



Pages 14-16



TOURIST VISAS NOW OPEN TO CITIZENS OF 52 COUNTRIES

Israelis still off Kuwait's entry list

Family visit visa extended with clearer kinship rules

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Director of the Electronic Services Department at the General Department of Residency Colonel Abdulaziz Al-Kandari says there is no ban on the entry of any nationality to Kuwait except for Israeli nationals, as there is a clear Amiri Decree stating that Kuwait is in a state of war with Israel.

He stressed that every decision taken by the Ministry of Interior is based on thorough studies that consider both immediate and long-term implications, with regulations developed accordingly.

During a visual presentation titled "Kuwait Visa Platform... New Entry Visas" at the Government Communication Center, Colonel Al-Kandari explained the new system that is introduced through the "Kuwait Visa" platform.

He highlighted the main updates aimed at facilitating the procedures for issuing various entry visas, noting that the new electronic visa system enhances Kuwait's position as an attractive destination for tourists.

Colonel Al-Kandari began the presentation with a detailed explanation of the new entry visas, including the lists of approved countries and professions.

He explained that each visa type has specific controls and requirements that must be met. Among the most prominent requirements for obtaining a tourist visa are that the applicant must not be subject to any restrictions or security concerns, must pay the prescribed fees, and must submit all required documents.

Continued on Page 4

Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Your Highness the Prime Minister ... Rain begins with a drop, then it pours

SOME time ago, I wrote an article titled, "If there is a will, there is a way." This proverb illustrates what must be done for institutions to succeed.

In Management Science, there is a golden rule -- individual interests must be subordinated to public interests, not the other way around.

However, for decades, Kuwait has been living in the opposite pattern -- one that brought backwardness and decline for the country.

For example, for years, we have been talking about the need to reform the electricity infrastructure and escape the cycle of fear every summer -- fear of power outages during the peak summer heat; as well as the need to import electricity from neighboring countries. This entails enormous cost for public finance.

Unfortunately, this vital facility was subject to extortion by influential individuals who had their tools in the National Assembly, as it happened with every major project over the past 30 years.

Instead of modernization, obstacles increased. As a result, everything in Kuwait was declining; up to the point where we felt as if we were living in a 19th-century country with a modern appearance.

So, whenever the government announces a project that benefits Kuwait today, everyone welcomed it.

In this regard, the mere signing of the contract for the second and third phases of the Zour power plant is already a confirmation that the country is on its way to achieving success -- free from parliamentary interference and influential figures who made everything subject to a price they received in advance. Otherwise, they obstructed the projects

through their influence in the National Assembly, Tenders Committee, Audit Bureau or various ministries.

If these projects were implemented long ago, Kuwait would have saved itself a great deal -- whether in terms of production disruption, time wasted due to power outages; or financially, as it has lost a lot, perhaps more than a billion Kuwaiti dinars in recent years.

Nevertheless, as the saying goes, "Better late than never."

Today, we are living in a completely new era, unlike what we have known over the past three decades. This era is characterized by a desire for reform, and at the same time, a swift decision-making process. This is why Kuwait is experiencing a kind of developmental boom.

While it is true that the construction of this new station -- which will greatly benefit Kuwait; will begin operating three years from now, its speedy completion is required.

Those who work are bound to make mistakes and those who do not work will not make mistakes, but they will be dooming themselves to backwardness.

Therefore, there are many projects that the country has needed for decades, and which have been delayed significantly.

Continued on Page 5

Follow me on:

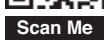
@Ahmedaljarallah

Ahmed aljarallah

ahmed@aljarallah.com



Scan QR code to visit the website:



aljarallah.com

Committee revokes Kuwaiti citizenships

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): The Supreme Committee for Kuwaiti citizenship held a meeting on Thursday and decided to revoke citizenship from a number of individuals.

The committee said in a statement that the meeting, chaired by Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, resulted in a decision to revoke citizenships and referred the matter to the Cabinet.

It revealed that the revoked citizenships included those with dual citizenships and those who obtained the document through forgery and fraud.

Some cases had their citizenships revoked due to reasons related to the state's higher interest.



Arrested suspects linked to residency trafficking and unlawful permit issuance.

Workers paid KD 350-900

Authorities crack down on illegal residency transfers

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: A Pakistani national, identified as Sh. R., has been arrested on charges of trafficking in residencies, along with several individuals who paid him money in exchange for residency permits issued in violation of the law, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the Ministry of Interior, the arrest was made based on the directives of Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef.

The case began with the receipt of information about the suspect, who was registered under the residency of a general trade and contracting company, and working as a representative for several companies. He was found to be illegally issuing residency permits for financial gain.

Further investigations revealed that the company in question is owned by another individual (identified as M.A.) and is connected to 19 other companies. The accused managed nine of these companies through an agency. In total, 150 workers were registered under these companies.

Authorities also arrested several individuals who had paid between KD

350 and KD 900 to renew or transfer their residency illegally. During questioning, they admitted their awareness that these transactions were unlawful and confirmed they do not actually work for the companies under which their residencies were issued.

