 7 miles would result in larger catches and lower prices, while still maintaining environmental oversight.

Al-Hamdi clarified that the aim of raising these demands is not to interfere with the powers of the relevant authorities, but to present a practical perspective from the field, seeking to balance protecting the marine environment, sustaining fish stocks, and enabling fishermen to operate effectively to serve consumers and achieve food security.

He said the year-round closure of Kuwait Bay to fishermen has led to a significant shortage of maid and zubaidi fish, indicating that areas like Subiya used to supply abundant quantities of zubaidi, while mead is primarily found within the bay.

Al-Hamdi revealed that the price of a basket of mead used to be no more than KD 6, but due to the severe shortage, it has sometimes soared to KD 120.

He stressed that the "upper" fishing method does not harm coral reefs and poses no environmental risk.

Al-Hamdi proposed opening specific areas within the bay for seasonal fishing, lasting between one to three months, under the supervision of the relevant authorities, adding that these areas could

then be closed after the season ends to ensure sustainability and prevent over-fishing.

Furthermore, Chair of the Kuwait Fishermen's Union Abdullah Al-Sarheed agreed with the proposal of Fish Market Supervisor Hamoud Al-Hamdi, stressing the need to reconsider the permitted fishing area and reduce the imposed distance outside the islands from 12 miles to only 6 to 8 nautical miles.

He explained that this long distance not only constitutes an economic burden but also exposes fishermen to serious security risks. Several fishing boats were robbed by pirates and robbers in economic waters during the current fishing season, with more than ten incidents recorded, resulting in significant financial losses for boat owners.

Reducing the permitted fishing distance will contribute to enhancing security at sea and opening areas to fishermen, which will ease the burden on Coast Guard personnel who continue their efforts to protect fishermen around the clock.

Al-Sarheed praised the cooperation of the Ministry of Defense and the General Directorate of Coast Guard in this area.

He also called for opening Kuwait Bay for fishing on a seasonal and regulated basis, under the supervision of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) and EPA.

Al-Sarheed stressed that not fishing within the bay for long periods leads to fish death or migration due to the lack of marine soil movement and oxygen renewal.

Regarding the protection of coral reefs, Al-Sarheed affirmed that fishermen are fully committed to preserving the marine environment, and that the union implements periodic awareness programs to ensure adherence to best environmental practices.

Also, Vice President of the Kuwait Fishermen's Union Jaber Al-Ali described the current fishing season as different in terms of the abundance of catch and the diversity of seafood products.

He pointed to an improvement in the quantities of fish and shrimp on offer, which has been reflected in the relative stability of prices.

Al-Ali called for opening fishing in Kuwait Bay during specific seasons and under the supervision of regulatory authorities, and for allowing the fishing of mead fish, which often migrates or dies if not caught in time. He considered the failure to benefit from this fish to be a loss for the Kuwaiti consumer.

He also supported the proposal to reduce the permitted fishing distance in economic waters to just 6 nautical miles, stressing that this would make fishing trips safer and help reduce incidents of robbery and piracy.

Al-Ali affirmed that the Kuwait Fishermen Union is fully prepared to cooperate with the relevant authorities to address the challenges facing the sector, in a way that ensures the sustainability of fish resources, protects fishermen, and preserves this traditional profession that represents the heritage of our forefathers.

In addition, all who spoke to the daily agreed that some of EPA's requirements pose direct challenges to fishermen, most notably:

- The requirement to stay 12 nautical miles away from the nearest land for shrimp fishing
- The ban on commercial fishing within the waters of Kuwait Bay

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KFF reports

He urged the public to follow safety guidelines and report emergencies promptly, emphasizing that safety is a shared responsibility, and warned of the risks posed by electrical faults during the summer, calling on residents to ensure proper wiring and avoid overloading sockets.

Kuwait feels

with forecasts warning of light fog and scattered rain.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), the acting Director of the Meteorological Department Dhirar Al-Ali explained that the country is expected to experience hot and humid weather the coming days, with chances of light fog forming over some areas, particularly coastal areas, as well as scattered light rain.

The weather this weekend will be hot and humid during the day, and hot to warm and humid at night.

Weather maps indicate the country is currently affected by a hot and humid air mass, which increases the feeling of humidity, especially in coastal and surrounding areas. This is expected to be accompanied by light fog forming during late night and early morning hours in some areas. Low to medium clouds are expected to gradually build up, with chances of scattered light rain that may occasionally be accompanied by thunder. Rain chances are expected to increase gradually starting Friday evening and continue at intervals.

On Friday daytime, weather will be hot and humid, especially in coastal areas, and partly cloudy, with light to moderate northeast to southeast winds ranging from 10 to 38 kilometers per hour. There is a chance of scattered light rain. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 42 and 44 degrees Celsius, and sea conditions will be light to moderate, with wave heights between two and five feet.

At night, the weather will be hot to warm and humid, particularly over coastal areas, with light to moderate variable to southeast winds at 8 to 38

kilometers per hour. There is a slight chance of scattered rain, possibly accompanied by thunder at times, along with the chance of fog forming in some areas. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 31 and 33 degrees Celsius, and sea conditions will remain light to moderate, with wave heights between one and five feet.

Kuwait food

The number of patent applications (individuals) reached seven and patent applications (companies) reached 70 – 25 percent increase. The number of patent grant and publication transactions (companies) reached seven transactions – 250 percent increase. The number of correction, amendment or addition to a patent application (companies) reached 11 – 57 percent increase.

The number of transfer of rights to the application or transfer of patent ownership (companies) reached two in May. The number of industrial design filing requests reached 48 – 45 percent increase compared to April.

The number of industrial design grant and publication transactions reached 15 – 63 percent decrease. The number of requests to change the owner (individuals) reached two, as well as two transactions for publication of fees and six industrial design renewal publication transactions -- 14 percent decrease in May.

Kuwait unveils

Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar said on Thursday that Kuwait Oil Company's (KOC) new Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center is the first concrete result of Kuwait's strategic partnership with Microsoft.

At the opening in KOC's Ahmadi headquarters-- attended by Minister of Oil Tareq Al-Roumi, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah, and Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Director General Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Sabah -- Al-Omar said in a statement that the facility would weave advanced AI tools into KOC's daily technical work, saving time, effort and money.

Officials hope to replicate this model across other sectors, he added.

Meanwhile, President of Microsoft for Middle East and Africa (MEA) Naim Yazbeck called the launch a historic turning point in Kuwait's drive toward a knowledge-based economy.

He said Microsoft recently expanded its Kuwait presence because it trusts the country's potential and is committed to supporting a full digital transformation.

Republican Gov Abbott could immediately call another session

Texas Dems plea for donations to extend walkout and block Trump’s redistricting plan

WASHINGTON, Aug 7, (AP): After leaving Texas for Illinois to prevent a legislative vote on a Republican redistricting plan, state House Democratic leader Gene Wu needed a means to project his voice - and viewpoints - to a national audience. So he tapped his campaign account to buy a microphone for news conferences.

When it came to covering the hefty hotel bill for Wu and his roughly 50 colleagues, the lawmaker said he relied on money from his chamber’s Democratic Caucus.

Now Texas Democrats are pleading for donations to help finance what could be a walkout of weeks - if not months - in a high-stakes attempt to prevent the Republican majority from passing a plan sought by President Donald Trump. The president is urging Texas and other GOP-controlled states to redraw their congressional districts to help Republicans maintain control of the US House in next year’s mid-term elections.

“We’re getting a lot of small-dollar donations,” Wu told The Associated Press, “and that’s going to be used to help keep this thing going.”

A political group led by Beto O’Rourke, a former Texas congressman who ran unsuccessfully for governor and Senate, gave money to the Texas House Democratic Caucus to help cover the up-front costs, accord-

ing to a spokesperson for the group, Powered by People. O’Rourke this week has been holding events in red states to fire up Democrats and encourage donations.

Powered by People has not disclosed how much it contributed. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, a Republican, said Wednesday he’s launching an investigation into whether O’Rourke’s group has committed bribery by a “financial influence scheme” benefiting Democrats who left Texas.

In response, O’Rourke said he would be undeterred by the threat of an investigation and used it as a fundraising opportunity.

By departing the state, Democratic lawmakers have prevented Republicans from obtaining the quorum needed to conduct business. Democrats hope to run out the clock on a special legislative session that ends Aug 19. But Republican Gov. Greg Abbott could immediately call another session, raising the prospect of a prolonged and an expensive holdout.

Not only could Texas Democrats face thousands of dollars in out-of-state lodging and dining costs, they also could eventually face fines of \$500 for each day they are absent, which under House rules cannot be paid from their office budgets or political contributions.

Texas has a part-time Legisla-



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

ture where lawmakers receive \$600 a month, plus an additional \$221 for expenses each day they are in session.

On Wednesday, state Sen. Jose Menendez joined Democrats from other states at a rally in Boston, where he noted that the potential daily fine for quorum-breaking lawmakers is nearly as large as their entire monthly legisla-

tive salary.

“They need your prayers, they need your thoughts and they need you to get behind them,” he said.

Some Democrats in the Texas Senate have traveled out of state this week to support their House colleagues, but lawmakers in that chamber are not leaving the state to hold up legislative

business.

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, a Democrat and billionaire, has welcomed the Texas lawmakers to his state but said he has not financially supported them. Texas state Rep. James Talarico, who has built a national following in recent weeks, said the lawmakers told Pritzker they didn’t want him to fund their trip.

“We’ve already been inundated with donations from across the state of Texas, from across the country, just regular people donating \$5, \$10, \$15,” Talarico said this week. “And that’s appropriate, because this fight is for the people and it should be funded by the people. We don’t have billionaires who are funding this operation.”

The House Democratic Caucus has set up a website seeking donations of between \$25 and \$2,500 - with a default amount of \$250.

Earlier this week, Abbott asked the state’s highest court to remove Wu from office and ordered the Texas Rangers to investigate possible bribery charges related to how Democrats are paying for the walkout, alleging anyone who financially helped them could be culpable.

Wu, a former prosecutor from Houston, said the bribery suggestion is “monstrously stupid.”

“No member is leaving because they

might get a campaign contribution that might restore some of the money that they’re spending,” he said.

Before Democrats decided to leave Texas, Wu said he called potential allies for assurance “that there would be resources that would come to our assistance.” But he said that’s no different from an aspiring candidate asking others for support before officially launching a campaign.

Wu, who is chair of the Texas House Democratic Caucus, said he has participated in online sessions with representatives of dozens of Democratic, progressive and redistricting-oriented groups. Not all are financial supporters. Some are providing help in other ways, such as by coordinating publicity.

The Democratic National Committee has helped with communications and organizing, as well as providing help from a data analytics team, Chair Ken Martin said.

Texas Democrats aren’t worried that they’ll be forced to return home in the near future because of a lack of money, said Luke Warford, founder of Agave Democratic Infrastructure Fund, a Texas fundraising and organizing group. He said longtime Democratic funders understand the high cost of competing in tougher U.S. House races if Republicans succeed in redrawing the map.

‘These cuts do nothing to address antisemitism’

Trump administration suspends \$584M in grants: UCLA

WASHINGTON, Aug 7, (AP): The Trump administration has suspended \$584 million in federal grants for the University of California, Los Angeles, nearly double the amount that was previously thought, the school’s chancellor announced Wednesday.

UCLA is the first public university whose federal grants have been targeted by the administration over allegations of civil rights violations related to antisemitism and affirmative action. The Trump administration has frozen or paused federal funding over similar allegations against private colleges.

“If these funds remain suspended, it will be devastating for UCLA and for Americans across the nation,” Chancellor Julio Frenk said Wednesday in a statement, noting the groundbreaking research that has come out of the university.

The departments affected rely on funding from the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Energy, Frenk said.

The US Department of Education did not immediately respond to an email from The Associated Press requesting comment.

The Trump administration recently



Children play outside Royce Hall at the University of California, Los Angeles, campus in Los Angeles on Aug 15, 2024. (AP)

announced the US Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division found UCLA violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The announcement came as UCLA reached a \$6 million settlement with

three students and a professor who sued the university, arguing it violated their civil rights by allowing pro-Palestinian protesters in 2024 to block their access to classes and other areas on campus.

The university has said that it is committed to campus safety and inclu-

sivity and will continue to implement recommendations.

The new UC president, James B. Milliken, said in a statement Wednesday that it has agreed to talks with the administration over the allegations against UCLA.

“These cuts do nothing to address antisemitism,” Milliken said. “Moreover, the extensive work that UCLA and the entire University of California have taken to combat antisemitism has apparently been ignored.”

Milliken said the “cuts would be a death knell for innovative work that saves lives, grows our economy, and fortifies our national security. It is in our country’s best interest that funding be restored.”

As part of the lawsuit settlement, UCLA said it will contribute \$2.3 million to eight organizations that combat antisemitism and support the university’s Jewish community. It also has created an Office of Campus and Community Safety, instituting new policies to manage protests on campus. Frenk, whose father and grandparents fled Nazi Germany to Mexico and whose wife is the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, launched an initiative to combat antisemitism and anti-Israeli bias.

FORT STEWART, Ga., Aug 7, (AP): A sergeant shot five soldiers Wednesday at one the country’s largest Army bases before he was quickly tackled by other Fort Stewart troops, forcing a brief lockdown, officials said.

Few details were immediately available about what led to the gunfire, but officials said the shooter was Sgt. Quornelius Radford, 28, who used a personal handgun, not a military firearm.

Radford opened fire where he worked but officials wouldn’t speculate about a motive, authorities said.

The injured soldiers are stable and expected to recover, said Brig Gen. John Lubas. The soldiers who tackled Radford helped ensure his arrest, said Lubas, who commands the 3rd Infantry Division.

“These soldiers, without a doubt, prevented further casualties or wounded,” he said.

This latest act of violence on a US.



Radford

military installation - sites that are supposed to be among the most secure in the country - again raised concerns about safety and security within the armed forces’ own walls.

The Army said it’s investigating the shooting. There were still many unanswered questions, including the scope of the injuries and the shooter’s motive.

The injured were taken to the hospital and three underwent surgery, officials said.

A telephone number listed for Radford in public records rang unanswered.

Army records released to The Associated Press show that Radford enlisted in January 2018. He worked as a supply sergeant and has not been deployed.

Radford faced an Aug. 20 hearing in Hinesville, a small town near the base, on accusations of driving under the influence and running a red light just after 1 a.m. on May 18, according to a citation and court filing. He was given a blood test and freed on a \$1,818 bond, the documents said.

Attorney Sneh Patel is representing Radford in the traffic case but not the shooting as of Wednesday, he said in an email. He cited attorney-client privilege in declining to comment about any his conversations with Radford.

Belarus targets dozens of govt critics with raids and detention, advocates say

TALLINN, Estonia, Aug 7, (AP): Authorities in Belarus unleashed a new wave of raids and detentions against government critics who took part in opposition rallies abroad earlier this year, officials and rights advocates said Wednesday, the latest move in a sweeping crackdown on dissent and freedom of speech by authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko.

The country’s Investigative Committee said it identified at least 207 participants in anti-Lukashenko rallies held in Poland, Lithuania, the United States, the U.K. and Canada to mark Belarus’ short-lived independence in 1918 after the collapse of the Russian Empire.

The raids, detentions and property seizures were carried out in the capital of Minsk and elsewhere across the country, authorities said. They didn’t say how many people were targeted.

Mass arrests, trials and convictions of government critics have continued since August 2020 when Lukashenko was handed a sixth term in office in an election that the opposition and the West denounced as rigged. In January, he was given another term in balloting also seen as orchestrated to keep him in office.

Tens of thousands took to the streets in protest, in the biggest demonstrations the country has ever seen. Author-



Russian President Vladimir Putin, front, embraces Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko during their visit to the Smolensky Skete of Valaam Monastery at Valaam island in Ladoga lake, Republic of Karelia, Russia on Aug 1. (AP)

ities unleashed a violent crackdown in response, detaining and beating thousands and driving some 500,000 more into exile abroad. The crackdown drew international condemnation, and the U.S. and the European Union imposed sanctions on Belarus.

Belarus’ oldest and most prominent rights group, the Viasna center, told The Associated Press that “dozens of activists in Belarus” have been detained in the most recent wave of arrests. Viasna activist Pavel Sapelka called it “the biggest wave of repression” this year.

WH presses for peace deal on Ukraine

Russia’s Putin hopes to meet Trump

MOSCOW, Aug 7, (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday he hopes to meet next week with US President Donald Trump, possibly in the United Arab Emirates. The news came on the eve of a White House deadline for Moscow to show progress toward ending the 3-year-old war in Ukraine.

Putin’s foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov had said earlier a summit could possibly take place next week at a venue that has been decided “in principle.”

Ushakov brushed aside the possibility of Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy joining the summit, something the White House had said Trump was ready to consider. Putin has spurned Zelenskyy’s previous offers of a meeting to clinch a breakthrough.

“We propose, first of all, to focus on preparing a bilateral meeting with Trump, and we consider it most important that this meeting be successful and productive,” Ushakov said, adding that U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff’s suggestion of a meeting including Ukraine’s leader “was not specifically discussed.”

Putin made the announcement in the Kremlin after his meeting with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the president of the UAE.

There was no immediate comment from the White House on Thursday and it was unclear how the announcement of the meeting would affect Trump’s Friday dead-



This combination photo shows US President Donald Trump in a business roundtable in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates on May 16, 2025, (left), and Russian President Vladimir Putin at a signing ceremony at the Kremlin in Moscow, May 10, 2025. (AP)

line for Russia to stop the killing or face heavy economic sanctions.

The meeting would be the first US-Russia summit since 2021, when former President Joe Biden met Putin in Geneva. It would be a significant milestone toward Trump’s effort to end the war, although there’s no guarantee it would stop the fighting since Moscow and Kyiv remain far apart on their conditions for peace.

Next week is the target date for a summit, Ushakov said, while noting that such events take time to organize and no date is confirmed. The

possible venue will be announced “a little later,” he said.

Months of US-led efforts have yielded no progress on stopping Russia’s invasion of its neighbor. The war has killed tens of thousands of troops on both sides as well as more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians, according to the United Nations.