When confronted with these confessions, the main suspect admitted to the charges, and confessed to embezzling the collected amounts. He explained that he carried out the transactions using login credentials of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) and the Ministry of Interior systems, without the knowledge or involvement of the company owner.

All parties involved have been referred to the competent authorities for legal action.

The Ministry of Interior emphasized that investigations are ongoing in coordination with PAM to inspect companies, uncover further residency trafficking cases, and take strict legal action against anyone found involved.

The ministry reaffirmed its commitment to enforcing the law without leniency.

E-litigation introduced to expedite court cases

Kuwait updates Civil and Commercial Law

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The decree amending the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law, approved by the Council of Ministers recently, introduces several amendments, including stricter regulations on the dismissal of judges, an increase in bail amounts, and keeping pace with digital transformation efforts by adopting electronic litigation to expedite processes and reduce time and effort, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The amendments, which take effect from the date of their publication in the official gazette, include the following:

The texts of Articles 40, 45-bis, 106, 108, and 109 of the

Civil and Commercial Procedures Law shall be replaced with the following:

Article 40 - "If the lawsuit pertains to the validation, annulment, or termination of a contract, the value of the lawsuit shall be assessed based on the value of the contract amount."

In cases involving exchange contracts, the value of the lawsuit shall be estimated based on the higher of the two exchanged amounts.

Continued on Page 5



Ministry of Public Works photo

Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Mohammad Al-Mashaan chairs a meeting on Thursday of the Ministerial Committee for Following Up on the Executive Status of Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed between Kuwait and China.

Cooperation expands across energy, housing and ports

Al-Mashaan leads Kuwait-China project oversight

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Mohammad Al-Mashaan chaired a meeting on Thursday of the Ministerial Committee for Following Up on the Executive Status of Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed between Kuwait and China.

The meeting reviewed the latest progress on 22 development projects outlined in the MoUs between Kuwait and

China, with particular focus on strategic areas such as the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project, electric power and renewable energy development, low-carbon waste recycling systems, housing projects, wastewater treatment infrastructure, and the development of free and economic zones.

Continued on Page 4

Kuwait to swelter under extreme weekend temps

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department stated that the weather in Kuwait during the weekend will be extremely hot during the day, and hot to warm and relatively humid at night.

The acting Director of the department Dhirar Al-Ali told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the country will be affected by a hot and relatively humid air mass, particularly over coastal and nearby areas, from Friday. This will be accompanied by chances of light fog forming during the late-night hours and early morning, especially in coastal areas.

As for weather during the daytime on Friday, Al-Ali explained that it will be extremely hot and relatively humid, especially in coastal areas, with northwesterly to southeasterly light to moderate winds ranging between 10 and 38 km/h. Scattered clouds may appear, and high temperatures are expected to range between 46°C and 48°C. The sea will be light to moderate with waves between two and five feet.

Continued on Page 4

PAM 'digitizes' salary completion certificates

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) on Wednesday announced the launch of a new electronic service for business owners, allowing them to issue a salary transfer completion certificate for the workers registered on their files.

In a press statement, PAM disclosed this service is based on bank transfer data approved by local banks, proving their commitment to transfer the salaries of their employees in accordance with the provisions of Ministerial Resolution No. 18/2010 regarding the wage protection system for workers in the private sector.

PAM explained that the certificate can be obtained electronically by following these simple steps: log into the 'Sahel Business' application, select 'Public Authority for Manpower services', 'Certificate Services' and then 'Salary Completion Certificate'. Fill up the required fields, select the type of certificate, and download the certificate.

'Zionist plans contravene UN charter'

Kuwait strongly condemns Israeli annexation remarks

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (Agencies): Kuwait on Thursday expressed in the strongest terms condemnation and denunciation of the Israeli occupation's statements regarding the annexation of regions from Arab countries, affirming that those inflammatory expansion-

ist remarks were against international laws and norms and the UN Charter.

The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry indicated that such statements exposed the heinous intentions on part of the Israeli occupation and also reflected plans to undermined the rights of the Palestin-

ian people.

The Foreign Ministry called on the world to use all possible means of pressure against such the Israeli occupation, warning of their ramifications,

Continued on Page 4

2

Criticism alone
won't earn a
leader's trust



8

KIPCO reports net
profit of KD 10.2
mln for H1 2025



Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:50	Asr	15:28
Sunrise ..	05:15	Maghrib ..	18:30
Zohr	11:53	Isha	19:53

Local

Weather		
Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Very hot and relatively humid especially over coastal areas with light to moderate north-westerly wind to southeasterly wind, with speeds of 10-38 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.		
By Night: Hot to rather hot and humid especially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for light fog forming.		
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	48	38
Kuwait Airport	49	34
Abdaly	49	31
Bubyan	47	25
Jahra	49	34
Ahmadi	44	33
Nuwaisib	49	32



HH the Amir HH the Crown Prince HH the Prime Minister

Amir congratulates Pakistan Pres. on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a congratulatory cable to the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished President Zardari good health and wellbeing, and for the friendly country and people more progress and prosperity.

Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sa-

bah also sent a congratulatory cable to the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished President Zardari good health and wellbeing, and the people of Pakistan further progress and prosperity.

Prime Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a congratulatory cable to the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, on his country's Independence Day.

Other Voices

Criticism alone won't earn a leader's trust

By Abdulaziz Mohammed Al-Anjeri

I am often urged by those I meet to confine my writing to one or two recurring topics. Yet a nation's reality cannot be reduced to a narrow set of themes, however important they may be.

Just recently, some long-ignored issues have finally begun to receive serious attention. Chief among them is the fight against narcotics, a scourge that has spared no segment of society.

Today, there is genuine resolve to tackle this problem, through concrete action: tighter border controls, the dismantling of major trafficking networks, and the absence of political connections that once shielded criminals. This is an achievement that deserves recognition.

That said, while the intent is commendable, the way these matters are publicized can sometimes have unintended consequences. Overexposing drug busts in the media, even with the aim of deterrence and public reassurance, risks reinforcing a negative image that could brand



Al-Anjeri

Kuwait as a major transit hub for the drug trade. The challenge lies in striking a balance between transparency and safeguarding the country's reputation.

From another important perspective, some in government focus on safeguarding the country's finances from waste and abuse. In the past, corruption and misuse of public funds became so common that the phrase 'combating corruption' began to lose its meaning. It sometimes felt as if public money was there for anyone to take.

Today, anti-corruption efforts are being enforced with an almost prosecutorial presumption: "You are guilty until proven innocent." This approach, though too harsh for some, is understandable when corruption becomes deeply entrenched. In such cases, soft measures rarely suffice; a calculated degree of firmness is necessary to ensure that wrongdoers are held accountable.

I am reminded of my late uncle, Hamad Al-Jouan, who played a central role as a parliamentarian in drafting and passing Kuwait's Public Funds Protection Law more than three decades ago. It was not the product of a single day or week, but of sustained effort, research, and multiple revisions. Serious reforms require time and precision before they can operate at maximum efficiency.

Still, the current rigidity, despite its good intentions, can backfire if not moderated by fair safeguards. It risks creating an environment in which capable leaders hesitate to act for fear that an unintentional mistake could result in severe punishment. This is, in the truest sense of the word, counter-intuitive: excessive caution can suppress creativity, entrench bureaucracy, slow decision-making, and ultimately cost the country valuable opportunities.

My hope is that this phase is a temporary one, to be followed by a recalibration that preserves accountability while enabling greater efficiency. Both Kuwait's anti-drug and anti-corruption efforts are still in their early stages. With refinement, they can achieve justice according to the highest standards of fairness and effectiveness.

In the end, balanced praise and honest criticism are what separate a nation that rises from one that stumbles. Governments, like students, are graded in multiple subjects: they may excel in some, perform adequately in others, and fail in a few. Fairness requires that we acknowledge the areas of excellence as well as those in need of improvement. If you want a student to listen to your concerns, you must not focus exclusively on their lack of achievement in certain subjects. In the long run, honest engagement is what truly drives progress.

'Kuwait beacon of stability, compassion'

Gov't support lauded as Pakistan embassy marks Independence Day

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Zafar Iqbal praised the humanitarian and leadership role of the State of Kuwait; describing it as "the embodiment of love, peace and humanity, and a true reflection of the spirit of 'Ahlam wa Sahlan'."

In a statement to the newspaper, Iqbal expressed his deep appreciation and admiration for His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; commending his insightful vision, boundless generosity, and unwavering commitment to care for everyone living in Kuwait -- citizens and expatriates. He described His Highness as a leader who made Kuwait the beacon of stability, compassion, and prosperity in the region and beyond.

He also disclosed that his recent meeting with Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah focused on new horizons for strengthening cooperation in the fields of labor welfare, humanitarian aid and social development. He lauded the dynamic and dedicated leadership of Al-Huwailah, stressing that such efforts are appreciated. He cited the appreciation from all residents of Kuwait for the improvement of people's lives.

He expressed his gratitude to the Kuwaiti government for resuming the recruitment of skilled Pakistani workers after the hiatus, considering this gesture an evidence of continuous confidence in the competence of Pakistani workers. He proposed regular coordination between the Pakistan Overseas Employment Agency and the Ministry of Social Affairs to ensure the efficiency and transparency of recruitment processes and their responsiveness to



Pakistani Ambassador Dr Zafar Iqbal addressing the community in the embassy hall.

the evolving needs of Kuwait.

He applauded the initiatives of the ministry and the distinguished care provided to the Pakistani community, while commending the Kuwaiti cooperative societies as an inspiring example of community-based economic success. He proposed the exchange of expertise between the cooperative sectors in the two countries.

He added that the meeting looked into the cultural similarities between the two

countries as a solid foundation for expanding cooperation in the areas of elderly care, childcare, support for people with disabilities, and social welfare services.