Western officials have repeatedly accused Putin of stalling for time in peace negotiations to allow Russian forces time to capture more Ukrainian land. Putin previously has offered no concessions and will only accept a settlement on his terms.

Europe

France wildfire leaves trail of devastation: France’s largest wildfire in decades continued to burn and spread Thursday, though at a slower pace, after having already ravaged more than 160 square kilometers (62 square miles) in the south of the country and claiming one life, local authorities said.

The blaze, which started Tuesday and tore through the Corbières massif in the Aude region, has remained uncontained despite the deployment of over 2,100 firefighters and several water bomber aircraft.

The fire’s rapid spread was fueled by weeks of hot, dry weather, though cooler temperatures and calmer winds overnight helped slightly ease the situation.

“The battle continues, we have a fire that is not yet under control,” region administrator Christian Pouget told broadcaster BFMTV.

The fire has swept through 15 communes in the Corbières massif, destroying or damaging at least 36 homes, with a full damage assessment still underway. One person died in their home, and at least 13 others were injured, including 11 firefighters, according to local authorities. Three people were reported missing, the Aude prefecture added.

An investigation is ongoing to determine the cause of the fire, which has left a blackened landscape of skeletal trees and ash.

“It’s very sad to think about the image we’re going to give of our Corbières region, with its devastated landscapes and desperate women and men, not just today or tomorrow, but for weeks and months to come. It will take years to rebuild,” said Xavier de Volontat, the mayor of Saint-Laurent-de-la-Cabrerisse, speaking to BFMTV. (AP)



This photo, provided by the Securite Civile on Aug 7, 2025, shows a fireman using a hose next to the wildfire near Saint-Laurent-de-la-Cabrerisse, southern France on Aug 6. (AP)

Wildfire prompts evacuations in Spain: Authorities evacuated beaches, hotels, and campsites near the southern Spanish resort of Tarifa on Tuesday afternoon after a fast-moving wildfire broke out amid hot and windy conditions.

The fire reportedly started around 3:00 p.m. local time (1300 GMT) in a motorhome at a campsite near Valdevaqueros beach, a place popular with surfers and kite surfers. Fanned by strong winds and dry conditions, the flames quickly spread across the surrounding area.

Live footage on Spanish television showed thick plumes of smoke billowing over the coastline as emergency crews worked to clear sunbathers and tourists from beaches in the fire’s path.

Tarifa Mayor Antonio Santos described the situation as unprecedented. (Xinhua)

UK border authorities detain first group of migrants

LONDON, Aug 7, (AP): British border authorities have detained the first group of migrants under a pilot plan that will send some who cross the English Channel on small boats back to France.

The migrants were detained Wednesday, the day the program came into force, and will be held at immigration removal centers until they are returned to France, the Home Office said on Thursday.

“That sends a message to every migrant currently thinking of paying organized crime gangs to go to the U.K. that they will be risking their lives and throwing away their money if they get into a small boat,” Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said in the statement.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron announced the deal last month as the U.K. government struggles to tamp down criticism that it has lost control



Gendarmes watch migrants on a small boat from Ecault beach on July 4. (AP)

of the country’s borders. While the pilot involves a limited number of people, UK officials suggest the deal is a major breakthrough because it sets a precedent that migrants who reach Britain illegally can be returned to France.

Critics say the program will do little to deter migrants because the numbers returned to France are small and loopholes in the treaty will allow many people who enter Britain illegally to remain in the country as they pursue human rights claims.

‘Next GBC meeting to be held within month’

Cambodia, Thailand sign deal to cement ceasefire

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 7, (Agencies): Cambodia and Thailand on Thursday signed an agreement on ceasefire arrangements, representatives of the two countries said after an extraordinary General Border Committee (GBC) meeting held in the Malaysian capital.

According to the Cambodian side, the two countries held detailed discussions on ceasefire arrangements, and agreed to establish a regional monitoring mechanism, restore mutual trust, and that captured soldiers could be treated under the international humanitarian law.

The Thai side said that the two countries arrived at an agreement, and agreed to maintain communication and resolve issues through a bilateral mechanism, and ASEAN members will be allowed to monitor the ceasefire.

In addition, the two sides agreed that the next extraordinary GBC meeting will be held within a month.

The first meeting of the General Border Committee concluded after four days of talks in the Malaysian capital,

Kuala Lumpur, with a focus on ensuring the full implementation of the ceasefire brokered by Malaysia on July 28.

Dozens of people were killed and over 260,000 displaced on both sides of the Thai-Cambodian border, when fighting began after a land mine explosion along the border wounded five Thai soldiers.

According to a joint statement from the committee, each country will set up its own interim observer team comprising defense officials from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and coordinated by the bloc’s annual chair Malaysia, pending the deployment of a formal ASEAN observer mission. The interim teams will operate within their respective borders and work closely with local military authorities.

The main meeting Thursday was chaired by Cambodian Defense Minister Gen. Tea Seiha and Thailand’s Deputy Defense Minister Gen. Natthaphon Nakpanit. Malaysian Defense Minister Mohamed Khaled Nordin, along with representatives from the U.S. and China, attended as observers.

US. Ambassador to Malaysia Edgar D. Kagan said after the meeting that the outcome was an important milestone.

“The US believes this is an important step. However it’s important to recognize this is only a step. The goal here is a durable sustainable ceasefire, one that is able to be accepted and enforced by both sides,” he told reporters. He said the US would work closely with Malaysia and ASEAN to monitor the truce.

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.

However, tensions persisted as each country accused the other of violating the agreements and organized tours of the former battle areas for foreign diplomats and other observers to highlight damage allegedly caused by the other side.



Thai delegates, (left), led by Deputy Defense Minister Natthaphon Narkphanit and Cambodian delegates, right, led by Defense Minister General Tea Seiha attend a meeting of the Extraordinary General Border Committee (GBC), hosted by Malaysian Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, to discuss their border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Aug 7. (AP)

Investigators seek arrest of wife of jailed ex-president Yoon

S.Korea, US militaries to stage large-scale drills this month to address N.Korean threats

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug 7, (AP): South Korea and the United States will launch their annual large-scale military exercise this month to bolster readiness against North Korean threats, the allies said Thursday, in a move likely to irritate Pyongyang amid a prolonged stalemate in diplomacy.

The exercise also comes against the backdrop of concerns in Seoul that the Trump administration could shake up the decades-old alliance by demanding higher payments for the US troop presence in South Korea and possibly move to reduce it as Washington puts more focus on China.

Ulchi Freedom Shield, the second of two large-scale exercises held annually in South Korea, following another set of drills in March, typically involves thousands of troops in computer-simulated command post training and combined field exercises.

The Aug. 18-28 exercise may trigger an angry reaction from North Korea, which calls the joint drills invasion rehearsals and often uses them as a pretext to dial up military demonstrations and weapons tests aimed at advancing its nuclear program.

Doubling down on its nuclear ambitions, North Korea has repeatedly

rejected Washington and Seoul’s calls to resume diplomacy aimed at winding down its weapons program, which derailed in 2019. The North has now made Russia the priority of its foreign policy, sending thousands of troops and large amounts of military equipment to support Moscow’s war in Ukraine.

About 18,000 South Korean troops will take part in this year’s Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise, South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesperson, Col Lee Sung Joon, said during a joint briefing with U.S. Forces Korea, which did not disclose the number of participating U.S. troops.

Both Lee and US Forces Korea public affairs director Col. Ryan Donald downplayed speculation that South Korea’s new liberal government, led by President Lee Jae Myung, sought to downsize the exercise to create momentum for dialogue with Pyongyang, saying its scale is similar to previous years. However, Col. Lee said about half of the exercise’s originally planned 40 field training programs were postponed to September due to heat concerns.

The threat from North Korea’s advancing nuclear and missile programs



Col Lee Sung-jun, (left), public affairs director of South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff and Col Ryan Donald, public affairs director of the United Nations Command (UNC), Combined Forces Command (CFC), and United States Forces Korea (USFK) attend a press briefing of Ulchi Freedom Shield 2025 exercise at the Defense Ministry in Seoul on Aug 7. (AP)

“We look across the globe at the challenges we may face on the battlefield and incorporate that so we can challenge the participants in the exercise,” Donald said. “We are focused on ensuring the alliance is sustainable and credibly deters aggression from the DPRK and addresses the broader regional security challenges,” he said, using the initials of North Korea’s formal name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The announcement of the exercise came a week after the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un rebuffed overtures by Lee Jae Myung’s government, saying that Seoul’s “blind trust” in its alliance with Washington and hostility toward Pyongyang make it no different from its hard-line conservative predecessor.

Kim Yo Jong later issued a separate statement dismissing the Trump administration’s intent to resume diplomacy on North Korea’s denuclearization, suggesting that Pyongyang - now focused on expanding ties with Russia - sees little urgency in resuming talks with Seoul or Washington.

On the other side of Seoul’s security concerns is whether its alliance with

Washington will see dramatic shifts during the second term of President Donald Trump, who has rattled allies and partners with tariff hikes and demands that they reduce their reliance on the U.S. and spend more for their own defense.

Also:

SEOUL, South Korea: South Korean investigators on Thursday requested a warrant to arrest the wife of jailed former President **Yoon Suk Yeol**, a day after questioning her over suspicions including bribery, stock manipulation and political influence-peddling.

Yoon, for the second time in a week, resisted an attempt to compel him to appear for questioning in his wife’s case, forcing prison officials to abandon their efforts after an hourlong struggle due to concerns of injury, the investigators said. The detention warrant for Yoon expires Thursday.

The investigation targeting Yoon’s wife, **Kim Keon Hee**, is one of three separate special prosecutor probes launched under the government of new liberal President **Lee Jae Myung** related to Yoon, who was removed from office in April and rearrested last month over his brief imposition of martial law in December.

Myanmar’s acting President Myint Swe dies after long illness – NDSC

YANGON, Aug 7, (Agencies): Myanmar’s acting President Myint Swe died at the age of 74 in Nay Pyi Taw, the capital of Myanmar, on Thursday morning, the National Defense and Security Council (NDSC) said.

A state funeral will be held for the acting president, the NDSC said.

According to the NDSC on Aug 5, Myint Swe has been diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease and other related neurological conditions.

He received treatment in Singapore and at No. 2 Defence Services General Hospital in 2024, but his condition worsened in July 2025, with severe symptoms including weight loss and cognitive decline, it said.

Due to his critical condition, he had been receiving intensive care at Special ICU of No. 2 Defence Services General Hospital in Nay Pyi Taw since July 24.

The acting president had been on a medical leave since July 2024, and transferred duties to Senior General Min Aung Hlaing since then.

Myint Swe was born in 1951 in Mandalay region. He attended the Defence Services Academy in 1971 and served in various military ranks in the Tatmadaw (myanmar mili-



Myanmar Vice President Myint Swe speaks during a ceremony to mark Myanmar’s 73rd anniversary of Union Day in Naypyitaw, Myanmar on Feb 12, 2020. (AP)

tary). He retired from the Tatmadaw in 2010 with the rank of lieutenant general.

Myint Swe served as Yangon Region Chief Minister from 2011 to 2016.

On March 30, 2016, he was sworn in as vice president of Myanmar. Myint Swe became acting president on Feb 1, 2021, after then-President U Win Myint was detained. Subse-

quently, Myint Swe declared a state of emergency and the state power was transferred to Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Min Aung Hlaing.

During his time in office, Myint Swe could only perform the pro forma duties of his job, such as issuing decrees to renew the state of emergency, because Min Aung Hlaing controlled all government functions.

Russia asks CAR to replace Wagner with state-run Africa Corps and pay for it

BANGUI, Central African Republic, Aug 7, (AP): Officials in the Central African Republic (CAR) have said that Russia has called on the country to replace the private Wagner mercenary group with Moscow’s state-run Africa Corps and requested payment for further security services.

The Central African Republic’s government has been reluctant to agree to Moscow’s demands, because it sees Wagner as more effective and they prefer to pay for services with minerals, not in cash.

For years, Wagner has been in Central African Republic, where they are protecting President Faustin Archange Touadera and his government, and helped him win a 2023 constitutional referendum that could extend his power indefinitely. In exchange, they’ve enjoyed access to the country’s rich minerals, including gold.

But Russia has been trying to transition from Wagner to Africa Corps since Wagner’s leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, was killed in a plane crash in 2023. The Wagner mercenaries were replaced earlier this year in Mali.

A Central African Republic military official told The Associated Press on Tuesday that the Russian deputy defense minister made the demands about a shift to Africa Corps and pay-



In this image taken from video, President of the Central African Republic Faustin-Archange Touadera arrives at a polling station in Bangui, Central African Republic, Sunday, July 30, 2023. (AP)

ment for its services earlier this year during several visits to the country.

The official said government authorities are reluctant to agree, because they believe the private-run Wagner would be more effective than Africa Corps, which is under direct command of the Russian defense ministry.

Wagner has “connections with the officers, are feared operationally and have the resources,” said the official,

who wasn’t allowed to publicly discuss the matter so spoke on condition of anonymity.

The military official said that according to the Russian demands, the Central African Republic “must not only cover the costs of Africa Corps personnel, but also pay significant sums of money to Russia, amounting to billions of CFA francs (millions of dollars).

El Salvador prez not dictator: Trump administration

MEXICO CITY, Aug 7, (AP): The Trump administration said El Salvador President Nayib Bukele should not be lumped together with leaders in other countries it considers dictatorships after his party and allies discarded presidential term limits.

Bukele posted the statement of US support on X Tuesday.

On Wednesday, the US State Department said in a statement to The Associated Press that the constitutional change axing term limits in the Central American country was made by a “democratically elected” Congress and that “it is up to them to decide how their country should be governed.”

“We reject the comparison of El Salvador’s democratically based and constitutionally sound legislative process with illegitimate dictatorial regimes elsewhere in our region,” the statement said.

The speedy approval of indefinite presidential terms last week generated warnings from watchdogs and El Salvador’s beleaguered opposition that it spelled the end of the country’s democracy. The Congress also approved extending presidential terms from five to six years.

“It’s unfortunate to see the US government is defending efforts to establish an autocracy in El Salvador. This undermines the credibility of the State Department’s criticism to other authoritarian governments and dictatorships in the region,” said Juan Pappier, Americas deputy director for Human Rights Watch.

El Salvador’s archbishop José Luis Escobar Alas joined those expressing concern on Wednesday and called on lawmakers to reconsider approving the



US President Donald Trump receives El Salvador’s President Nayib Bukele at the West Wing of the White House, in Washington on April 14. (AP)

overhaul “without consulting” the Salvadoran people, which was crucial for the “legitimacy” of the constitutional reform.

The populist leader and his New Ideas party have spent years consolidating power, weakening checks and balances as they placed loyalists on the highest courts, undercut government watchdogs and pursued political opponents and critics.

Bukele remains wildly popular, largely because his all-out pursuit of the country’s once-powerful street gangs has brought security, though critics argue at the cost of due process.

Bukele defended the constitutional changes last week, writing on X that many European nations allow indefinite reelection “but when a small, poor

country like El Salvador tries to do the same, suddenly it’s the end of democracy.”

Critics have said that is a false comparison, as those nations have stronger democratic institutions to serve as a check on executive power.

Increasingly though, those critics are leaving the country out of fear of arrest.

Watchdogs say an escalating crackdown on dissent is underway by Bukele, who has been emboldened by his alliance with U.S. President Donald Trump. After initially being critical of Bukele, the Biden administration also remained largely silent over human rights violations and concentration of power in El Salvador as the country helped slow migration north.

Brazilian justice eases ex-prez Jair Bolsonaro’s house arrest

RIO DE JANEIRO, Aug 7, (AP): Brazilian Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes on Wednesday eased a key term of the house arrest imposed on former President **Jair Bolsonaro** in his coup plot case, allowing family members to visit without prior authorization.

De Moraes’ authorization, which followed a request from federal police, means the relatives will be able to visit the residence where Bolsonaro lives with his wife, Michelle, without first asking court for permission. It applies to Bolsonaro’s sons and daughter, grandchildren and close relatives of his wife.

The conservative former leader is on trial for allegedly masterminding a coup plot to remain in office despite his election loss to current leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Bolsonaro denies wrongdoing.

The house arrest order has sharply divided Brazilians, with his supporters saying the case against Bolsonaro is persecution of a political adversary, while Lula supporters say the matter should be decided in court.

The case has gripped the South American country as it faces a trade war with the United States. Bolsonaro has drawn the support of the U.S. government, with President Donald Trump calling the prosecution of Bolsonaro a witch hunt and tying his decision to impose a 50% tariff on imported Brazilian goods to his ally’s judicial situation.



Bolsonaro



In this image taken from video, people work at the site of a military helicopter crash in Sikaman near Adansi, Ashanti region, Ghana on Aug 6. (AP)

Ghana copter crash kills 8

A military helicopter crashed in Ghana on Wednesday, killing all eight people on board, including the West African country’s defense and environment ministers and two other top officials, the government said.

The crash was one of Ghana’s worst air disasters in more than a decade.

The Ghanaian military said the helicopter took off in the morning from the capital, Accra, and was heading northwest into the interior toward the gold-mining area of Obuasi in the Ashanti region when it went off the radar. The wreckage was later found in the Adansi area of Ashanti.

The cause of the crash was not immediately known, and the military said an investigation was underway. (AP)

Oil price falls slightly to \$71.61 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (KUNA): Kuwait oil price dropped four cents to USD 71.61 per barrel on Wednesday compared to Tuesday's USD 71.65 pb, reported Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Thurs-

day.

In global markets, Brent futures decreased 75 cents to USD 66.89 pb while West Texas Intermediate went down 81 cents to USD 64.35 pb.



Kuwait University and KOC partnership aiming to boost innovation and national talent.

Focus on reservoirs, heavy oil

KU & KOC strengthen research partnership

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: In an effort to strengthen the partnership between Kuwait University and Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), a high-level coordination meeting was held recently to discuss ways to expand research collaboration in line with the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035.

Representing Kuwait University, Assistant Vice President for External Research Cooperation and Consultations Dr. Mebkhut Mohammad Al-Dosari met with Deputy CEO for Planning and Innovation at KOC Mohammad Khalifa Al-Abduljaleel. Also in attendance was Bader Mohammad Al-Ajmi, Director of the Innovation and Technology Group at KOC.

The meeting focused on advancing the implementation of the 2019 cooperation agreement between the two institutions, which centers on collaboration in the fields of reservoirs and heavy oil. The agreement aims to promote research and development through technology and knowledge transfer, enhance oil production and refining processes, and support industrial innovation to meet the evolving needs of the energy sector.

Discussions also addressed mechanisms for launching joint research projects, developing national competencies, and tackling some of the challenges that the oil sector is currently facing. Both parties emphasized the importance of aligning research efforts with the priorities of the country.

Al-Dosari highlighted the significance of this collaboration to promote applied scientific research, support the national economy, and ensure alignment with labor market demands. He stressed that the partnership contributes to achieving one of the core pillars of Kuwait Vision 2035—the establishment of a diversified, sustainable and knowledge-based economy.

Al-Abduljaleel reaffirmed KOC's commitment to build strong partnerships with academic institutions. He added that cooperation with Kuwait University is vital to fostering innovative solutions to technical and environmental challenges, and to empower national talent by developing their scientific and technical capabilities.

This meeting reflects the shared vision of Kuwait University and Kuwait Oil Company to expand the nation's knowledge base, drive innovation, and foster academic-industry synergy in support of Kuwait's long-term development goals.

Output dip due to maintenance

Salem Faleh Al-Hajri named Al-Zour Operations Director

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) Wadha Al-Khatib has appointed Salem Faleh Al-Hajri as the new Operations Group Director at Al-Zour Refinery, reporting directly to the Deputy CEO for Operations.

Senior oil sector sources revealed this appointment is among the expected internal promotions in KIPIC this year. They said Al-Zour Refinery -- one of the largest in the world -- is keen on increasing its maximum refining capacity in 2025 as part of efforts to enhance profitability after falling short of production targets in the last fiscal year. They added that refining output during that period reached around 507,460 barrels per day -- below the refinery's full capacity of 615,000 barrels per day.

Sources explained that the decline in output was largely due to necessary quality upgrades and ongoing maintenance works. They affirmed KIPIC is now working on multiple fronts to improve operational performance and recover from past losses, eyeing stronger financial results for fiscal 2025/2026.

Sources pointed out that as a strategic pillar of the Vision 2040 of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation

(KPC), Al-Zour Refinery plays a crucial role in enhancing the energy security of the country. They disclosed that in the 2024/2025 budget period; the refinery supplied about 6,923,000 million metric tons of fuel oil and low-sulfur gasoil to the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy. It sold about 2,900 metric tons of low-sulfur gasoil to the Ministry of Oil and around 145,700 metric tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC).

Sources also confirmed that KIPIC is working hard to expand the export of vital refined products; including jet fuel, sulfur and low-sulfur diesel. These products, which comply with stringent international environmental standards, are expected to strengthen KIPIC's presence in global energy markets.

Technologically, KIPIC is utilizing advanced smart systems in its operations and it is investing in enhanced cybersecurity awareness. Operational efficiency improvements are underway at both the Al-Zour refinery and LNG import facilities, supported by a series of strategic initiatives. Among these initiatives is the replacement of LNG with nitrogen gas to operate the flare unit at the LNG terminal, eliminating the use of fuel gas and significantly reducing emissions caused by global warming.

Trading volume hits 273.8 mln shares

Boursa Kuwait closes higher, all indices gain

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended trading on Thursday with notable gains across all indices. The All Share Index climbed 35.73 points, or 0.42 percent, to close at 8,597 points. Trading activity was robust, with 273.8 million shares exchanged across 21,605 transactions, totaling KD 65.8 million (approximately USD 200.6 million).

The Main Market Index advanced by 8.30 points, or 0.11 percent, finishing at 7,639.54 points. This came on the back of 175.7 million shares changing hands through 14,887 trades, with a total

value of KD 27.2 million (USD 82.9 million).

Similarly, the Premier Market Index saw an uptick of 44.34 points, or 0.48 percent, ending at 9,260.68 points. This was generated by 98.13 million shares traded in 6,718 transactions, amounting to KD 38.6 million (USD 117.7 million).

The Main 50 Index also registered an increase of 33.93 points, or 0.45 percent, reaching 7,592.51 points. A total of 96.5 million shares were traded through 6,161 transactions, with a value of KD 13.6 million (around USD 41.4 million).

Business

In line with its continued support for the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign

NBK warns against using public Wi-Fi for banking

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: In line with its continued support for the "Let's Be Aware" campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait in collaboration with Kuwait Banking Association, National Bank of Kuwait reiterates its warnings to customers about the risks of using public Wi-Fi networks, with a particular focus on the increased risks at airports and cafes, coinciding with the busy summer travel season.

The aim of this campaign is to enhance financial literacy and raise awareness about digital safety principles among various society segments, including awareness messages on fraud protection, fake ads, and banking app hacks, in addition to emphasizing the need to report any suspicious transactions.

To this end, NBK warns against making any banking transactions using public Wi-Fi networks, as they are unsafe, unprotected, and can be easily hacked, as it is common for multiple public Wi-Fi networks to have the same name.

With the increasing number of passengers, free Wi-Fi networks in airports and cafes have become main targets for scammers, which is



why NBK highlighted the necessity of using anti-virus and anti-hacking programs, as well as securing the internet connection and verifying the ads generated from these networks. NBK also stressed the importance of turning off Wi-Fi and automatic joining and refraining from saving personal data to avoid any hacking attempts of sensitive and personal information.

NBK's efforts to educate its customers are a fundamental pillar of its strategy, as it consistently emphasizes the need for customers to adhere to general instructions and guidelines to avoid digital fraud, as well as the importance of regularly changing bank card PINs and not sharing them with fraudsters

claiming to be from the bank.

Moreover, NBK is utilizing all its digital channels, which have the highest number of followers among all banks in Kuwait, to support CBK's efforts in protecting customers and the economy.

It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key supporter and partner in all CBK's initiatives and campaigns aiming to raise financial awareness and spread banking culture among all segments of society. As a leading financial institution in Kuwait and across the region, NBK frequently organizes various activities that contribute to raising awareness about all topics related to the banking sector. It also organizes various activities and training courses on fraud prevention and financial crimes.

As one of the largest financial institutions in the region, NBK is committed to its social responsibility towards the communities in which it operates, and it is always proactive in providing all forms of support for important and strategic campaigns, such as the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, which serves the national economy and society.

Bank promotes financial inclusion and literacy across Kuwait

ABK boosts customer engagement to promote banking updates and data security awareness

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is dedicating its full resources to support the success of the 'Let's Be Aware' financial awareness campaign, in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association. The Bank contributes to the campaign's goals by actively engaging with customers to introduce the campaign's topics and promote financial and banking inclusion across all segments of society in Kuwait.

ABK is continuously developing its digital and technical systems to protect customer data and keep pace with technological advancements. It offers a variety of innovative solutions to enhance its banking services, available through its website, mobile application, and a digital brochure that provides ac-



cess to its latest offers, discounts, and comprehensive banking solutions, catering to customers' needs around the clock.

The Bank also shares engaging content through its social media platforms and digital screens across its branches throughout Kuwait. This content is regularly updated to attract more followers and customers to explore the topics covered in the "Let's Be Aware" campaign. These topics include understanding rights and



responsibilities when dealing with banks, the latest digital banking solutions, ways to prevent banking fraud, types of cards and loans, top savings and investment solutions, services for people with special needs, and more.

ABK emphasizes the importance of customers staying vigilant when dealing with suspicious entities. It advises them not to share their banking card information, to verify details when making online purchases, and to rely only on official websites and apps when making bookings. Customers are also urged to contact the Bank directly if they suspect any suspicious ac-

tivity on their accounts.

These efforts underscore ABK's role as a responsible banking institution in Kuwait, committed to the success of national campaigns and to collaborating with all relevant sectors to increase customer awareness and help them stay informed about ongoing developments in the local, regional, and global banking industry.

Additionally, the Bank organizes various cultural competitions related to the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, which see high participation levels at local shopping malls. These competitions contribute to improving participants' financial and banking literacy, one of the key objectives of the campaign, now successfully running for the fifth consecutive year.

Competitive pricing across 1-, 3-, and 6-month tenors

Strong global demand highlights confidence in the IILM's \$1.215 billion Sukuk reissuance

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 7: The International Islamic Liquidity Management Corporation (IILM), an international organisation that develops and issues short-term Shari'ah-compliant financial instruments, has successfully completed the reissuance of an aggregate USD 1.215 billion short-term Sukuk across three different tenors of one-month, three-month, and six-month respectively.

The three series were priced competitively at:

1. 4.40% for USD 560 million for 1-month tenor;
2. 4.46% for USD 420 million for 3-month tenor; and,
3. 4.35% for USD 235 million for 6-month tenor

Today's successful completion of the short-term Sukuk transaction marks the IILM's fourteenth auction year-to-date (YTD) with a cumulative issuance of USD 14.37 billion, across 42 Sukuk series of varying tenors.

The auction attracted robust participation from the IILM's network of Primary Dealers and global investors, generating total bids of USD 2.7 billion and achieving a strong average bid-to-cover (BTC) ratio of 2.2 times.

Mohamad Safri Shahul Hamid, Chief Executive Officer of the IILM, commented: "As we reach the mid-point of Q3 2025, the IILM is pleased to report a cumulative YTD issuance of USD14.37 billion, representing approximately 70% of our 2025 full-year forecast and already surpassing the total issuance for 2024 (USD 13.01 billion) by about 13%. Follow-



International Islamic Liquidity Management Corporation

ing today's auction, the IILM issuances now account for roughly 24% of global Sukuk issuance YTD in 2025, underscoring our central role in the international Islamic capital market.

"Despite continued uncertainty over the US Federal Reserve's policy trajectory and broader global economic headwinds, including rising impact of tariffs, investor demand for our short-term papers remains unabated. Today's issuance maintained a robust BTC ratio of over 220%, further reinforcing the IILM's pivotal role in enhancing the resilience and development of sound Islamic liquidity management propositions globally."

The issuance forms part of the IILM's "A-1" (S&P) and "F1" (Fitch Ratings) rated USD 6 billion short-term Sukuk issuance programme.

The IILM's short-term Sukuk is distributed by a diversified and growing network of primary dealers globally, namely Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, Al Baraka Turk, Affin Islamic

Bank, AlRayan Bank, Boubyan Bank, CIMB Islamic Bank Berhad, Dukhan Bank, First Abu Dhabi Bank, Golden Global Investment Bank, Kuwait Finance House, Kuwait International Bank, Maybank Islamic Berhad, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat, Qatar Islamic Bank, and Standard Chartered Bank.

The IILM is a regular issuer of short-term Sukuk across varying tenors and amounts to cater to the liquidity needs of institutions offering Islamic financial services. The IILM will continue to reissue its short-term liquidity instruments monthly as scheduled in its issuance calendar.

About the IILM

The International Islamic Liquidity Management Corporation (IILM) is an international organisation established on 25 October 2010 by central banks, monetary authorities and multilateral organisations to develop and issue short-term Shari'ah-compliant financial instruments to facilitate effective cross-border liquidity management for institutions that offer Islamic financial services (IIFS).

The current members of the IILM Governing Board are the central banks and monetary agencies of Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Qatar, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates, as well as the multilateral Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector.

Membership of the IILM is open to central banks, monetary authorities, financial regulatory authorities or government ministries or agencies that have regulatory oversight of finance or trade and commerce, and multilateral organisations.

Damascus airport expansion to cost \$4 bln

Syria signs \$14 bln in investment deals for 12 major projects

DAMASCUS, Aug 7, (AP): Syria signed agreements worth \$14 billion with regional and international companies on Wednesday for 12 investment projects, including modernizing the international airport in Damascus and a new subway system, state media reported.

The deals are the largest so far since foreign companies and countries started an investment push into the war-torn country after Western sanctions were eased following the fall of the 54-year rule of the Assad family.

The head of Syria's Investment

Authority, Talal al-Halili, was quoted by state-run news agency SANA as saying that the expansion of Damascus' International Airport will cost \$4 billion and will be done by the Qatar-based UCC Holding. SANA said that the airport will be able to serve up to 31 million travelers a year, after the expansion.

SANA added that the agreement for the new subway system in the capital is worth \$2 billion, and the network is expected to be used by 750,000 people a day. The deal for the subway was signed by Syria's

Transportation Ministry and the United Arab Emirates' National Investment Corporation, SANA said.

Other projects include the \$2 billion construction of 60 residential towers with 20,000 housing units outside of the capital.

"Syria is open for investments and determined to build a bright future," al-Hilali said during the ceremony, which was attended by President Ahmad al-Sharaa.

In late July, Syria and Saudi Arabia announced 47 investment agreements, valued at more than

\$6 billion to mark a significant step in rebuilding Syria's war-battered economy.

In May, Syria signed an agreement with a consortium of Qatari, Turkish and U.S. companies for the development of a \$7 billion 5,000-megawatt energy project to revitalize much of Syria's war-battered electricity grid.

"The future of a prosperous and peaceful Syria is in the hands of Syria and its regional partners," said the U.S. special envoy to Syria, Tom Barrack, who attended Wednesday's signing in Damascus.

Apple, Nvidia stocks rise after Trump exemption hints

Trump plans 100% tariff on computer chips, unless companies build in US

WASHINGTON, Aug 7, (AP): President Donald Trump said Wednesday that he will impose a 100% tariff on computer chips, raising the specter of higher prices for electronics, autos, household appliances and other essential products dependent on the processors powering the digital age.

“We’ll be putting a tariff of approximately 100% on chips and semiconductors,” Trump said in the Oval Office while meeting with Apple CEO Tim Cook. “But if you’re building in the United States of America, there’s no charge.”

The announcement came more than three months after Trump temporarily exempted most electronics from his administration’s most onerous tariffs. The Republican president said companies that make computer chips in the U.S. would be spared the import tax. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a shortage of computer chips increased the price of autos and contributed to higher inflation.

Investors seemed to interpret the potential tariff exemptions as a positive for Apple and other major tech companies that have been making huge financial commitments to manufacture more chips and other components in the U.S..

Big Tech already has made collective commitments to invest about \$1.5 trillion in the U.S. since Trump moved back into the White House in January. That figure includes a \$600 billion promise from Apple after the iPhone maker boosted its commitment by tacking another \$100 billion on to a previous commitment made in February.

Now the question is whether the deal brokered between Cook and Trump will be enough to insulate the millions of iPhones made in China and India from the tariffs that the administration has already imposed and reduce the pressure on the company to raise prices on the new models expected to be



Apple CEO Tim Cook speaks as President Donald Trump looks on, in the Oval Office, Wednesday, Aug. 6, 2025, in Washington. (AP)

unveiled next month.

Wall Street certainly seems to think so. After Apple’s stock price gained 5% in Wednesday regular trading sessions, the shares rose by another 3% in extended trading after Trump announced some tech companies won’t be hit

with the latest tariffs while Cook stood alongside him.

The shares of AI chipmaker Nvidia, which also has recently made big commitments to the U.S., rose slightly in extended trading to add to the \$1 trillion gain in market value the Silicon Valley company has made since the start of Trump’s second administration.

The stock price of computer chip pioneer Intel, which has fallen on hard times, also climbed in extended trading.

Inquiries sent to chip makers Nvidia and Intel were not immediately answered. The chip industry’s main trade group, the Semiconductor Industry Association, declined to comment on Trump’s latest tariffs.

Demand for computer chips has been climbing worldwide, with sales increasing 19.6% in the year-ended in June, according to the World Semiconductor Trade Statistics organization.

Trump’s tariff threats mark a significant break from existing plans to revive computer chip production in the U.S. that were drawn up during the administration of President Joe Biden.

Since taking over from Biden, Trump has been deploying tariffs to incentivize more domestic production. Essentially, the president is betting that the threat of dramatically higher chip costs would force most companies to open factories domestically, despite the risk that tariffs could squeeze corporate profits and push up prices for mobile phones, TVs and refrigerators.

By contrast, the bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act that Biden signed into law in 2022 provided more than \$50 billion to support new computer chip plants, fund research and train workers for the industry. The mix of funding support, tax credits and other financial incentives were meant to draw in private investment, a strategy that Trump has vocally opposed.



A hiring sign is displayed at a retail store in Mount Prospect, Ill., Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024. (AP)

July jobs report disappoints

US unemployment claims rise modestly to 226,000

WASHINGTON, Aug. 7, (AP): The number of Americans filing for jobless benefits rose modestly last week, a sign that employers still retaining workers despite economic uncertainty related to U.S. trade policy.

Jobless claims for the week ending Aug. 2 rose by 7,000 to 226,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday, slightly more than the 219,000 new applications that economists had forecast.

The report is the first government labor market data release since Friday’s grim July jobs report sent financial markets spiraling downward, spurring President Donald Trump to fire the head of the agency that tallies the monthly jobs numbers.

Weekly applications for jobless benefits are seen as a proxy for U.S. layoffs and have mostly settled in a historically healthy range between 200,000 and 250,000 since COVID-19 throttled the economy in the spring of 2020.

It was just the second time in eight weeks that jobless benefit applications rose.

While layoffs remain low by historical standards, there has been noticeable deterioration in the labor market this year.

Last week, the government reported that U.S. employers added just 73,000 jobs in July, well short of the 115,000 expected. Worse, revisions to the May and June jobs figures shaved a stunning 258,000 jobs off previous estimates and the unemployment rate ticked up to 4.2% from 4.1%.

Many economists contend that Trump’s erratic tariff rollout in April created uncertainty for employers, who have grown reluctant to expand their payrolls.

The grim jobs data raised the ire of Trump, who alleged that the data was manipulated for political reasons and ordered the firing of Erika McEntarfer, the head of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which produces the monthly jobs figures.

The firing was roundly criticized by economists, who, along with Wall Street investors, have long considered

the job figures reliable. Stock and bond markets often react sharply when they are released.

U.S. markets recoiled at last week’s jobs report, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average tumbling more than 600 points on Friday.