He then invited the minister to Pakistan in order to personally assess the humanitarian and development projects funded by Kuwait and implemented in cooperation with Pakistani institutions.

He praised the noble and steadfast role of Kuwait in all forums and in supporting the Palestinian people in Gaza, emphasizing that these efforts embody the deep commitment of the country to justice, compassion, and alleviating human suffering; such that it earned the respect and appreciation of the Islamic world, including the Pakistani people.

The Pakistani ambassador praised the support that his country is receiving from the government and people of Kuwait, affirming the good relations between the two countries and his commitment to strengthen ties in all fields. Iqbal made the statement during the celebration of the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan.

The Pakistani Embassy organized a flag-raising ceremony at its building, with a number of members of the Pakistani community in attendance.

The ceremony included the reading of official greetings from the President of the Republic of Pakistan, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In his speech, the Ambassador greeted the Pakistanis, while praising the "founding fathers" whose sacrifices led to the independence. He cited the victories of the Pakistani Armed Forces in the battle of truth.

He urged the Pakistani community to work hard and with dedication for the progress and prosperity of their country.

He lauded their contributions to the development of Pakistan and Kuwait.

The celebration included the participation of children and a number of Pakistani singers who performed famous patriotic songs and other musical segments, as well as the cake-cutting ceremony for the occasion.



Officials from ten participating entities at the ceremony.

ROPME course on marine awareness concludes

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): The Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), in cooperation with 10 participating entities, concluded on Thursday its summer camp Al-Ra'ed Al-Azraq (Blue Pioneer).

ROPME Executive Secretary Dr. Mohammad Al-Ahmad told KUNA the program is part of the organization's marine environment strategy, which includes education and outreach to civil society and the education sector.

He emphasized the importance of teaching concepts related to marine conservation and sustainability, describing it as a core pillar for preserving life below water.

According to Al-Ahmad, the educational approach covers both formal education - integrated into school curricula in cooperation with education ministries in GCC states, Iraq, and Iran - and non-formal education, such as exhibitions, camps, and field programs.

He noted that the summer camp is a key non-formal activity designed to expand marine environmental awareness and added that this year's edition was developed in collaboration with member states, with the aim of rolling it out to all members next year.

ROPME's mandate covers the Arabian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, and parts of the Arabian Sea - an area of about 500,000 square kilometers - with the participation of GCC countries, Iraq, and Iran.

'No hunting in tourism visa'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): Mongolia's tourism visa does not include a hunting license, which should be obtained separately through a different visa, affirmed Kuwait Ambassador to Mongolia Mutlaq Al-Thuwaimer on Thursday.

In a statement to KUNA, the Ambassador called on Kuwaiti visitors to present their flight tickets and place of residence when arriving in Mongolia, reiterating that a visa that includes a hunting license could be obtained through other procedures.

He stressed that Kuwaiti citizens should abide by rules and regulations or face fines and visa cancellation.

Co-ops work rules amended

'Good governance, Kuwaitization priority'

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah has confirmed the issuance of a ministerial decision introducing important amendments to the cooperative work regulations.

In a press statement, Al-Huwailah disclosed that amendments are designed to reinforce the principles of good governance, standardize employment policies, and promote Kuwaitization in supervisory roles in cooperative societies through a unified and transparent mechanism that ensures equal opportunity.

She said the amendments are in line with the vision of the ministry to enhance the operational and administrative efficiency of the cooperative sector. "The goal is to deliver improved services to shareholders and con-



Dr Al-Huwailah

sumers, while strengthening the sector's developmental and economic role within the country," she explained.

She pointed out that the decision is a significant step forward in the efforts of the government to implement Kuwaitization in various sectors. She said one of the major changes is the introduction of a centralized mechanism for appointing individuals to supervisory positions -- Director General, Deputy Director General and Department Head -- through a specialized committee. She added this committee, chaired by the undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, consists of representatives from the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies and the relevant department in the ministry; indicating all applications will be submitted only through the 'Fakhruna' platform of PAM.

She revealed that the recruitment process will be overseen entirely by the committee, beginning with the screening of applications, followed by an electronic written exam -- conducted in collaboration with an accredited university -- requiring a minimum passing score of 80 percent. "The final stage involves personal interviews to identify the most qualified Kuwaiti candidates," she added.

'Gulf grid helped avert power outages in member countries'

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Gulf Inter-connection Network has played a crucial role in preventing total and partial power outages in member states; considering it provided support in more than 2,800 emergency cases since it started operations in 2009 until 2024.

The network, which stretches from Kuwait to the Sultanate of Oman, achieved 100 percent response rate by instantly transferring the required energy between member states.

It has intervened in more than 50 cases involving a loss of renewable energy production, offering critical backup and ensuring system stability throughout the Gulf region.

In another development, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) announced during its meeting last Monday the

opening of bids for the construction of the new building for the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy in Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City.

Sources revealed that seven bids were accepted and one was excluded; indicating CAPT will refer these bids to the ministry, which is expected to prepare technical recommendations within 30 days. Sources said a final decision will then be made to award the project to the bidder that meets the financial and technical requirements, in line with the Public Tenders Law and its implementing regulations. Sources added the contract will be forwarded to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for review, audit and final approval.

Sources confirmed that the planned facility is part of the strategy of the ministry to expand its services in the new residential areas, aiming to save time and effort for citizens and expatriates by bringing vital services closer to their homes.



Farwaniya Governorate photo Governor of Farwaniya and acting Governor of the Capital Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah with the visiting Kuwait-Pakistan Friendship Society members.

Farwaniya Gov. congratulates Pakistanis, meets KPFS group

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Governor of Farwaniya and acting Governor of the Capital Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah on Thursday met with Chairperson of the Kuwaiti-Pakistani Friendship Society (KPFS) Rana Ijaz Hussain and its members on the occasion of the National Day of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

During the meeting, the two sides talked about the role of the Society in strengthening friendship and cooperation between Kuwaitis and Pakistanis. They also exchanged greetings on the occasion.

The members of the Society expressed their appreciation to the Governor for his warm welcome and his commitment to maintain constant communication with the people of Kuwait.

They praised the full support of the governorate for initiatives that serve the Pakistani community.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Governor greeted the Pakistani community on their National Day wishing the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and its friendly people continuous success.

which overstepped sovereignty of nations and threatened the stability and security of the region.

Meanwhile, Israel's far-right finance minister announced approval Thursday of contentious new settlement construction in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, which Palestinians and rights groups worry will scuttle plans for a Palestinian state by effectively cutting the territory into two parts.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich boasted that the construction, which is expected to receive final approval later this month, could thwart Palestinian statehood plans. It came as many countries, including Australia, Britain, France, and Canada, say they will recognize a Palestinian state in September.

The construction on a tract of land east of Jerusalem named E1 has been has been under consideration for more than two decades, and is especially controversial because it is one of the last geographic links between the major West Bank cities of Ramallah and Bethlehem.

Ambassador Belinda Lewis reflects on her journey in Kuwait

Kashka, kindness and cross-cultural connections

By Chaitali B. Roy
Special to the Arab Times

When Belinda Lewis arrived in Kuwait in the spring of 2021, the country was still under lockdown, its streets quiet, its gatherings on pause. Undeterred, the first female British Ambassador of Kuwait set about building connections in the most challenging of circumstances from behind quarantine walls, with a toddler and a baby in tow. It was hardly the first test of her resilience. Ambassador Lewis had served in some of the world’s most difficult postings, from overseeing the Helmand Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan to navigating the turbulent months in Iraq after Mosul’s fall. In Kuwait, she brought the same grit and grace, strengthening a 125-year-old partnership between the UK and Kuwait through trade, education, environmental cooperation, and cultural ties. As she prepares to leave, she departs not just as a representative of Britain but as a friend to Kuwait, leaving behind a legacy of warmth, diplomacy, and significant achievements.

In this conversation, she highlights the 125th anniversary celebrations of UK-Kuwait diplomatic relations, which included cultural fusions, educational opportunities, and horticultural projects. She emphasises the strong military partnership, noting 30 short-term training teams from the UK, praising Kuwait’s support for the diplomatic corps. On a personal note, she shares her children’s attachment to their school and garden, and her own fondness for local dishes like kashka. She also recounts unique experiences, including receiving a piece of Queen Elizabeth’s coronation carpet and being warmly welcomed into a Kuwaiti home she had entered by mistake during Ramadan.

Arab Times: You arrived in Kuwait at a unique time, in the middle of the pandemic. What were your first impressions, and how did you navigate the restrictions to still connect with people?

Ambassador Belinda Lewis: It was still a very difficult time then. I remember arriving at the Kuwait airport so clearly. There were a couple of staff members who were there to greet us. We had a very warm reception. But I arrived with a 10-month-old baby and a three-year-old who was fed up, having fallen asleep in the last 30 minutes of the flight and waking up very grumpy and cranky. I seemed to have lots of plastic bags. I needed to change my baby’s nappy as soon as we arrived. I remember just feeling not very ambassadorial. And then we came to this beautiful residence. I remember thinking, “Wow, how lucky are we to live in a house that’s filled with so much history and has such a beautiful garden?” The garden, the outside space, was amazing to have.

I think about what it was like trying to connect with people when you’re brand new in a country, especially when your whole way of working depends on networking and meeting others. But we couldn’t meet in person, so I did a lot through Teams and Zoom, just like everyone did back then, and that was fine.

One of the strangest moments came when we started coming out of lockdown. People began taking off their masks, and we could finally meet face-to-face instead of through a screen. There were so many people I didn’t recognise. I’d introduce myself, only to be told, “Oh, we’ve spoken three times before!” Sometimes, a person’s smile wasn’t what I’d imagined-when you’ve only seen the top half of someone’s face, you picture the rest, and then when the mask comes off, it’s different from what you expected.