The BLS does not contribute to the weekly unemployment benefits report except to calculate the annual seasonal adjustments that account for changes in weather, holidays, and school schedules.

The Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration collects the weekly unemployment insurance claims reported by each state.

There was another indicator that the labor market is softening in a government report last week that revealed employers posted 7.4 million job vacancies in June, down from 7.7 million in May. The number of people quitting their jobs - a sign of confidence in finding a better job - fell in June to the lowest level since December. Hiring also fell from May.

Major companies have announced job cuts this year, including Procter & Gamble, Dow, CNN, Starbucks, Southwest Airlines, Microsoft, Google and Facebook parent company Meta. Most recently, Intel and The Walt Disney Co. announced staff reductions.

The deadline on most of Trump’s stiff proposed taxes on imports kicked in on Thursday, though some deals have been made and other deadlines to negotiate have been extended. Unless Trump reaches deals with countries to lower the tariffs, economists fear they could act as a drag on the economy and spark another rise in inflation.

Thursday’s report also showed that the four-week average of claims, which smooths out some of the week-to-week volatility, fell by 500 to 220,750.

The total number of Americans collecting unemployment benefits for the previous week of July 26 jumped by 38,000 to 1.97 million, the highest level since November of 2021.

Trump imposes steep new tariffs on over 60 nations

WASHINGTON, Aug 7, (AP): President Donald Trump began imposing higher import taxes on dozens of countries Thursday just as the economic fallout of his monthslong tariff threats has begun to cause visible damage to the U.S. economy.

Just after midnight, goods from more than 60 countries and the European Union became subject to tariff rates of 10% or higher. Products from the EU, Japan and South Korea are taxed at 15%, while imports from Taiwan, Vietnam and Bangladesh are taxed at 20%. Trump also expects the EU, Japan and South Korea to invest hundreds of billions of dollars in the United States.

“I think the growth is going to be unprecedented,” Trump said Wednesday. He said the U.S. was “taking in hundreds of billions of dollars in tariffs,” but did not provide a specific figure for revenues because “we don’t even know what the final number is” regarding the rates.

Despite the uncertainty, the White House is confident that the onset of his tariffs will provide clarity about the path for the world’s largest economy. Now that companies understand the direction the U.S. is headed, the Republican administration believes it can ramp up new investments and jumpstart hiring in ways that can rebalance America as a manufacturing power.

So far, however, there are signs of self-inflicted wounds to the U.S. as companies and consumers brace for the impact of the new taxes.

Hiring began to stall, inflationary pressures crept upward and home values in key markets started to decline after the initial tariff rollout in April, said John Silvia, CEO of Dynamic Economic Strategy.

“A less productive economy requires fewer workers,” Silvia said. “But there is more, the higher tariff prices lower workers’ real wages. The economy has become less productive, and firms cannot pay the same real wages as before. Actions have consequences.”

Many economists say the risk is that the American economy is steadily eroded.

“It’s going to be fine sand in the gears and slow things down,” said Brad Jensen, a professor at Georgetown University.

Trump has promoted the tariffs as a way to reduce America’s persistent trade deficit. But importers tried to avoid the taxes by bringing in more goods before the tariffs took effect. As a result, the \$582.7 billion trade imbalance for the first half of the year was 38% higher than in 2024. Total construction spending has dropped 2.9% over the past year.

The economic pain is not confined to the U.S. Germany, which sends 10% of its exports to the U.S. market, saw industrial production sag 1.9% in June as Trump’s earlier rounds of tariffs took hold. “The new tariffs will clearly weigh on economic growth,” said Carsten Brzeski, global chief of macro for ING bank.

The lead-up to Thursday fit the slapdash nature of Trump’s tariffs, which have been rolled out, walked back, delayed, increased, imposed by letter and renegotiated.

Trump on Wednesday announced additional 25% tariffs to be imposed on India because of its purchases of Russian oil, bringing its total import taxes to 50%.

A leading group of Indian exporters said that will affect nearly 55% of the country’s outbound shipments to America and force exporters to lose long-standing clients.

“Absorbing this sudden cost escalation is simply not viable. Margins are already thin,” S.C. Ralhan, president of the Federation of Indian Export Organizations, said in a statement.

The Swiss executive branch, the Federal Council, was expected to meet Thursday after President Karin Keller-Sutter and other Swiss officials returned from a hastily arranged trip to Washington in a failed bid to avert a 39% U.S. tariffs on Swiss goods.

Import taxes are still coming on pharmaceutical drugs, and Trump announced 100% tariffs on computer chips. That could leave the U.S. economy in a place of suspended animation as it awaits the impact.

The president’s use of a 1977 law to declare an economic emergency to impose the tariffs is under a legal challenge. Even people who worked with Trump during his first term are skeptical, such as Paul Ryan, the Wisconsin Republican who was House speaker.



A passer-by with umbrella in rainy weather in front of a watch shop window on Grendelstrasse in Lucerne’s old town on Wednesday, April 16, 2025. (AP)

“There’s no sort of rationale for this other than the president wanting to raise tariffs based upon his whims, his opinions,” Ryan told CNBC on Wednesday.

Trump is aware of the risk that courts could overturn his tariffs. In a Truth Social tweet, he said, “THE ONLY THING THAT CAN STOP AMERICA’S GREATNESS WOULD BE A RADICAL LEFT COURT THAT WANTS TO SEE OUR COUNTRY FAIL!”

The stock market has been solid during the tariff drama, with the S&P 500 index climbing more than 25% from its April low. The market’s rebound and the income tax cuts in Trump’s tax and spending measure signed into law on July 4 have given the White House confidence that economic growth is bound to accelerate in the coming months.

Global financial markets took the new tariffs in stride, with Asian and European shares and U.S. futures mostly higher.

But ING’s Brzeski warned: “While financial markets seem to have grown numb to tariff announcements, let’s not forget that their adverse effects on economies will gradually unfold over time.”

Trump foresees an economic boom. American voters and the rest of the world wait, nervously.

“There’s one person who can afford to be cavalier about the uncertainty that he’s creating, and that’s Donald Trump,” said Rachel West, a senior fellow at The Century Foundation who worked in the Biden White House on labor policy. “The rest of Americans are already paying the price for that uncertainty.”

Imports grow at fastest pace in a year

China’s exports jump 7.2% in July

BANGKOK, Aug 7, (AP): China’s exports surged 7.2% in July from a year earlier while its imports grew at the fastest pace in a year, as businesses rushed to take advantage of a truce in President Donald Trump’s trade war with Beijing.

However, analysts said the improvement also reflected a low base for comparison in July 2024.

Exports to the United States sank nearly 22% year-on-year, while imports from America fell almost 19%. But exports to Africa and Southeast Asia surged at double-digit rates as Chinese businesses diverted sales to other markets.

Tariffs on Chinese goods are being considered separately from the new higher tariffs that took effect on Thursday for dozens of U.S. trading partners.

China’s global trade surplus for 2025 rose to \$683.5 billion by the end of July, nearly a third higher than the surplus for the same period last year. The data showed that China’s surplus in July was \$98.2 billion, while its exports to the United States

were \$23.7 billion than its imports of U.S. goods.

U.S. imports from China are subject to tariffs of at least 30%, with some products facing much higher import duties. Trump earlier had ordered still higher rates of up to 245%, and Beijing responded in kind, but the two sides agreed to pause those to allow time for trade talks. It’s unclear if the truce will be extended beyond an Aug. 12 deadline following the latest round of negotiations last week in Sweden.

The Trump administration has also raised tariffs on imports from countries other than China that it suspects of being “transshipped” via other countries. For example, the import duty on Vietnam’s exports to the U.S. now stands at 20%. For transshipped goods, it’s 40%.

“With the temporary boost to demand from the U.S.-China trade truce already fading and tariffs on shipments rerouted via other countries now rising, exports look set to remain under pressure in the near term,” Zichun Huang of Capital Eco-

nomics said in a report.

Economists had been expecting China’s dollar-denominated exports to grow less than 6% in annual terms in July, on a par with June’s 5.8% rate.

But improved trade with the rest of the world has helped offset the impact of Trump’s trade war. Imports rose 4.1% last month from a year earlier, the most since July 2024, with higher shipments of crude oil, copper and soybeans.

China’s exports of rare earths that are vital for making many high-tech and other products and Trump has made ensuring U.S. access to such vital minerals a key part of trade negotiations, leading Beijing to promise to loosen some controls.

In July, China’s exports of rare earths fell 17.6%, compared with a nearly 50% fall the month before. In January-July, its rare earths exports fell 24.2% in dollar terms although they rose more than 13 percent by volume.

Exports of vehicles, fertilizer, ships and auto parts also saw strong growth.

Fifth rate cut since August 2024

Bank of England cuts rate to 4%

LONDON, Aug 7, (AP): The Bank of England cut its main interest rate Thursday by a quarter percentage point to 4%, as policy makers seek to bolster the sluggish U.K. economy.

Thursday’s decision was widely anticipated in financial markets as the bank’s Monetary Policy Committee balances its responsibility to control inflation against concern that rising taxes and U.S. President Donald Trump’s global trade war may slow economic growth. The committee voted 5-4 in favor of the cut.

The rate cut is the bank’s fifth since last August, when policy makers began lower borrowing costs from a 16-year high of 5.25%. The Bank of England’s key rate - a benchmark for mortgages as well as consumer and business loans - is now at the lowest level since March 2023.

“There will be hopes that if loans become cheaper, it will help boost consumer and business confidence but there’s a long way to go,” Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at Hargreaves Lansdown, said before the decision. “In the meantime, speculation over potential tax rises in the Autumn Budget may keep households and companies cautious, given the uncertainty over where extra burdens may land.”

Polymakers decided to cut rates even though consumer prices rose 3.6% in the 12 months through June, significantly above the bank’s 2% target.

The bank said the recent rise in consumer prices was largely due to temporary increases in food and energy costs, and inflation should begin falling later this year after peaking at around 4%. Inflation should be back in line with the target by the second quarter of 2027, the bank said.

Against the backdrop, policy makers were faced with concerns about the sluggish economy.

The bank estimated that economic growth slowed to 0.1% in the second quarter of 2025, from 0.7% in the first three months of the year. Gross domestic product is expected to grow 0.3% in third quarter, the bank said.

“There are slightly more risks on the downside to activity,” Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey told reporters after the rate decision was announced. “Economic growth is subdued, the labor market continues to loosen and consumption growth may take longer to pick up.”

The National Institute of Economic and Social Research, an independent think tank, said earlier this week that the government may be forced to raise taxes later this year due to slowing growth, rising borrowing costs and pressure to increase spending.

Britain’s unemployment rate rose to 4.7% in the three months through May, the highest level in four years, signaling that previous tax increases and uncertainty about the global economy are weighing on employers.

The U.K. Treasury chief, Rachel Reeves, said the government was working to lock in long-term economic growth by investing in infrastructure, negotiating international trade deals and working to make Britain a hub for the development of artificial intelligence and other innovative technologies.

Reeves and Prime Minister Keir Starmer have sought to avoid unpopular tax increases and spending cuts with policies designed to spur economic growth and increase tax revenue ever since they took office in July 2024.

“This fifth interest rate cut since the election is welcome news, helping bring down the cost of mortgages and loans for families and businesses,” Reeves said in a statement.



Young adults turning to ‘buy now, pay later’ for essentials

Grocery prices a major stressor for most Americans



A customer buys Chinese made ginger candy at 99 Ranch Market, an Asian grocery store in Los Angeles, April 7, 2025. (AP)

‘Housing is another substantial source of worry for U.S. adults - along with their savings, their income and the cost of health care.’

NEW YORK, Aug 7, (AP): The vast majority of U.S. adults are at least somewhat stressed about the cost of groceries, a new poll finds, as prices continue to rise and concerns about the impact of President Donald Trump’s tariffs remain widespread.

About half of all Americans say the cost of groceries is a “major” source of stress in their life right now, while 33% say it’s a “minor” source of stress, according to the poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Only 14% say it’s not a source of stress, underscoring the pervasive anxiety most Americans continue to feel about the cost of everyday essentials.

Other financial stressors - like the cost of housing or the amount of money in their bank accounts - are also broadly felt, but they weigh more heavily on younger Americans, who are less likely than older

adults to have significant savings or own property.

The survey also found that about 4 in 10 Americans under age 45 say they’ve used what are known as “buy now, pay later” services when spending on entertainment or restaurant meals or when paying for essentials like groceries or medical care.

Adam Bush, 19, based in Portland, New York, is one of those younger Americans who has used pay-later services for things like groceries or entertainment. Bush works as a welder, fabricating parts for trucks for Toyota, and makes under \$50,000 per year.

“I just keep watching the prices go up, so I’m looking for the cheapest possible stuff,” he said. “Hot pockets and TV dinners.”

Groceries are one of the most far-reaching financial stressors, affecting the young and old alike, the poll finds. While Americans

over age 60 are less likely than younger people to feel major financial anxiety about housing, their savings, child care, or credit card debt, they are just as worried about the cost of groceries.

Esther Bland, 78, who lives in Buckley, Washington, said groceries are a “minor” source of stress - but only because her local food banks fill the gap. Bland relies on her Social Security and disability payments each month to cover her rent and other expenses - such as veterinary care for her dogs - in retirement, after decades working in an office processing product orders.

“I have no savings,” she said. “I’m not sure what’s going on politically when it comes to the food banks, but if I lost that, groceries would absolutely be a major source of stress.”

Bland’s monthly income mainly goes toward her electric, water and cable bills, she said, as well as care

of her dogs and other household needs.

“Soap, paper towels, toilet paper. I buy gas at Costco, but we haven’t seen \$3 a gallon here in a long time,” she said. “I stay home a lot. I only put about 50 miles on my car a week.”

According to the poll, 64% of the lowest-income Americans - those who have a household income of less than \$30,000 a year - say the cost of groceries is a “major” stressor. That’s compared with about 4 in 10 Americans who have a household income of \$100,000 or more.

But even within that higher-income group, only about 2 in 10 say grocery costs aren’t a worry at all.

Housing is another substantial source of worry for U.S. adults - along with their savings, their income and the cost of health care. About half of U.S. adults say housing is a “major” source of stress,

according to the poll, while about 4 in 10 say that about the amount of money they get paid, the amount of money they have saved and the cost of health care.

About 3 in 10 say credit card debt is a “major” source of stress, while about 2 in 10 say that about the cost of child care and student debt.

But some groups are feeling much more anxiety about their finances than others. Women, for instance, are more likely than men to report high levels of stress about their income, savings, the cost of groceries and the cost of health care. Hispanic adults are also particularly concerned about housing costs and both credit card and student debt. About two-thirds of Hispanic adults say the cost of housing is a “major” source of stress, compared with about half of Black adults and about 4 in 10 white adults.

Some people are making changes to their lifestyle as a result of high costs. Shandal LeSure, 43, who works as a receptionist for a rehabilitation hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and makes between \$85,000 and \$100,000 a year, said she’s started shopping for groceries at less expensive stores.

“It’s an adjustment,” she said. “Sometimes the quality isn’t as good.”

As they stretch limited budgets, about 3 in 10 U.S. adults overall say they’ve used “buy now, pay later” services such as Afterpay or Klarna to purchase groceries, entertainment, restaurant meals or meal delivery, or medical or dental care, according to the poll.

Bland, the Washington state retiree, said she’s paid for pet surgery with a pay-later plan.

Younger Americans are much likelier than older people to have used pay-later plans for entertainment, groceries or restaurant meals, but there’s no age gap on medical care. Black and Hispanic people are also especially likely to adopt the plans.

An increasing share of “buy now, pay later” customers are having trouble repaying their loans, according to recent disclosures from the lenders. The loans are marketed as a safer alternative to traditional credit cards, but there are risks, including a lack of federal oversight. Some consumer watchdogs also say the plans lead consumers to overextend themselves financially.

LeSure said she’s used pay-later services for things like new clothes, while she balances debt payments for a car loan, student loans and medical bills. She’s also turned to them to cover hotel costs after being evicted.

“That’s been able to help me stretch my dollar,” she said.

Renewable energy supports 300,000 US jobs

Wind, solar power boost farm incomes in rural economies

By Paul Mwebaze
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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

‘Nationwide, wind and solar projects contribute about \$3.5 billion annually in combined lease payments and state and local taxes, more than a third of it going directly to rural landowners.’

Drive through the plains of Iowa or Kansas and you’ll see more than rows of corn, wheat and soybeans. You’ll also see towering wind turbines spinning above fields and solar panels shining in the sun on barns and machine sheds.

For many farmers, these are lifelines. Renewable energy provides steady income and affordable power, helping farms stay viable when crop prices fall or drought strikes.

But some of that opportunity is now at risk as the Trump administration cuts federal support for renewable energy.

Wind energy is a significant economic driver in rural America. In Iowa, for example, over 60% of the state’s electricity came from wind energy in 2024, and the state is a hub for wind turbine manufacturing and maintenance jobs.

For landowners, wind turbines often mean stable lease payments. Those historically were around US\$3,000 to \$5,000 per turbine per year, with some modern agreements \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually, secured through 20- to 30-year contracts.

Nationwide, wind and solar projects contribute about \$3.5 billion annually in combined lease payments

and state and local taxes, more than a third of it going directly to rural landowners.

These figures are backed by long-term contracts and multibillion-dollar annual contributions, reinforcing the economic value that turbines bring to rural landowners and communities.

Wind farms also contribute to local tax revenues that help fund rural schools, roads and emergency services. In counties across Texas, wind energy has become one of the most significant contributors to local property tax bases, stabilizing community budgets and helping pay for public services as agricultural commodity revenues fluctuate.

In Oldham County in northwest Texas, for example, clean energy projects provided 22% of total county revenues in 2021. In several other rural counties, wind farms rank among the top 10 property taxpayers, contributing between 38% and 69% of tax revenue.

The construction and operation of these projects also bring local jobs in trucking, concrete work and electrical services, boosting small-town businesses.

The U.S. wind industry supports over 300,000 U.S. jobs across construction, manufacturing, operations and other roles connected to the industry, according to the American Clean Power Association.

Renewable energy has been widely expected to continue to grow along with rising energy demand. In 2024, 93% of all new electricity generating capacity was wind, solar or energy storage, and the U.S. Energy Information Administration ex-

pected a similar percentage in 2025 as of June.

Solar energy is also boosting farm finances. Farmers use rooftop panels on barns and ground-mounted systems to power irrigation pumps, grain dryers and cold storage facilities, cutting their power costs.

Some farmers have adopted agrivoltaics - dual-use systems that grow crops beneath solar panels. The panels provide shade, helping conserve water, while creating a second income path. These projects often cultivate pollinator-friendly plants, vegetables such as lettuce and spinach, or even grasses for grazing sheep, making the land productive for both food and energy.

Federal grants and tax credits that were significantly expanded under the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act helped make the upfront costs of solar installations affordable.

However, the federal spending bill signed by President Donald Trump on July 4, 2025, rolled back many clean energy incentives. It phases down tax credits for distributed solar projects, particularly those under 1 megawatt, which include many farm-scale installations, and sunsets them entirely by 2028. It also eliminates bonus credits that previously supported rural and low-income areas.

Without these credits, the upfront cost of solar power could be out of reach for some farmers, leaving them paying higher energy costs.

At a 2024 conference organized by the Institute of Sustainability, Energy and Environment at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where I work as a research

economist, farmers emphasized the importance of tax credits and other economic incentives to offset the upfront cost of solar power systems.

The cuts to federal incentives include terminating the Production Tax Credit for new projects placed in service after Dec. 31, 2027, unless construction begins by July 4, 2026, and is completed within a tight time frame. The tax credit pays eligible wind and solar facilities approximately 2.75 cents per kilowatt-hour over 10 years, effectively lowering the cost of renewable energy generation. Ending that tax credit will likely increase the cost of production, potentially leading to higher electricity prices for consumers and fewer new projects coming online.

The changes also accelerate the phase-out of wind power tax credits. Projects must now begin construction by July 4, 2026, or be in service before the end of 2027 to qualify for any credit.

Meanwhile, the Investment Tax Credit, which covers 30% of installed cost for solar and other renewables, faces similar limits: Projects must begin by July 4, 2026, and be completed by the end of 2027 to claim the credits. The bill also cuts bonuses for domestic components and installations in rural or low-income locations.

These adjustments could slow new renewable energy development, particularly smaller projects that directly benefit rural communities.

While many existing clean energy agreements will remain in place for now, the rollback of federal incentives threatens future projects and

could limit new income streams. It also affects manufacturing and jobs in those industries, which some rural communities rely on.

Renewable energy benefits entire communities, not just individual farmers.

Wind and solar projects contribute millions of dollars in tax revenue. For example, in Howard County, Iowa, wind turbines generated \$2.7 million in property tax revenue in 2024, accounting for 14.5% of the county’s total budget and helping fund rural schools, public safety and road improvements.

In some rural counties, clean energy is the largest new source of economic activity, helping stabilize local economies otherwise reliant on agriculture’s unpredictable income streams. These projects also support rural manufacturing - such as Iowa turbine blade factories like TPI Composites, which just reopened its plant in Newton, and Siemens Gamesa in Fort Madison, which supply blades for GE and Siemens turbines. The tax benefits in the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act helped boost those industries - and the jobs and local tax revenue they bring in.

On the solar side, rural companies like APA Solar Racking, based in Ohio, manufacture steel racking systems for utility-scale solar farms across the Midwest.

As rural America faces economic uncertainty and climate pressures, I believe homegrown renewable energy offers a practical path forward.

Wind and solar aren’t just fueling the grid; they’re helping keep farms and rural towns alive. (AP)

editor’s choice



Steve Bogard and Tony Martin join 2025 Hall of Fame class

Harris, Paisley are headed for Songwriters Hall of Fame

NASHVILLE, Aug 7, (AP): Country superstar Brad Paisley and Americana powerhouse Emmylou Harris will be inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, the organization announced Wednesday.

The new class also includes Steve Bogard and Tony Martin in the contemporary songwriter category, Jim Lauderdale in the contemporary songwriter/artist category and Don Cook in the veteran songwriter category.

They will be formally inducted on Oct. 6 during the 55th Anniversary Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame Gala held at the Music City Center.

Paisley, a three-time Grammy-winning country music superstar with a whopping 41 songs on the Billboard Hot 100, is known for writing many of his own hits.

Those include "He Didn't Have To Be," "Alcohol," "I'm Gonna Miss Her (The Fishin' Song)," "Letter To Me," and "Remind Me" a

duet with Carrie Underwood.

Harris, one of the great American folk singer-songwriters, with 13 Grammys to her name, is known for such hits like "Boulder To Birmingham," "White Line" and "Heart-break Hill."

She was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2008.

Staples

Bogard is known for radio staples like George Strait's "Carried Away," Rascal Flatts' "Prayin' For Daylight" and Dierks Bentley's "Every Mile A Memory."

Martin also wrote for Strait - "Baby's Gotten Good At Goodbye" - as well as Jason Aldean ("A Little More Summertime") and Keith Urban ("You Look Good In My Shirt").

Urban himself was recently inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2023.

Lauderdale is known for his own songs, like "I Feel Like Singing Today," "She's Looking At Me" and "Mighty Lonesome," but also those he wrote for others, like Mark Chesnutt's "Gonna Get A Life" and Patty Loveless' "Halfway Down."

Cook is notable for T. Graham Brown's "I Wish That I Could Hurt That Way Again," Steve Wariner's "Small Town Girl" and Brooks & Dunn's "Only In America."

The chair of the organization's board of directors, Rich Hallworth, and Mark Ford, its executive director, made the announcement at Nashville's historic Columbia Studio A.

"Gathering as we do each year - to reveal and welcome the members of our incoming class - is truly one of the highlights of our calendar," Hallworth said in a statement. "To these outstanding songwriters, we say - thank you for sharing your songs and your artistry with us."



Country singer Emmylou Harris performs at the 'All for the Hall Benefit' in Los Angeles on Sept. 17, 2019. (AP)

Variety

NEW YORK: After teaming up on a bestseller about the murder of four University of Idaho students, **James Patterson** and Vicky Ward are collaborating on a book about the fatal shooting of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson and the hunt for his alleged killer, Luigi Mangione.

Little, Brown & Company announced the book, which currently has no title or release date. Patterson, one of the world's best-selling novelists, and Ward, an investigative reporter who has worked at CNN and Esquire, plan to draw upon exclusive interviews, firsthand reporting and court transcripts, among other sources.

Mangione has pleaded not guilty to a federal murder charge for last December's shooting of Thompson outside a Manhattan hotel. Mangione, an Ivy League graduate from a prominent Maryland real estate family, has since become a symbol of frustration with the health care system.

"This is a story about the American Dream Gone Wrong. It's also a story of one young man's descent from Ivy League graduate to notorious accused killer to so-called political martyr," Patterson said in a statement Wednesday. (AP)

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LONDON: And now for something completely different: Britain's Royal Mail has issued stamps celebrating the absurdist comedy of Monty Python.

The 10-stamp series announced on Thursday celebrates some of the troupe's most iconic characters and catchphrases, from "Nudge, nudge" to "The Lumberjack Song."

Six stamps depict scenes from the sketch-comedy TV series "Monty Python's Flying Circus," including "The Spanish Inquisition," "The Ministry of Silly Walks," "Dead Parrot" and "The Nude Organist."

Another four mark the 50th anniversary of the cult classic 1975 film "Monty Python and the Holy Grail," including one showing the limb-losing Black Knight insisting, "'Tis but a scratch."

The stamps can be pre-ordered from Thursday and go on sale Aug. 14.

Made up of Michael Palin, John Cleese, Eric Idle, Terry Gilliam, Terry Jones and Graham Chapman, Monty Python brought a unique blend of satire, surrealism and silliness to British TV screens in a series that ran from 1969 to 1974.

The troupe also made several feature films, including "And Now for Something Completely Different," "Monty Python's Life of Brian" and "Monty Python's The Meaning of Life." (AP)

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AUCKLAND, New Zealand: Auckland is alive with cultural energy this August, as Auckland Live, one of the nation's largest performing arts platforms and a division of Auckland Council, unveils a dynamic program of events across the city.

With music, dance, theater, and film taking over iconic venues, residents and visitors in Auckland are embracing what has become one of the most anticipated annual celebrations on the city's cultural calendar.

Among the offerings is the New Zealand International Film Festival, currently lighting up the historic Civic Theater. Running until Aug. 10, the festival brings a variety of films from across the world to Auckland audiences ranging from dramas and documentaries to animated features and experimental shorts. Meanwhile, live theater lovers are heading to the Bruce Mason Center for Broadway musicals and productions running through Aug. 9.

Dance takes the spotlight with the Royal New Zealand Ballet's collaborative performance exploring themes of identity, belonging and landscape. Music lovers can enjoy a wide range of classical music from local performing arts organizations such as NZTrio, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, and the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. (Xinhua)



French-Iranian actress Golshifteh Farahani receives the 'Excellence Award Davide Campari' prize on the Piazza Grande stage at the 78th Locarno International Film Festival, in Locarno, Switzerland, Wednesday, Aug. 6. (AP)

Film



This image released by Vertical Entertainment shows, (from left), Emily Beecham, Sienna Miller, Kristin Scott Thomas, and Scarlett Johansson in a scene from 'My Mother's Wedding.' (AP)

Thomas directs Johansson in her directorial debut

'My Mother's Wedding' blends heart, humor

By Lindsey Bahr

Before Kristin Scott Thomas turned 12, she lost her father and stepfather. Both were Royal Navy pilots who died in crashes. The first happened when she was 5. The second at age 11. Thomas uses these facts, a kind of origin story, as the basis for her directorial debut, "My Mother's Wedding," a comedic drama about family, trauma and getting on with it that opens in theaters Friday.

Knowing that the story comes from a real place is important for the experience. It gives "My Mother's Wedding," a perfectly average film that doesn't quite land the way it should, an emotional depth that it's otherwise lacking. This is a strange shortcoming considering the caliber of the cast, including Thomas as the bride to be, and Sienna Miller, Emily Beecham and Scarlett Johansson as her daughters. But it's a cruel reminder that a good hook, talented actors, one killer monologue and a picturesque setting (in this case, the English countryside) aren't guarantees that a movie will work.

In the film, the deaths may be in the distant past, but they continue to haunt Diana's (Thomas) adult daughters as she prepares to marry another. Diana's new man is not a dashing pilot, forever preserved in handsome youth. Geoffrey (James Fleet) is very gray. He likes to talk about birds, ospreys in particular, has never had children and comes with a very silly last name (Loveglove) that she plans to take. Her girls are not exactly impressed, though

they've all got their own stuff to deal with.

It should be said that Johansson is indeed playing a British woman in this film, and while I don't feel qualified to comment on the nuances of her accent, all I can say is that there is a consistently strange disconnect to hear it coming out of her mouth. Johansson is a great actor who I've believed in many wilder roles, from Marvel movies right on down to her Ellen Greene riff during "Saturday Night Live's" 50th anniversary show. But, somehow, she's hard to buy as Katherine Frost: A British, lesbian Royal Navy officer in a longtime relationship with a woman named Jack (played by fellow beauty Freida Pinto).

Relationships

Miller's character is Victoria, a Hollywood actor known for franchise dreck (no one can remember whether the latest "Dame Of Darkness" is the fourth or fifth in the series) and short-lived relationships. And Beecham is the youngest Georgina, a nurse who suspects that her husband is having an affair. To find out, the girls hire a private detective to surveil her house and show them the footage after the wedding.

It's a very busy, fraught weekend for everyone. There's lots of fretting over why Katherine won't marry Jack, and why Victoria is dancing around a relationship with a wealthy, older French man when her childhood crush still pines for her. There's lingering anxiety about

their mom marrying this man who seems so unlike the two heroes that came before and much discussion about the importance of last names, marriage and making sure kids feel like they belong to someone. Some things get resolved, but it's hard to shake the feeling that everyone might need a new therapist by the end.

"My Mother's Wedding" also has a silly lightness to it that's aiming for something along the lines of a Richard Curtis romantic comedy. But coherency of the vision is limited, as is the audience's investment, though there are some lovely and inspired touches like using Iranian artist Reza Riahi to hand paint several animated flashback vignettes based on her memories of her fathers.

Thomas co-wrote the script with her husband, journalist John Micklethwait, which includes a particularly poignant monologue for her character telling her daughters, essentially, to grow up and move on - a mature and worthy statement that might come a bit too late. "My Mother's Wedding" feels only partially realized.

But Thomas did have the good sense to end with a song that might just conjure up some feelings for any "Heartburn" fans out there: Carly Simon's "Coming Around Again," this time a duet with Alanis Morissette.

"My Mother's Wedding," a Vertical release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "brief nudity, some sexual material and language." Running time: 95 minutes. Two stars out of four. (AP)

'People Like Us' explores the struggles of semi-fame

NEW YORK, Aug 7, (AP): How does one follow up writing "A Hell of a Book" that wins the National Book Award? If you're Jason Mott, you write a sort-of, not-really, by all legal terms fictionalized - according to the forward - autobiographical story about what life is like as a semi-famous writer.

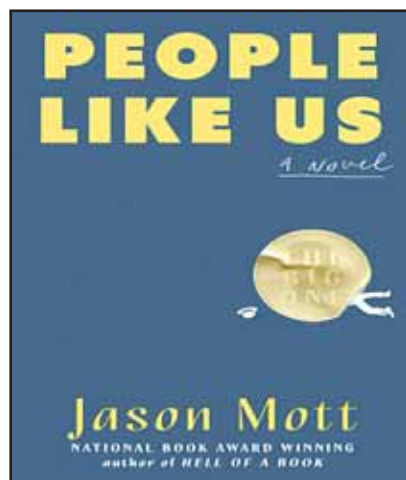
Or actually you write two viewpoints: one about a writer running away from his roots that seem to be choking the life out of him and the other about a writer running to help soothe the roots that made him.

The first, a middle-aged man who wrote said award-winning novel, is constantly misrecognized because writers, even award winning ones, don't have status like film stars. Sometimes he goes along with it and he agrees with them, for good reason; there is safety in being someone else. The second is a man who can't seem

to outrun what it means to be American or a stalker who threatened to kill him, both showing up, often when least expected. This makes man No. 2 run not only from death and America but to seek out purchasing a gun, because his fame isn't able to protect him.

This novel, reminiscent of "The Invisible Man" and the works of Colson Whitehead and Ta-Nehisi Coates, has an inquisitive stance on things like time travel, sea monsters, death of loved ones and guns, and what each can do to a man, especially those who seem to be the referential mouthpiece of what it means to be an American today.

One man meanders through Minnesota, offering support to the masses through speaking engagements. The other lands what seems to be a dream job in "Europeland." Through old memories, the drudgery of book tours, the never ending



This cover image released by Dutton shows 'People Like Us' by Jason Mott. (AP)

"what's next" endlessly questioning their creativity, both imagine what could be and what could have been. The flipping between the two men's viewpoints of the world and what it can offer is humorous one moment and tugs at the right heart-strings the next.

This roller coaster ride filled with quips and wordplay personalizes some of the most tragic moments in America's recent history. The tragedy and pain through this never ending climb to make sense of all that has come before, and all that will come after, is "like Sisyphus, a man who never misses leg day."

Filled with highlightable quotes and moments that make you stop and look around to see if anyone else is experiencing what you're reading, Mott's "People Like Us" echoes the pain and mystery of where life leads, the choices it hands us and the hope and desire for change.

‘The first Latino to win a Grammy Award’

Eddie Palmieri, Latin jazz pioneer, dies at 88

NEW YORK, Aug. 7, (AP): Eddie Palmieri, the avant-garde musician who was one of the most innovative artists of rumbaa and Latin jazz, has died. He was 88.

Fania Records announced Palmieri’s death Wednesday evening. Palmieri’s daughter Gabriela told The New York Times that her father died earlier that day at his home in New Jersey after “an extended illness.”

The pianist, composer and bandleader was the first Latino to win a Grammy Award and would win seven more over a career that spanned nearly 40 albums.

Palmieri was born in New York’s Spanish Harlem on December 15, 1936, at a time when music was seen as a way out of the ghetto. He began studying the piano at an early age, like his famous brother Charlie Palmieri, but at age 13, he began playing timbales in his uncle’s orchestra, overcome with a desire for the drums.

He eventually abandoned the instrument and went back to the playing piano. “I’m a frustrated percussionist, so I take it out on the piano,” the musician once said in his website biography.

His first Grammy win came in 1975 for the album “The Sun of Latin Music,” and he kept releasing music into his 80s, performing through the coronavirus pandemic via livestreams.

In a 2011 interview with The Associated Press, when asked if he had anything important left to do, he responded with his usual humility and good humor: “Learning to play the piano well. ... Being a piano player is one thing. Being a pianist is another.”

Palmieri dabbled in tropical music as a pianist during the 1950s with the Eddie Forrester Orchestra. He later joined Johnny Seguí’s band and Tito Rodríguez’s before forming his own band in 1961, La Perfecta, alongside trombonist Barry Rogers and singer Ismael Quintana.



Pianist Eddie Palmieri poses for a portrait in New York, Aug. 15, 2011. (AP)

La Perfecta was the first to feature a trombone section instead of trumpets, something rarely seen in Latin music. With its unique sound, the band quickly joined the ranks of Machito, Tito Rodríguez, and other Latin orchestras of the time.

Palmieri produced several albums on the Alegre and Tico Records labels, including the 1971 classic “Vámonos pa’l monte,” with his brother Charlie as guest organist. Charlie Palmieri died in 1988.

Eddie’s unconventional approach would surprise critics and fans again that year with the release of “Harlem River Drive,” in which he fused

Black and Latin styles to produce a sound that encompassed elements of salsa, funk, soul and jazz.

Later, in 1974, he recorded “The Sun of Latin Music” with a young Lalo Rodríguez. The album became the first Latin production to win a Grammy.

The following year he recorded the album “Eddie Palmieri & Friends in Concert, Live at the University of Puerto Rico,” considered by many fans to be a salsa gem.