It almost felt like getting to know everyone all over again. But it was a wonderful feeling when things finally opened up. A strange start, yes, but I learned so much about different ways of working.

AT: You’ve been here four years and four months. You have accomplished a great deal and witnessed significant events during your tenure here, including the Queen’s passing and the King’s coronation. What would you say was the most rewarding achievement of your tenure here?

Ambassador Lewis: I would say marking 125 years of formal diplomatic relations between Kuwait and the UK. Our 125th anniversary celebrations took place throughout the entire year of 2024, and they were the result of a brilliant, beautiful partnership between my embassy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other parts of the Kuwaiti government, who were so supportive and helpful, and the Kuwaiti embassy in London. We had numerous events both in the UK and here in Kuwait, and we created some truly unique cultural fusions.

We designed a new tartan, launched lasting initiatives such as horticultural education projects that are now evolving into food security programmes, and left behind permanent legacies like the beautiful mural in the Gold Souk. In a few weeks, after I leave Kuwait, I’ll join my successor, Qudsi Rasheed, at Cardiff University to unveil another mural, our final project from the 125th anniversary celebrations.

We also welcomed our then Deputy Prime Minister, Oliver Dowden, along with several other ministers who visited during the year. The celebrations touched on trade, investment, education, culture, the arts, and literature. For example, we hosted a children’s writer and illustrator from Northern Ireland.

erational mechanisms.

All provisions are subject to this law and in accordance with the Electronic Litigation System.”

Article 106 - “If a judge has grounds for recusal and does not step down, the opposing party may request their recusal.

The recusal request is submitted by means of a report at the Clerk’s Office, signed by the applicant or their authorized representative holding a special power of attorney.

The power of attorney must be attached to the report. The recusal report must state the reasons for recusal and be accompanied by any supporting documents. The applicant must deposit a guarantee of KD 200 upon submitting the report.

This guarantee is multiplied by the number of judges involved.

The Clerk’s Office shall not accept the recusal report unless proof of the guarantee deposit is provided.

A single guarantee shall suffice for each judge if multiple applicants submit their recusal requests in a single report, even if the reasons for recusal differ.

If the recusal request is rejected, forfeited, dismissed, or declared invalid, the court shall impose a fine of no less than KD 500 and no more than KD 1,000. This fine shall be multiplied by the number of judges to be recused. In such cases, the guarantee shall be confiscated by law.”

Article 108 - The Clerk’s Office shall submit the recusal report to the President of the Court.

If the person to be recused is the President, the report shall be submitted to their representative.

The person receiving the report shall immediately inform the judge whose recusal is requested.

The judge must respond in writing to the facts and reasons for the recusal within two working days following their review.

If the judge does not respond within this period or acknowledges the reasons for recusal, and these reasons are legally valid, the President of the Court shall issue an order for their removal.

If the judge responds to the reasons for recusal but does not acknowledge any reason legally valid for recusal, the person to whom the report was submitted shall issue an order for the judge’s removal.

The report shall then be submitted to the circuit handling the appeal, which will set a date for its urgent hearing.

The Clerk’s Office shall notify the appellant, the judge, and the other par-



Ambassador Belinda Lewis with her husband Major Anthony Galvin, USMC (Ret) and their beloved dog at the British residence.

It truly felt like a genuine partnership between the UK and Kuwait, and I’m deeply grateful for the support we received, from government bodies to the British expatriate community in Kuwait, who all joined in making the celebrations a success.

AT: You’ve mentioned the numerous activities you have spearheaded and been involved in, ranging from investment to education to environmental collaboration. Which of these areas is closest to your heart?

Ambassador Lewis: So I guess it is probably investment. I started my career as a banker. I used to work for HSBC, and I’ve always retained an interest in commercial work, specifically in trade services and investment. And the UK benefits hugely from inward investment from Kuwait. I’ve always enjoyed tracking the movement in different sectors, and it’s really interesting. It’s a very important part of our partnership. So I would probably go for investment.

AT: I’m sure there were moments during your service when you felt especially proud to represent the UK in Kuwait.

Ambassador Lewis: Oh, there were so many memorable moments. When I think back, anything connected to the British military and our very strong defence partnership with Kuwait instantly comes to mind. Maybe it’s because of the uniforms, the flags, and the national anthems- we always mark those occasions with such ceremony.

Just last year alone, we had about 30 short-term British training teams come in and out of Kuwait to work with the Kuwaiti military across a wide range of areas: bomb disposal, diving training, first aid, particularly battlefield first aid and many other specialised fields.

Whenever I see soldiers, sailors, and aviators arriving, they bring with them not just their expertise, but also a “can-do” attitude. The UK and Kuwait share the same military doctrine, and we are fortunate to have the excellent Staff College here in Kuwait, which hosts both British instructors and British students.

the lawsuit contained in Articles 37 to 44 of the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law issued by Decree-Law No. 38/1980 are used solely to determine the jurisdiction and final quorum of the courts.

They have no relation to estimating the fees for the lawsuit, which is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Judicial Fees Law No. 17/1973, as amended by Decree-Law No. 78/2025.