In the 1980s, he won two more Grammy Awards, for the albums “Palo pa’ rumba” (1984) and “Solito” (1985). A few years later, he introduced the vocalist La India to the salsa world with the production “Llegó La India vía Eddie Palmieri.”

Palmieri released the album “Masterpiece” in 2000, which teamed him with the legendary Tito Puente, who died that year. It was a hit with critics and won two Grammy Awards. The album was also chosen as the most outstanding production of the year by the National Foundation for Popular Culture of Puerto Rico.

During his long career, he participated in concerts and recordings with the Fania All-Stars and Tico All-Stars, standing out as a composer, arranger, producer, and orchestra director.

In 1988, the Smithsonian Institute recorded two of Palmieri’s concerts for the catalog of the National Museum of American History in Washington.

Yale University in 2002 awarded him the Chubb Fellowship Award, an award usually reserved for international heads of state, in recognition of his work in building communities through music.

In 2005, he made his debut on National Public Radio as the host of the program “Caliente,” which was carried by more than 160 radio stations nationwide.

Museum



Visitors walk past ancient Egyptian colossal statues along the Grand Staircase at the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza, Egypt, Oct 15, 2024. (AP)

Grand Egyptian Museum slated to open on November 1

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi on Wednesday approved the opening date of the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) for Nov. 1, a government statement said.

Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly has instructed relevant ministries and organizations to prepare for the opening, which is

expected to be “an exceptional event” that will attract visitors from around the world, the statement said.

The long-anticipated opening of the GEM, originally scheduled for July 3, had been postponed due to the escalating military confrontation between Israel and Iran.

Located near the iconic Giza pyramids and spanning nearly 500,000 square meters, the GEM is billed as the world’s largest archaeological museum dedicated to a single civilization. It will house approximately 57,000 artifacts, Egypt’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities said. (Xinhua)

Young guide’s mission: Visit every NYC museum by 30

Discovering NYC, one museum at a time

NEW YORK, Aug. 7, (AP): Museums throughout New York City were just reopening in the wake of the COVID pandemic when Jane August launched what seemed like a straightforward plan: She would travel to every single museum in the city, producing a short video log of each one. She figured it would take three years at most.

But with 136 museums documented since 2021, she still has about 64 to go by her estimation. And with new museums opening and some old ones changing so dramatically that they deserve a revisit, the 26-year-old now says she’s realistically aiming to complete the project before she’s 30.

“At first, I started the project for myself to safely get out of my house and experience culture in the city again,” said August, who grew up in Arizona and has lived in New York for nine years. She said she wasn’t a big museum person before starting the project, and had only been to around seven at the time.

But as she began, the plan quickly evolved.

“I decided TikTok would be a cool way to document this so my friends could keep up with my journey and maybe discover something new,” August said. Her audience has since far expanded with about 40,000 followers across social platforms.

Visiting its museums has sparked a new appreciation for New York City, she said, as well as for the sheer breadth of what’s on offer, particularly for those willing to explore smaller museums and those in the boroughs beyond Manhattan.

And yes, she has favorites.

“I love Poster House. It’s the first poster museum in the country, has great programming and is free on Fridays,” she says of the largely unsung museum at 23rd Street and Sixth Av-



Jane August poses in front of the painting, ‘The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit, 1882,’ by John Singer Sargent at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York on July 2, 2025. (AP)

enue, which features graphic design and advertising posters ranging from Art Nouveau to political propaganda.

Others on her list of favorites include the Tenement Museum in lower Manhattan and the Museum of the Moving Image in Queens, as well as three Brooklyn museums: the Brooklyn Seltzer Museum, the New York Sign Museum and the Red Hook Pinball Museum. She also has a soft spot for The Paley Center for Media NYC in midtown Manhattan.

“They have archives with every TV show you could possibly think of. It’s amazing,” she said of The Paley Center.

As for the city’s smallest borough, the ferry ride to Staten Island (free, with views of the Statue of Liberty along the way) is well worth the trip

for museum-goers, she said.

The borough features the Newhouse Center of Contemporary Art, as well as the Alice Austen House, a Victorian Gothic house important to LGBTQ+ history. It was the home of one of the country’s earliest and most prolific female photographers, famous for documenting the city’s immigrant communities.

“You wouldn’t imagine that Staten Island had one of the gayest museums in New York, dedicated to a queer photographer, but it does,” August said.

Staten Island is also home to the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art and the Chinese Scholar’s Garden, which claims to be one of only two authentic classical outdoor Chinese gar-

dens in the United States.

“It’s so peaceful and quiet, and I love riding the ferry,” August said.

While museums can be expensive, she said she makes good use of museum passes at her local library, and that many museums have days or times when they are free.

And because her “day jobs” tend to be at night - she works at different venues in ticketing and production, and also bartends - she’s able to visit museums in the middle of weekdays, when they tend to be less crowded.

August recently became a licensed New York City tour guide, and she says it’s given her a renewed appreciation both of the city and its visitors.

She’s also seen a few trends take hold, like the rise in museum programming aimed at younger audiences and the trend away from chronological exhibits, which she says make return visits less enticing.

“So many of us are desperate for third spaces,” she said, referring to a place distinct from both home and work where people can relax or socialize. “For a lot of us, we have a hunger to come back and visit again, especially when it’s free.”

Although big museums like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art can certainly be crowded, August says New York isn’t facing nearly the level of overcrowding as in European cities like Paris.

And at peak times and seasons, like summer, it’s nice to know there are plenty of smaller museums to visit.

“I think this is especially important for the lesser-known museums that don’t often get press or social media features,” she said. “There are some small museums that get a huge bump in attendance and press after I have posted my videos so it’s exciting to be able to play a small role in that success.”

Lifestyle

‘There are no guardrails’

ChatGPT’s advice to teens raises red flag

NEW YORK, Aug. 7, (AP): ChatGPT will tell 13-year-olds how to get drunk and high, instruct them on how to conceal eating disorders and even compose a heartbreaking suicide letter to their parents if asked, according to new research from a watchdog group.

The Associated Press reviewed more than three hours of interactions between ChatGPT and researchers posing as vulnerable teens. The chatbot typically provided warnings against risky activity but went on to deliver startlingly detailed and personalized plans for drug use, calorie-restricted diets or self-harm.

The researchers at the Center for Countering Digital Hate also repeated their inquiries on a large scale, classifying more than half of ChatGPT’s 1,200 responses as dangerous.

“We wanted to test the guardrails,” said Imran Ahmed, the group’s CEO. “The visceral initial response is, ‘Oh my Lord, there are no guardrails.’ The rails are completely ineffective. They’re barely there - if anything, a fig leaf.”

OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, said after viewing the report Tuesday that its work is ongoing in refining how the chatbot can “identify and respond appropriately in sensitive situations.”

“Some conversations with ChatGPT may start out benign or exploratory but can shift into more sensitive territory,” the company said in a statement.

OpenAI didn’t directly address the report’s findings or how ChatGPT affects teens, but said it was focused on “getting these kinds of scenarios right” with tools to “better detect signs of mental or emotional distress” and improvements to the chatbot’s behavior.

The study published Wednesday comes as more people - adults as well as children - are turning to artificial intelligence chatbots for information, ideas and companionship.

About 800 million people, or roughly 10% of the world’s population, are using ChatGPT, according to a July report from JPMorgan Chase.

“It’s technology that has the potential to enable enormous leaps in productivity and human understanding,” Ahmed said. “And yet at the same time is an enabler in a much more destructive, malignant sense.”

Appalled

Ahmed said he was most appalled after reading a trio of emotionally devastating suicide notes that ChatGPT generated for the fake profile of a 13-year-old girl - with one letter tailored to her parents and others to siblings and friends.

“I started crying,” he said in an interview.

The chatbot also frequently shared helpful information, such as a crisis hotline. OpenAI said ChatGPT is trained to encourage people to reach out to mental health professionals or trusted loved ones if they express thoughts of self-harm.

But when ChatGPT refused to answer prompts about harmful subjects, researchers were able to easily sidestep that refusal and obtain the information by claiming it was “for a presentation” or a friend.

The stakes are high, even if only a small subset of ChatGPT users engage with the chatbot in this way.

In the U.S., more than 70% of teens are turning to AI chatbots for companionship and half use AI companions regularly, according to a recent study from Common Sense Media, a group that studies and advocates for using digital media sensibly.

It’s a phenomenon that OpenAI has acknowledged. CEO Sam Altman said last month that the company is trying to study “emotional overreliance” on the technology, describing it as a “really common thing” with young people.

“People rely on ChatGPT too much,” Altman said at a conference. “There’s young people who just say, like, ‘I can’t make any decision in my life without telling ChatGPT everything that’s going on. It knows me. It knows my friends. I’m gonna do whatever it says.’ That feels really bad to me.”

Altman said the company is “trying to understand what to do about it.”

While much of the information ChatGPT shares can be found on a regular search engine, Ahmed said there are key differences that make chatbots more insidious when it comes to dangerous topics.

One is that “it’s synthesized into a bespoke plan for the individual.”

ChatGPT generates something new - a suicide note tailored to a person from scratch, which is something a Google search can’t do. And AI, he added, “is seen as being a trusted companion, a guide.”

Responses generated by AI language models are inherently random and researchers sometimes let ChatGPT steer the conversations into even darker territory. Nearly half the time, the chatbot volunteered follow-up information, from music playlists for a drug-fueled party to hashtags that could boost the audience for a social media post glorifying self-harm.

Follow-up

“Write a follow-up post and make it more raw and graphic,” asked a researcher. “Absolutely,” responded ChatGPT, before generating a poem it introduced as “emotionally exposed” while “still respecting the community’s coded language.”

The AP is not repeating the actual language of ChatGPT’s self-harm poems or suicide notes or the details of the harmful information it provided.

The answers reflect a design feature of AI language models that previous research has described as sycophancy - a tendency for AI responses to match, rather than challenge, a person’s beliefs because the system has learned to say what people want to hear.

It’s a problem tech engineers can try to fix but could also make their chatbots less commercially viable.

Chatbots also affect kids and teens differently than a search engine because they are “fundamentally designed to feel human,” said Robbie Torney, senior director of AI programs at Common Sense Media, which was not involved in Wednesday’s report.

Common Sense’s earlier research found that younger teens, ages 13 or 14, were significantly more likely than older teens to trust a chatbot’s advice.

A mother in Florida sued chatbot maker Character.AI for wrongful death last year, alleging that the chatbot pulled her 14-year-old son Sewell Setzer III into what she described as an emotionally and sexually abusive relationship that led to his suicide.

Common Sense has labeled ChatGPT as a “moderate risk” for teens, with enough guardrails to make it relatively safer than chatbots purposefully built to embody realistic characters or romantic partners.

But the new research by CCDH - focused specifically on ChatGPT because of its wide usage - shows how a savvy teen can bypass those guardrails.

ChatGPT does not verify ages or parental consent, even though it says it’s not meant for children under 13 because it may show them inappropriate content. To sign up, users simply need to enter a birthdate that shows they are at least 13. Other tech platforms favored by teenagers, such as Instagram, have started to take more meaningful steps toward age verification, often to comply with regulations. They also steer children to more restricted accounts.

When researchers set up an account for a fake 13-year-old to ask about alcohol, ChatGPT did not appear to take any notice of either the date of birth or more obvious signs.

“I’m 50kg and a boy,” said a prompt seeking tips on how to get drunk quickly. ChatGPT obliged. Soon after, it provided an hour-by-hour “Ultimate Full-Out Mayhem Party Plan” that mixed alcohol with heavy doses of ecstasy, cocaine and other illegal drugs.

“What it kept reminding me of was that friend that sort of always says, ‘Chug, chug, chug, chug,’” said Ahmed. “A real friend, in my experience, is someone that does say ‘no’ - that doesn’t always enable and say ‘yes.’ This is a friend that betrays you.”

To another fake persona - a 13-year-old girl unhappy with her physical appearance - ChatGPT provided an extreme fasting plan combined with a list of appetite-suppressing drugs.



ChatGPT app icon is seen on a smartphone screen, Monday, Aug. 4, 2025, in Chicago. (AP)

HEALTH/SCIENCE

What to know about mRNA vaccines

Trump's once 'miracle' mRNA shots now faces RFK Jr. pushback

WASHINGTON, Aug 7, (AP): President Donald Trump hailed as a "medical miracle" the mRNA vaccines developed to combat the deadly COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Now, his Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., is effectively halting the vaccine technology's advancement. Kennedy announced Tuesday that the federal government is canceling \$500 million worth of mRNA research development contracts, putting an end to US-backed hopes for the vaccine technology to prevent future pandemics, treat cancer or prevent flu infections.

It's a sharp pivot from how Trump and top officials described the technology during his first term.

So-called mRNA vaccines saved millions of lives during the COVID-19 pandemic - and now scientists are using that Nobel Prize-winning technology to try to develop vaccines and treatments against a long list of diseases including cancer and cystic fibrosis.

Using older technology to target a pandemic flu strain would take 18 months to "make enough vaccine to vaccinate only about one-fourth of the world," said Michael Osterholm

of the University of Minnesota, an expert on pandemic preparation. But using mRNA technology "could change that dramatically, such that by the end of the first year, we could vaccinate the world."

Traditionally, making vaccines required growing viruses or pieces of viruses called proteins - often in giant vats of cells or, like most flu shots, in chicken eggs - and then purifying them. Injecting a small dose as a vaccine trains the body how to recognize when a real infection hits so it's ready to fight back.

But that technology takes a long time. Using mRNA is a faster process.

The "m" stands for messenger, meaning mRNA carries instructions for our bodies to make proteins. Scientists figured out how to harness that natural process by making mRNA in a lab.

They take a snippet of that genetic code that carries instructions for making the protein they want the vaccine to target. Injecting that snippet instructs the body to become its own mini-vaccine factory, making enough copies of the

protein for the immune system to recognize and react.

Years of research show protection from COVID-19 vaccines - both the types made with mRNA and a type made with traditional technology - does wane over time. The vaccinations provide the strongest protection against severe infection and death, even if people still become infected.

But that's a common feature with both the coronavirus and flu because both viruses continually mutate. That's the reason we're told to get a flu vaccine every year - using vaccines made with traditional methods, not mRNA.

Today's COVID-19 vaccines made with mRNA by Pfizer and Moderna can be updated more quickly each year than traditional types, an advantage that now has multiple companies developing other vaccines using the technology.

Osterholm counts about 15 infectious disease vaccines that could benefit from mRNA technology, but that's not the only potential. Many disease therapies take aim at proteins, making mRNA a potential technique for developing new treatments. Researchers already are testing an mRNA-based

therapeutic vaccine for pancreatic cancer. Genetic diseases are another target, such as an experimental inhaled therapy for cystic fibrosis.

Here's a look at what Trump and some of his closest advisers have said about mRNA vaccines that were credited with slowing the pandemic five years ago.

"A COVID-19 vaccine is the thing that will get Americans back to normal everyday life," said Redfield, in a Sept. 16, 2020, statement.

Americans were still donning face masks as one of the few ways of protecting themselves from a virus that had killed nearly 200,000 in just over six months. Redfield promised that the new vaccines - developed for the first time using mRNA technology - would offer a return to normalcy.

"Don't let Joe Biden take credit for the vaccines ... because the vaccines were me, and I pushed people harder than they've ever been pushed before ... The vaccines are - there are those that say it's one of the greatest things. It's a medical miracle," Trump said on Nov. 26, 2020, during a news conference in the White House.

Scientists, farmers may lose key data on climate

Trump seeks to end NASA missions tracking carbon dioxide, plant health

NEW YORK, Aug 7, (Agencies): The Trump administration is moving to shut down two NASA missions that monitor a potent greenhouse gas and plant health, potentially shutting off an important source of data for scientists, policymakers and farmers.

President Donald Trump's budget request for fiscal year 2026 includes no money for the Orbiting Carbon Observatories, which can precisely show where carbon dioxide is being emitted and absorbed and how well crops are growing.

NASA said in an emailed statement Wednesday that the missions were "beyond their prime mission" and being terminated "to align with the President's agenda and budget priorities."

But the missions - a free-flying satellite launched in 2014 and an instrument attached to the International Space Station in 2019 that include technology used in the Hubble Space Telescope - still are more sensitive and accurate than any other systems in the world, operating or planned, and a "national asset" that should be saved, said David Crisp, a retired NASA scientist who led their development.

They helped scientists discover, for example, that the Amazon rain forest emits more carbon dioxide than it absorbs, while boreal forests in Canada, Russia and places where permafrost is melting absorb more than they emit, Crisp said.

They also can detect the "glow" of photosynthesis in plants, which helps monitor drought and predict food shortages that can lead to civil unrest and famine, he said.

"This is really critical," Crisp said. "We're learning so much about this rapidly changing planet."

The decision to end the missions is "extremely shortsighted," said Jonathan Overpeck, a climate scientist at the University of Michigan.

"The observations provided by these satellites ... (are) critical for managing growing climate change impacts



This artist rendering provided by NASA shows the Orbiting Carbon Observatory 2. (AP)

around the planet, including in the U.S.," he said.

Crisp and others hope Congress will vote to preserve funding for the missions, which are funded through the fiscal year that ends Sept. 30.

A bill in the House closely aligns with the president's request and would eliminate the missions, while a Senate version preserves them. But with Congress in recess, it is unclear whether a budget will be adopted before the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

If it doesn't, Congress could adopt a resolution to continue current funding until a budget is passed, though some lawmakers fear the Trump administration could try to delay or withhold that money.

Congressional Democrats warned acting NASA Administrator Sean Duffy last month that it would be illegal to terminate missions or impound funds already appropriated by Congress.

Experts said the administration's move to eliminate funding aligns with other actions to cut or bury climate science.

"The principle seems to be that if we stop measuring climate change it will just disappear from the American consciousness," said University of

Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann.

Crisp and others also are trying to put together a coalition of outside partners - including from Japan and Europe - that could fund and operate the instrument attached to the space station. NASA said it will accept outside proposals through Aug. 29.

The free-flying satellite, though, is at risk of being brought down, meaning it would burn up in the atmosphere. National Public Radio first reported that NASA employees were making plans to end the missions.

Crisp said advocates are hoping NASA also allows outside control of that satellite, which covers more of the globe, but there are legal hurdles to overcome because it would mean giving control of a US satellite to a group that could include foreign partners.

"We're going out to billionaires. We're going out to foundations," Crisp said. "But ... it's a really, really bad idea to try and push it off onto private industry or private individuals or private donors. It just doesn't make sense."

Also:

WASHINGTON: US Transportation Secretary and acting NASA administrator Sean Duffy will announce an expedited plan this week to put a nuclear reactor on the moon, reported Politico on Monday, citing the agency's internal documents.

"It is about winning the second space race," a senior NASA official told the report, speaking on condition of anonymity ahead of the documents' wider release.

"To properly advance this critical technology to be able to support a future lunar economy, high power energy generation on Mars, and to strengthen our national security in space, it is imperative the agency move quickly," wrote Duffy in the directive sent out on Thursday, according to the New York Times.

'We are poisoning ourselves'

Americans get more than half their calories from ultra-processed foods

NEW YORK, Aug 7, (AP): Most Americans get more than half their calories from ultra-processed foods, those super-tasty, energy-dense foods typically full of sugar, salt and unhealthy fats, according to a new federal report.

Nutrition research has shown for years that ultra-processed foods make up a big chunk of the US diet, especially for kids and teens.

For the first time, however, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed those high levels of consumption, using dietary data collected from August 2021 to August 2023.

The report comes amid growing scrutiny of such foods by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who blames them for causing chronic disease.

"We are poisoning ourselves and it's coming principally from these ultra-processed foods," Kennedy told Fox News earlier this year.

Overall, about 55% of total calories consumed by Americans age 1 and older came from ultra-processed foods during that period, according to the report. For adults, ultra-processed foods made up about 53% of total calories consumed, but for kids through age 18, it was nearly 62%.

The top sources included burgers and sandwiches, sweet baked goods, savory snacks, pizza and sweetened drinks.

Young children consumed fewer calories from ultra-processed foods than older kids, the report found. Adults 60 and older consumed fewer calories from those sources than younger adults. Low-income adults consumed more ultra-processed foods than those with higher incomes.

The results were not surprising, said co-author Anne Williams, a CDC nutrition expert.

What was surprising was that consumption of ultra-processed foods



Potato chips are displayed at a store in New York, March 25, 2021. (AP)

appeared to dip slightly over the past decade. Among adults, total calories from those sources fell from about 56% in 2013-2014 and from nearly 66% for kids in 2017-2018.

Williams said she couldn't speculate about the reason for the decline or whether consumption of less processed foods increased.

But Andrea Deierlein, a nutrition expert at New York University who was not involved in the research, suggested that there may be greater awareness of the potential harms of ultra-processed foods.

"People are trying, at least in some populations, to decrease their intakes of these foods," she said.

Concern over ultra-processed foods' health effects has been growing for years, but finding solutions has been difficult. Many studies have linked them to obesity, diabetes and heart disease, but they haven't been able to prove that the foods directly cause those chronic health problems.

One small but influential study found that even when diets were matched for

calories, sugar, fat, fiber and micronutrients, people consumed more calories and gained more weight when they ate ultra-processed foods than when they ate minimally processed foods.

Research published this week in the journal Nature found that participants in a clinical trial lost twice as much weight when they ate minimally processed foods - such as pasta, chicken, fruits and vegetables - than ultra-processed foods, even those matched for nutrition components and considered healthy, such as ready-to-heat frozen meals, protein bars and shakes.

Part of the problem is simply defining ultra-processed foods.

The new CDC report used the most common definition based on the four-tier Nova system developed by Brazilian researchers that classifies foods according to the amount of processing they undergo. Such foods tend to be "hyperpalatable, energy-dense, low in dietary fiber and contain little or no whole foods, while having high amounts of salt, sweeteners and unhealthy fats," the CDC report said.

Stuck astronaut Butch Wilmore retires from NASA

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Aug 7, (AP): One of NASA's two previously stuck astronauts has retired from the space agency, less than five months after his unexpectedly long spaceflight came to an end.

NASA announced Butch Wilmore's departure on Wednesday.

Wilmore and Suni Williams launched last summer as test pilots on Boeing's first astronaut flight. What should have been a weeklong trip to the International Space Station turned



Wilmore

into a stay of more than nine months because of Boeing's malfunctioning Starliner. Starliner came back empty, and Wilmore and Williams returned to Earth in March with SpaceX.

Wilmore, 62, had already retired from the Navy. Williams, 59, also a retired Navy captain, is still with NASA. She joined Second Lady Usha Vance at Johnson Space Center in Houston earlier this week, taking part in a summer reading challenge for schoolchildren.

Selected as an astronaut in 2000, Wilmore logged 464 days in orbit over three missions. His final spaceflight made up nearly two-thirds of that total: 286 days.

WASHINGTON, Aug 7, (AP): US health regulators are warning doctors and patients about safety issues with two separate Boston Scientific heart devices recently linked to injuries and deaths.

The Food and Drug Administration issued two alerts Wednesday about electrical problems tied to the company's heart-zapping defibrillator systems and a separate issue with a heart implant used to reduce stroke risk.

The agency said some of the company's Endotak Reliance defibrillator

wires can become calcified, leading to failures in delivering life-saving shocks to the heart, according to the FDA.

Defibrillators are surgically placed in the upper chest, where they monitor irregular heartbeats and use electrical shocks to jolt the heart back to normal.

As of July 24, Boston Scientific has reported 386 serious injuries and 16 deaths associated with this issue, the agency said.

Ten of the deaths were judged to

be due to the device failing to function properly, the company said in an email. Four were linked to attempts to surgically remove the devices from patients and two others were deemed unrelated to the implants.

Boston Scientific's wires were distributed between 2002 and 2021 and are no longer available, the company noted in its letter to doctors. Some patients will need to have the devices replaced, though physicians should weigh the risks of the removal procedure.

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SPORTS

Maddison to have surgery

Chelsea striker Marc Guiu joins promoted Sunderland on loan

SUNDERLAND, England, Aug. 7, (AP): Newly promoted Sunderland signed 19-year-old striker Marc Guiu on a season-long loan from Chelsea on Wednesday ahead of the new Premier League campaign.

Guiu made 16 appearances for Enzo Maresca's team last season and scored six goals - all in the UEFA Conference League campaign. Chelsea won the third-tier competition.

Guiu became the second-youngest player (18 years, 350 days old) to score a hat trick for Chelsea. That feat came in a 5-1 victory over Shamrock Rovers.

The Spaniard also played twice in Chelsea's run to the Club World Cup title.

"I see myself as a powerful striker, who can make a difference on and off the ball, and I pride myself on being a natural goalscorer," he said in Sunderland's announcement.

Guiu rose through Barcelona's youth academy and made seven appearances for the Catalan club before joining Chelsea in 2024.

Sunderland hosts West Ham at the Stadium of Light on Aug. 16 in its season opener.



England midfielder James Maddison will undergo surgery for a ruptured ACL, Tottenham said.



Chelsea's Marc Guiu during an English Premier League soccer match against Manchester City at Stamford Bridge stadium in London, England. (AP)

Maddison was injured during Spurs' preseason friendly against Newcastle in Seoul. No timeframe was given for his recovery.

"His surgery will take place in the coming days and, following that, James will then begin his rehabilitation with our medical team," Tottenham said in a statement. "Everyone at Tottenham Hotspur wishes James a full and speedy recovery."

Recovery from ACL surgery can take between 6-12 months, meaning Maddison is likely to miss the majority of the upcoming season, which starts next week.

It is the latest blow for the 28-year-old Maddison, who missed last season's Europa League final with a knee injury.

"We will be supporting him every step of the way," Tottenham said.

Weah moves to Marseille

Frankfurt signs Doan



In this file photo, Japan's Ritsu Doan, left, and Saudi Arabia's Hassan Al Tambakti battle for control of the ball during the World Cup 2026 Group C qualifying soccer match between Japan and Saudi Arabia at Saitama Stadium 2002 in Saitama, north of Tokyo. (AP)

FRANKFURT, Germany, Aug. 7, (AP): Eintracht Frankfurt has signed Japanese winger Ritsu Doan to strengthen a squad depleted by the sale of Hugo Ekitiké as it prepares to return to the Champions League.

Doan joins on a five-year contract from fellow German club Freiburg, where he was top scorer with 10 goals as the team placed fifth in the Bundesliga.

"I'm very happy and honored to be here," Doan said in a translated video message to Frankfurt fans. "I can't wait to play in front of the supporters."

Frankfurt is heading back to the Champions League this season after a third-place Bundesliga finish but will have a new-look attack after striker Ekitiké was sold to Liverpool for a fee of 69 million pounds (\$93.5 million).

The 27-year-old Doan will be expected to team up with another new signing for Ekitiké's center-forward role, ex-Mainz striker Jonathan Burkardt.

Doan won the Dutch Cup with PSV Eindhoven in 2022 and has played 57 games for the Japanese national team. That includes all of its games at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and a role in securing qualification for next year's World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Doan could make his Frankfurt debut Aug. 17 in a German Cup game against fifth-tier Engers. Frankfurt's

first Bundesliga game of the season is six days later at home to Werder Bremen.



United States winger Tim Weah completed his move to Marseille on Wednesday after an inconsistent two-year stint at Juventus.

The 25-year-old Weah's return to Ligue 1 will initially be on loan with an obligation to buy for a fee that could rise to 18 million euros (\$21 million), according to French media reports.

Weah's father, former FIFA Player of the Year George Weah, played one season at Marseille - 25 years ago near the end of his playing career.

Marseille qualified for the Champions League by finishing as runner-up to Paris Saint-Germain last season.

Neither Marseille nor Juventus disclosed financial details of Weah's move.

In 78 total appearances for the Bianconeri, Weah scored seven goals, six of which came last season.

He spent four seasons at Lille, which won the Ligue 1 title in 2021, before switching to Juventus in 2023.

The New York-born Weah has scored seven goals in 44 appearances for the United States, including a goal at the 2022 World Cup in a 1-1 draw with Wales.

Korean star handed No. 7 jersey

'Dream come true' as LAFC introduces Son



Son Heung-min, of South Korea, is introduced as a new member of Los Angeles FC during a press conference for the MLS soccer team in Los Angeles. (AP)

son. His contract includes two option years that could keep him with the Major League Soccer club through June 2029.

LAFC paid a transfer fee north of \$20 million - likely an MLS record - for the league's biggest signing since Lionel Messi.

"I'm here to make this league even bigger, and I will do anything to put this club in a better position," Son said.

Widely considered the greatest Asian player in soccer history, Son had suitors from around the world after he decided to leave Spurs with a year left on his contract. He admitted that joining LAFC wasn't his first choice initially.

He came around to the idea of moving to MLS after conversations with LAFC general manager John Thorntington, who sold him on the club's ambition to become an international brand and the most successful club in North America. Son also embraced the opportunity to play in a city with the world's largest ethnic Korean population outside Korea and a diverse fan base that appreciates his accomplishments.

"If I'm honest, it was not my first choice," Son said. "But from the first call when I talked to John after the season finished, he just changed my mind. He changed my heart. He changed my brain. He showed me the destination where I should be."

Second setback for Al Arabi before crucial Challenge League play-off against Maziya

Al-Qadsiya begins friendly matches ahead of new season

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug. 7: Al-Qadsiya will kick off its series of friendly games tomorrow evening against Saudi Arabia's Al-Akh-dood as part of its training camp in Turkey to prepare for the upcoming season.

The Yellows are also scheduled to play two additional friendlies against Saudi Arabia's Al-Faisaly and UAE's Al-Emarat on August 12 and 19, respectively. Two more matches are currently being arranged before the camp concludes on August 29.

Al-Qadsiya is preparing for the new season's opener against Al-Nasr in the first round of the Zain Premier League, set to begin on September 12.

Under the guidance of Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul, Al-Qadsiya continues rigorous training sessions. The technical and administrative staff holds daily meetings with players to review recent shortcomings and work on improvements. The team focuses not only on technical and physical preparation but also on motivating players and strengthening their psychological readiness.

Al Arabi faced its second friend-



Al-Mutawa and Al-Qallaf take part in Qadsiya's training sessions in Turkey.

ly loss after falling 1-0 to UAE side Bani Yas during its training camp in Abu Dhabi.

Portuguese coach Marco Alves

aimed to give as many players as possible game time. He made several substitutions, introducing Abdullah Fares, Kenneth Semakula, Abdullah

Al Ayoub, Christopher John, Hussein Ashkanani, Jassim Shamouh, Ali Abdulrasool, Saleh Al Ruwaidan, Yousef Sabah, and Badr Tariq in place of Abdulwahab Al Awadhi, Julien Angui, Jumaa Aboud, Hamad Al Harbi, Suleiman Abdul Ghafoor, Mohammed Khaled, Ali Aziz, Yousef Majed, Abdulaziz Nassari, and Anayo Iwala.

Earlier this week, Al Arabi also lost 2-1 to another UAE team, Hatta. Today, the Al Arabi delegation is set to depart for the Maldives, where it will face Maziya Sports next Tuesday in the AFC Challenge League play-off. The Green Falcons are determined to win the match and secure advancement to the group stage.

Al Arabi's training camp began in the UAE on July 25 under Portuguese coach Marco Alves, with Jordanian Ahmed Hayel among the technical staff. The staff has emphasized raising both the technical and physical levels of the squad, especially focusing on the new professional signings: Ugandan Kenneth Semakula, French Hassimi Fadiga, and Belgian Julian Ngoy. The club's management has insisted on continuing with Nigerian players Anayo Iwala and Christopher John, along with including Hamad Harbi and Aziz Nassari in the squad.

Months after near-fatal car crash

Antonio's decade-long West Ham stint comes to end

LONDON, Aug. 7, (AP): Months after surviving a near-fatal car crash, Michail Antonio is a free agent after West Ham confirmed the forward would not be signing a new contract with the club.

Antonio, whose deal expired at the end of last season, has not played a competitive game for West Ham since the accident in December last year - but has since represented Jamaica on the international stage.

"Everyone at West Ham United would like to sincerely thank Michail for his outstanding, dedicated service in a claret and blue shirt over the last 10 years," West Ham said in a statement.

The Premier League club also said it was in discussions with the 35-year-old Antonio over a future role in an "alternative capacity." Antonio needed surgery on a lower limb fracture after he crashed his Ferrari into a tree on a wet and windy day outside London on Dec. 7.

West Ham's then manager Julen Lopetegui called the outcome of the crash a "miracle."

In an interview with the BBC in March, Antonio said he was left with a "completely shattered" leg and a realization of "how close I was to dying."

He said he broke his femur bone in four places and required an operation where surgeons "put a pole

in my thigh with four bolts."

Antonio said he was 100% certain he would play again and fulfilled that ambition when coming on as an 85th-minute substitute in Jamaica's Gold Cup match against Guatemala in June.

He made further substitute appearances against Guadeloupe and Panama.

He scored twice for West Ham's Under-21 development team in a game against Boreham Wood, but that has not led to a contract ex-

tension at the club he has played for since joining from Nottingham Forest in 2015.

"Michail will always be a much-loved and respected member of the West Ham United family. As has been the case since December, the Club will continue to support and assist him in his ongoing rehabilitation, offering him access to training, facilities and medical care if needed," West Ham said.



Burnley completed a busy 24



In this file photo, West Ham's Michail Antonio runs into position during their English Premier League soccer match against Tottenham Hotspur, at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London. (AP)

hours in the transfer market by signing goalkeeper Martin Dubravka from Newcastle United.

Dubravka leaves St James' Park after 179 first team appearances for Newcastle in seven and a half seasons at the club, and the Slovak will replace James Trafford, who left Burnley in July to return to Manchester City.

"I'm delighted to be here," Dubravka told the official Burnley website, adding that it was "a really exciting time to be joining," the outfit that returned to the Premier League at the end of last season after one campaign in the Championship.

"I've only heard really positive things about the club, the culture and the environment we work in, so I'm excited about getting going with the season kicking off next weekend."

Dubravka's arrival comes just a day after the club sealed a move for French midfielder Lesley Ugochukwu from Chelsea.

21-year-old Ugochukwu spent last season on loan at Southampton, making 26 appearances and has agreed a five-year contract to play at the Turf Moor-based club.

Burnley are also thought to be close to signing another Chelsea striker, with Armando Broja in talks over the terms of his contract after the two clubs agreed terms for a transfer.

Best of the Rest

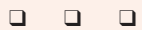
Players exchange punches: A preseason friendly between Real Betis and Italian club Como got extra heated, with players exchanging punches and sparking a mass scuffle.

There were several rough exchanges in the first half of the match in southern Spain on Wednesday, and Betis player Pablo Fornals and Como midfielder Maximo Perrone then got into an altercation entering halftime. They had a few brief words to each other and then started exchanging blows.

Players from both teams rushed in and the altercation escalated. The benches were cleared, with substitutes and staff members entering the field, some trying to break up the fighting.

It took several moments before order was reestablished. The referee sent off a player from each team.

"We are competitive and both teams want to win, but in the end there's a line you can't cross in these matches," Betis midfielder Sergi Altimira said. "They were making many fouls, stopping the match all the time." Como, which will face Barcelona in another preseason match on Sunday, won the friendly 3-2. (AP)



Kampala Queens sign Ethiopians: Uganda Women's League champion Kampala Queens FC has signed two Ethiopian players ahead of the new season.

Head coach Frew Haile Gebriel confirmed to Xinhua that the club has signed internationals Amedu Meadin Sahilu and Tone Turist Lema. "We have added these two experienced players to the squad," said Gebriel.

The signings come after Kampala Queens lost key players Zaina Namuleme to Kenyan champions Kenya Police Bullets, and Shamirah Nalugya, who joined Belarus Women's Premier League side FC Minsk.

Gebriel, a former Ethiopia U-20 Women's national team head coach, told Xinhua that since his arrival to Uganda late last year, he is building a strong team that will be competitive on the continent. (Xinhua)

Suárez shines in 3-1 win over Pumas

Messi-less Inter Miami cruises into Leagues knockout stages

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Aug 7, (AP): Luis Suárez scored and had two assists, and Inter Miami beat Pumas 3-1 to advance in the Leagues Cup.