The principle of judicial impartiality is founded on a fundamental rule - the necessity of the litigant’s confidence in the judge, and that the judgment is based solely on the truth, without bias or whim.

Legislative texts regulating judicial affairs have explicitly affirmed the support and guarantee of this impartiality. At the same time, they provide the litigant, if there is serious evidence raising suspicion of compromised impartiality, a means to prevent the questioned judge from hearing the case.

This is a fundamental right, and thus the right to recuse a judge from hearing a particular dispute is one of the fundamental rights linked to the right to a fair trial itself.

Practical experience and official statistics have shown that some parties seeking to delay litigation continue to file recusal requests as a tactic of spite and stubbornness in disputes, disregarding the harm this causes to the reputation, standing, and dignity of judges, and casting doubt on their integrity and impartiality. The current legislative provisions have proven insufficient to address this issue.

Although the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law has been in effect for many years, most of its provisions regarding bail amounts and penalties have not been updated, despite the economic changes in recent years. These changes include high inflation rates, shifts in per capita income, fluctuations in currency exchange rates, and a decline in the currency’s purchasing power.

The legislator’s original authority in regulating rights is discretionary, unless limited by constitutional restrictions.

Discrimination between individuals is prohibited in their right to access their natural judge or within the procedural and substantive rules governing judicial litigation of claimed rights. The rules should be uniform for all litigation, whether in claiming rights, defending them, or appealing judgments.

The guarantees stipulated in the aforementioned Civil and Commercial

AT: You worked very closely with local leaders, organisations and citizens. What have you learned from the Kuwaiti way of doing things?

Ambassador Lewis: Oh, so much. I think I’ve learned quite a bit about patience. The British style is often quite direct: we set our timeframes, we have our agendas, and we believe we should jolly well stick to them. But sometimes, that approach just doesn’t work in Kuwait.

There’s also something unique about how ideas are raised and how decisions are made here. From a UK perspective, you might look at who holds the budget or who is the most senior person, perhaps the chairperson of the board, and assume that’s who you need to approach. But in Kuwait, it doesn’t always work like that. Sometimes, the person who will actually make the decision is more junior, but has the faith, trust, and confidence of a senior decision-maker. If you only speak to the senior person without engaging the others, you may get nowhere.

So, I’ve learned to think more laterally and to avoid pushing too hard on timing. It has been a real education for me. I’ve worked in this part of the world before, but every place is different and the Kuwaiti way is its own.

AT: You’ve often spoken about Kuwait’s hospitality, and was there a particular instance where you felt that warmth most strongly?

Ambassador Lewis: I’ve felt it most when welcomed into people’s homes. In many countries, as a diplomat, you meet in restaurants, cafés, or ministries, but in Kuwait, I’ve often been warmly invited into family homes. I love the casual touches, like shoes by the door, rollerblades in the hall, and little bikes around; it feels real and personal.

One of my most memorable experiences was during Ramadan a couple of years ago, when I accidentally went into the wrong house. I was a complete stranger, yet the group of ladies there offered me coffee and chocolates and chatted warmly, even though they clearly had no idea why I was there. When we realised the mix-up, we laughed about it. You couldn’t do that in the UK, but in Kuwait, a stranger is simply a guest to be welcomed.

AT: That’s a lovely memory. Diplomats get to see a country beyond the surface. What’s one lesser-known thing about Kuwait that you think more people should know?

Ambassador Lewis: One thing I’ve come to greatly admire about Kuwait is how supportive it is of the diplomatic corps. Kuwait works hard to ensure that as many countries as possible can have an embassy here, whether large or small. They make diplomats feel welcome, help facilitate openings, and provide special measures to keep embassies running. This generosity allows countries, especially those that might struggle to maintain a presence in the GCC or Middle East, to establish a comfortable and manageable base here. Many of us are deeply grateful to Kuwait for this commitment to diplomacy.

AT: Can you remember the first Kuwaiti meal you had? Does anything in particular stand out in the Kuwaiti cuisine?

Ambassador Lewis: I can’t remember the very first meal, but yes, there’s a particular dish which I’ve never had anywhere other than in Kuwait. It’s one that many other British people don’t seem to like. I think it’s called kashka, and it’s almost like a porridge, but it has meat in it. I’ve had it at most Ramadans. I think it’s really tasty and savoury, but there’s something about the texture that doesn’t seem to suit other British palettes.

AT: What’s that one thing about Kuwait that you think your children will miss most?

Ambassador Lewis: I know they’ll miss the garden here, where they spent hours playing out there. They’ll miss their school. They were very attached to the English School here, where they had lots of friends, and seemed to get on really well with their teachers. So I guess really, for them, it’s everything, because they don’t really remember London at all. They were 10 months old and three when they moved here. So it’s their whole childhood.

AT: You must have received some very special gifts during your time here. Is there anything in particular that stands out?