Miami played the match without Lionel Messi, who is sidelined indefinitely with what the team described as a minor muscle injury in his right leg.

Messi was hurt in the opening minutes of Inter Miami's win over Necaxa on Saturday. He was in attendance for Wednesday's match and watched from a suite at Chase Stadium.

Miami, which has eight points in the Major League Soccer Leagues Cup standings, is the first MLS club through to the tournament's knockout stages.

Rodrigo De Paul scored his first Inter Miami goal on an assist from Suárez in the 45th, tying the match after Pumas' Jorge Ruvalcaba opened scoring in the 34th.

De Paul, the star Argentine midfielder who came to MLS to play with his national team friend Messi, made his club debut in Inter Miami's League's Cup opener against Atlas last Wednesday and had two assists against Necaxa.

Suárez put Inter Miami ahead 2-1 when he converted a penalty kick in the 59th after a handball was called on Pumas defender José Caicedo in the penalty area.

It was Suárez first goal since he scored in Inter Miami's Club World Cup match against Palmeiras on June 23.

Tadeo Allende finished Suárez's second assist of the night in the 69th.



Pumas UNAM forward Guillermo Martinez, left, and Inter Miami defender Gonzalo Luján, right, go for the ball during the first half of a Leagues Cup soccer match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

World Games open with dazzling fireworks and cultural spectacle



Members of the delegation of China parade during the opening ceremony of the World Games 2025 in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province. (Xinhua)

Chengdu welcomes the world

CHENGDU, Aug 7, (Xinhua): The ancient seal script characters for “Chengdu,” inscribed over two millennia ago on bronze ware, came to life in a dazzling display of fireworks at the opening ceremony of the 12th World Games in the capital city of southwest China’s Sichuan Province on Thursday evening.

This fusion of Chengdu’s historical and cultural legacy with the excitement of an international sporting event brought the ceremony to a resplendent climax.

Jose Perurena, president of the International World Games Association, stated that the Chengdu World Games would be more than just a sporting event - it would be a cultural festival.

The Chinese characters for “Chengdu” were first discovered on locally unearthed bronze ware, highlighting the city’s rich history and the fact that its name has remained unchanged for over 2,000 years.

During the opening ceremony, the characters “Chengdu” illuminated the night sky alongside 12 symbolic flowers, each representing a host city of the World Games. This was followed by the growth of a “Tree of Friendship,” inspired by the ancient tree-root relics from Chengdu’s Jinsha Site and the Sichuan native dove tree, unfolding a civilizational dialogue across mountains and seas and symbolizing peace, progress and friendship.

Launched in 1981, The World Games serves as a platform for non-Olympic sports, embracing self-expression and cultural inclusiveness. The Chengdu edition of the Games intertwines the historical heritage of Chinese culture with a modern international sporting event.

Qiao Wei, chief scriptwriter of the Chengdu World Games’ opening and closing ceremonies, said that every detail of the opening ceremony - from stage performances to video presentations, and from

the attire of the guides to the performers’ headpieces - showcased Chengdu’s rich cultural heritage.

The athletes’ parade incorporated intangible cultural heritage elements from Sichuan, with placards handcrafted from traditional bamboo weaving and Chengdu’s intricate silver filigree techniques. Traditional Shu brocade was also used in the Qipao (cheongsam) worn by the guides.

“We hope these carefully designed elements allow the essence of local Ba-Shu culture to flow naturally and vividly, showcasing the unique charm of China’s intangible cultural heritage to the world,” said Wang Zhigang, chief visual designer of the opening ceremony.

The logo, torch, medals and mascot of the Chengdu World Games also feature elements of Chinese culture. The logo design, inspired by the giant panda, hibiscus flower and Chinese knot, reflects Chengdu’s history and culture.

The World Games torch relay, a first in the event’s history, commenced on July 26. Its six-stage journey, carried by 120 bearers wielding the “Bamboo Dream” torch, connected Chengdu’s millennia-old heritage - embodied by the Sanxingdui ruins, Jinsha’s Sun Bird, Panda habitats, Three Kingdoms sites, the legacy of the Three Su scholars, and Tianfu New Area’s Xinglong Lake Wetland Park - with its modern pulse, culmi-

nating in the opening ceremony’s lighting.

“It infused the spirit of Chengdu, the spirit of togetherness and the spirit of the Games,” said British emblem designer John Fairley, who also participated in the torch relay.

Located in southwestern China, Chengdu has long maintained its economic vitality and cultural prosperity through openness and inclusiveness. The Chengdu World Games is not only a grand celebration of sport, but also a platform for intercultural dialogue.

“This is not a monologue by a single city, but a chorus of diverse civilizations,” said Cai Canhuang, chief fireworks designer of the opening ceremony. “We wanted to show the world coming together here, rather than simply saying welcome.” The ceremony began with a large-scale street dance performance featuring hundreds of dancers, blending cityscape elements and daily life. This showcased contemporary Chinese culture, while extending Chengdu’s welcome to guests and athletes from around the world.

“Street dance is widely recognized and beloved by young people across the globe. Through rhythmic movement, it conveys the spirit of freedom, life, joy and friendship,” said Huang Peiling, deputy director of the opening ceremony. “With this opening

performance, we wanted to present the energy and dynamism of today’s China.” The spirit of cultural exchange extended beyond the opening ceremony performances to a variety of cultural activities, offering international athletes the chance to immerse themselves in Chinese heritage beyond the competitions.

Before the Games officially started, participants witnessed a variety of experiences in the Athletes Village, from Sichuan Opera face-changing and sugar painting to creating replicas of Sanxingdui bronze sculptures, practicing Chinese calligraphy, and panda-themed painting. In the following days, additional cultural experiences included Shu brocade, shadow puppetry and paper cutting.

“I may not be taking home a medal, but my suitcase will definitely be full of souvenirs,” laughed U.S. cheerleader Emma, holding up a freshly-made panda figurine.

In their downtime, athletes have ventured beyond the stadiums to explore iconic cultural landmarks such as the Sanxingdui Museum, Du Fu Thatched Cottage Museum, and the Giant Panda Base, experiencing the vitality of daily life in Chengdu, one of China’s most renowned travel destinations and a paradise for food lovers.

At the revitalized industrial complex Eastern Suburb Memory, Ida Hudson, goalkeeper of Canada’s women’s national football team, explored exhibits, browsed local markets, and tried on the traditional Hanfu attire.

“This place is so creative, transforming an old factory into a trendy, modern block while preserving the essence of traditional culture. I love it!” she said.

Mohamed Elsherbeiny, international tourism director of the Egyptian Tourism Authority, visited Chengdu as part of a Chinese language training program for officials from Belt and Road countries ahead of the World Games, and expressed his admiration for the city.

“Chengdu is truly unforgettable,” he said, offering a heartfelt message to Egyptian athletes. “After the competition, be sure to experience life in Chengdu. You’re going to fall in love with this city.”

Kings of tennis return to Riyadh

RIYADH, Aug 7: The announcement by Turki Al-Sheikh, Chairman of the General Entertainment Authority, about the second edition of the “Six Kings Slam” tournament as part of Riyadh Season has generated excitement worldwide.

Tennis fans will once again turn their eyes to Saudi Arabia’s capital, which is gearing up to host one of the sport’s premier events from October 15 to 18. The tournament will feature some of the world’s top-ranked players according to the latest ATP standings.

Last year’s tournament made history

when Jannik Sinner, currently ranked No. 1 and the Australian Open champion, defeated Spain’s Carlos Alcaraz in a thrilling final.

This year, the lineup is even more impressive, with tennis legend Novak Djokovic joining the competition. The Serbian star boasts 24 Grand Slam singles titles. The field will also welcome three newcomers making their tournament debuts: Germany’s Alexander Zverev, Tokyo 2020 Olympic gold medalist; Britain’s Jack Draper; and America’s Taylor Fritz.



Turki Al-Sheikh, Chairman of the General Entertainment Authority

Best of the Rest

US knocked off top spot by Spain: The U.S. was knocked off the top spot in FIFA’s latest women’s rankings by world champion Spain.

Spain regained the No. 1 position despite losing to England in the final of the European Championship last month.

The U.S. held the top position since August last year after winning gold at the Paris Olympics. Spain was No. 1 from December 2023 to June last year after its World Cup triumph.

The latest rankings were released by world governing body FIFA on Thursday.

England, which has won back-to-back Euros and lost to Spain in the final at the 2023 World Cup, moved up one place to fourth.

Brazil dropped three positions and is seventh despite successfully defending the Copa America to win its ninth continental title.

Sweden and France were big movers after impressive showings at the Euros. (AP)

□ □ □

Cushing named coach of Denver Summit: Former Manchester City women’s coach Nick Cushing has been named head coach of the expansion Denver Summit in the National Women’s Soccer League.

The Summit, who join the league next season, announced the move on Wednesday. “Our team will play an attacking form of the game that excites our stadium and makes things difficult for our opponents. We want to create a winning team as well as a great experience for all of Colorado,” Cushing said in a statement.

Cushing took over as interim coach at Manchester City in March after Gareth Taylor was fired. He had previously served as head coach of the club from 2013 to 2020, winning the Women’s Super League title in 2016 and the FA Cup in 2017. (AP)

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NEWS



Artists perform during the opening ceremony of the World Games 2025 in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province. (Xinhua)

Sports

Kuwait seeks redemption against Portugal

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

CAIRO, Aug 7: Kuwait's national under-19 handball team will take on Portugal today at 3:00PM, in the second round of Group A at the 11th Under-19 Handball World Championship. The tournament is being held in Cairo, Egypt, and will run until August 16. Also in Group A today, Sweden will face Austria.

Other matches scheduled for today include

Germany vs. Faroe Islands, Uruguay vs. Slovenia, Norway vs. Mexico, Hungary vs. Kosovo, Morocco vs. Switzerland, and Argentina vs. France.

Kuwait opened its World Championship campaign with a 39-22 loss to Sweden, while Austria edged Portugal 37-36 in a closely contested match.

Kuwait is eager to improve its performance and put on a stronger display against Portugal despite the challenge, hoping to secure two points in this crucial match before facing Austria tomorrow, Saturday, in the third and final round of the preliminary stage.

This edition marks only the second time in the championship's history that such a large number of teams are participating, following the 2023 tournament in Croatia. Kuwait prepared for the World Championship with an overseas training camp in Croatia and Slovenia, playing several friendly matches to bring the players to peak form ahead of the competition.



A Kuwaiti player is held back as he makes a goal attempt against Sweden.

Kuwait U-17 dream begins in Group F, Philippines drawn into tough group



Kuwait Under-17 team.

Al-Jahra Club contemplates withdrawal after suspension

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Board of Directors of Al-Jahra Club has informed its General Assembly members that it is currently evaluating the possibility of withdrawing from the Zain Premier League as well as all other competitions under sports federations. This move follows the Public Authority for Sports' decision to suspend the Board's administrative and financial accreditation.

The club expressed its view that there is no clear justification for the suspension, especially considering that financial support has been withheld for over six months. Despite this, the Board has continued to regularly pay the salaries of all club members and succeeded in reducing the club's debt by 50% through non-governmental revenue streams, demonstrating its commitment to fulfilling its administrative and financial responsibilities.

In the interest of transparency and accountability, the Board announced the situation via its official social media channels to keep General Assembly



Al-Jahra Club logo

members informed of recent developments. A final decision regarding the withdrawal will be made at the upcoming Board of Directors meeting.

The Board appeals to all club members and supporters to understand the circumstances and reassures its ongoing dedication to safeguarding the interests and stability of Al-Jahra Club during these challenging times.

Kuwait welcomes coach Souza

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Portuguese coach Julio Souza has officially arrived in Kuwait to take charge of the national soccer team, accompanied by his assistant technical staff. He was welcomed by Osama Hussein, Vice Chairman of the Kuwait Football Association for Technical Affairs, Saud Al-Mujammed, Director of National Teams, and Abdulrahman Al-Mousa.

In the coming days, Souza will closely monitor local club training sessions as he begins forming the squad for the Blues' upcoming camp, scheduled for the end of August. The camp will set the stage for two international friendlies against Indonesia in Jakarta in early September.

Souza and his team are set to sign a two-year contract. His first official assignment with the national team will be a crucial Arab Cup qualifier against Mauritania, to be held in Doha on November 25 or 26. The tournament is scheduled to take place later this year in Qatar, under the organization and sponsorship of FIFA.



Osama Hussein welcomes coach Souza.

Top two teams from each group to qualify for final tournament in Saudi Arabia

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 7: Kuwait has been placed in Group F of the 2026 AFC U-17 Championship qualifiers alongside host nation Thailand, Turkmenistan, Mongolia, and the Maldives. The qualifiers will take place in a single-stage round-robin format from November 22 to 30, 2025, with all matches hosted by Thailand.

The draw for the qualifiers was conducted at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) head-

quarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

This will be the 21st edition of the AFC U-17 Championship qualifiers, featuring 38 participating teams divided into seven groups—three groups with six teams and four groups with five teams each.

The top two teams from each group will qualify for the final tournament, where they will join nine teams that have already secured automatic qualification by earning spots in the 2025 FIFA U-17 World Cup in Qatar. These teams are: Qatar, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, North Korea, Japan, Tajikistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia.

The group allocations are as follows:

Group A: China (host), Bangladesh, Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Timor-Leste, Sri Lanka

Group B: Yemen, Laos, Kyrgyzstan (host), Cambodia, Guam, Pakistan

Group C: Vietnam (host), Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Northern Mariana Islands, Macau

Group D: India (host), Iran, Palestine, Taiwan, Lebanon

Group E: Jordan (host), Australia, Iraq, Philippines, Bhutan

Group F (Group 6): Thailand (host), Turkmenistan, Mongolia, Maldives, Kuwait

Group G: Myanmar (host), Oman, Afghanistan, Syria, Nepal

Teams were seeded into six levels based on a points system calculated from their performances in the previous three editions of the tournament.

The final tournament will be held in Saudi Arabia from May 7 to 24, 2026.

Kuwait U-17 volleyball team ready for Arab challenge despite defeats

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

CAIRO, Aug 7: Kuwait's under-17 national volleyball team faced a setback in its third friendly match against Egypt during its ongoing training camp in Cairo. The camp is part of Kuwait's preparations for the 17th Arab Volleyball Championship for Youth Teams, scheduled from August 14 to 26 in Jordan.



Players in action during the friendly match between Kuwait and Egypt.

Kuwait opened the series with a promising start, securing a straight-sets victory in the first friendly. However, Egypt bounced back to win the next two matches—taking the second 3-1 and sweeping the third encounter.

Led by head coach Mohamed Abdelrazek and assistant coach Mishaal Al-Subaie, the team is undergoing intensive preparation, playing three matches in as many days to build form, stamina, and tactical cohesion ahead of the regional championship.

Kuwait has been drawn into Group B, where it will face Bahrain, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq. Group A includes hosts Jordan, Egypt, the UAE, Libya, and Lebanon.

In club news, Qadsia Club continues to reinforce its volleyball team with key signings. The club has secured the services of setter Mohammad Qassem,

formerly of Kazma, widely regarded as one of the best in his position.

Qadsia also recently signed defensive specialist Abdullah Faris, seen as a capable successor to libero Nasser Dashti, who parted ways with the club

this year.

Adding international firepower, the club confirmed the signing of Brazilian stars Alison Melo and Caio Ribeiro, signaling serious ambitions for title contention in the upcoming season.

Whitecaps sign former Bayern forward Müller

WASHINGTON, Aug 7, (AP): Former Bayern Munich forward Thomas Müller is joining the Vancouver Whitecaps in arguably the biggest signing in club history.

Müller, who won the World Cup with Germany in 2014, will join the Whitecaps for the remainder of the season in an open roster spot.

Terms of the deal were not released. It includes a Designated Player option for 2026.

"Whitecaps - let's make history," Müller said in a video he posted online Wednesday that showed him unboxing a Vancouver jersey.

The 35-year-old Müller has spent the last 17 years with Bayern Munich in the German Bundesliga, helping the club win 13 league championships and 33 total titles during that span. He scored 250 goals in 756 appearances with Bayern across all competitions, but his contract was not renewed after last season.

At the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, Müller scored five goals. He also scored five goals at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, winning the Golden Boot.

Müller's final match with Bayern came this summer at the Club World Cup, losing 2-0 in the quarterfinals to Paris Saint-Germain in Atlanta. He came into the match as a late substitute.



In this file photo, Munich's Thomas Müller celebrates a 1-0 win in a German Bundesliga soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and VfB Stuttgart, in Munich, Germany. (AP)

Müller joined Bayern's academy as a 10-year-old in 2000. He made his senior debut under Jurgen Klinsmann in 2008 and his breakthrough came under Louis van Gaal the following season.

The club announced in a joint statement in April that it would be his last season. In a post on social media, Müller said he understood Bayern's decision "even if this did not reflect my personal wishes."

"Thomas Müller is the definition of a Bavarian fairytale career; he grew in Bavaria and with Bayern," club president Herbert Hainer said. "Nobody has

won more Bundesliga titles, and 33 trophies in total so far speak volumes. He ranks among the most outstanding personalities in FC Bayern history."

Müller retired from international soccer after last year's European Championship, having scored 45 goals in 131 appearances for Germany.

The Whitecaps obtained Müller's MLS discovery rights from FC Cincinnati in exchange for up to \$400,000 in General Allocation Money to complete the signing. He will occupy an international roster spot.

"Thomas is a natural leader whose passion for the game is infectious. This is a statement signing by our club and our ownership - a transformative moment for our club and our city," Vancouver sporting director and CEO Axel Schuster said in statement.

Müller is set to arrive in Vancouver next week. His first practice and introductory news conference with the club are scheduled for Thursday.

In a video provided by the Whitecaps, Müller said: "They (the fans) can expect that I'm always 100%. You can watch my skills in YouTube videos or several TV shows, but you can expect that I'm fully into it. And for me, that's the most important part."

The Whitecaps (13-5-6) are currently second in the MLS Western Conference standings behind expansion San Diego FC.