Ambassador Lewis: I’ve received some extraordinary gifts- old documents, rare books, often linked to the UK-Kuwait relationship, which I display in the residence for guests to enjoy. One remarkable gift from Sheikh Hala was a piece of carpet woven for Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation, depicting Windsor Castle. It had disappeared years ago, possibly sold or packed away, but Sheikh Hala and Essa Dashti tracked it down, bought it at auction, and returned it to the residence. It now hangs proudly in our drawing room.

AT: If you could master one Kuwaiti tradition, what would it be, and why?

Ambassador Lewis: I love watching the dancing at weddings and the unique way people here move. I was once told it’s like a trotting pony. On the occasions when I’ve been persuaded to join in, which always leaves me a bit embarrassed, I realise I’m great at air guitar, but not so good at Kuwaiti dancing. I’d love to master it, but it never quite works for me. The “trotting pony” style looks simple, yet doing it in a relaxed, effortless way is much harder than it seems.

AT: Ambassador Belinda Lewis, we wish you the very best for the future.

Continued from Page 5

Your Highness

All of them are necessary and serve the national economy; starting with service infrastructure, through health and medical projects, which will make it a destination for medical tourism and ending with entertainment projects that encourage spending money domestically, rather than seasonal migration to neighboring countries during each vacation. These projects include the development of islands, acceleration of Mubarak Port completion and the new airport, among others.

In other words -- in colloquial terms: “Let people come to the country, not Kuwaitis migrating to other countries.”

Kuwait updates

If the lawsuit concerns the validation, nullification, or termination of an ongoing contract, the value shall be estimated based on the total financial consideration for the entire duration of the contract.

If the contract has already been partially executed, the value of a lawsuit seeking its termination shall be estimated based on the remaining term.

For lawsuits involving eviction or the delivery of property, the estimation shall follow the same rules outlined in the previous paragraph.

In cases involving a dispute over contract renewal, the value of the lawsuit shall be based on the financial consideration for the specific term in dispute.

Article 45-bis - “It is permissible to use the “Electronic Litigation System” for court clerk management and the use of an approved electronic signature. This system covers various functions, including filing lawsuits, appealing judgments, paying fees, submitting documents, depositing memoranda, serving judicial papers, and conducting court sessions remotely using electronic audio and video communication technology between the parties to the lawsuit, as well as issuing judgments, orders, and enforcement procedures.

Data generated by electronic systems shall be considered the original where the law requires direct action on the original document.

The Electronic Litigation System Regulations are issued by a decision of the Minister of Justice and specify the rules and provisions to be followed. These may include, when necessary, rules related to establishing case preparation or appeal offices and their op-

Procedures Law aim to ensure individuals exercise their right to litigation seriously, whether by filing lawsuits or appealing judgments.

Electronic litigation

Electronic litigation offers many advantages, including speeding up procedures, saving time and effort, reducing expenses, and allowing litigants to attend court sessions remotely.

For all of the above, and since the Amiri Order issued on May 10, 2024, stipulated in Article 4 that laws shall be issued by decree-laws, it was deemed necessary to prepare the present draft decree-law to amend the provisions of the aforementioned Civil and Commercial Procedures Law in order to keep pace with all the aforementioned developments.

Advantages of e-litigation

It is noted that the e-litigation system is considered an optional means for litigants and is not intended to replace traditional litigation.

Its benefits became especially clear during the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying decisions to suspend government agencies, including courts.

The pandemic prevented individuals from exercising their constitutional rights through traditional means, while this system served as the only viable option for those seeking access to the judiciary.

E-litigation also offers the advantage of speeding up procedures, saving time and effort, and reducing expenses, as it allows litigants to attend court sessions remotely. It benefits judges as well, enabling them to review electronic case files and conduct deliberations and issue rulings electronically. E-litigation also extends to executive procedures and orders, allowing for faster execution compared to traditional methods.

Main amendments

1. Replacement of Articles 40, 45 bis, 106, 107, and 109 of the aforementioned Civil and Commercial Procedures Law with new texts.

2. Establishment of the legal basis for the comprehensive “electronic litigation system,” including the possibility of creating a case or appeal preparation office in each court. This office will handle preparatory tasks for the electronic file from registration until the first session, such as examining data, completing missing documents, registering them in the system, and communicating with the parties digitally regarding their litigation.

3. The bail for recusal requests has been set at KD 200. If the recusal request is rejected, forfeited, inadmis-

sible, or invalidated, the court shall confiscate the bail and impose a fine on the applicant ranging from KD 500 to KD 1,000, multiplied by the number of judges requested to be recused.

4. Prohibition of submitting a repeated request to recuse the same judge in the original case.

5. To ensure the speedy resolution of pending recusal requests, the draft law obliges the president of the court or their representative to designate the circuit that will consider the recusal request, set a date for its urgent hearing, and issue a ruling within one month from that date.

6. The effect of submitting a recusal request on the original case has been amended. The submission of the first recusal request results in the suspension of the original case. However, the submission of any subsequent recusal requests, whether by the first requesting party or other parties in the original case, does not suspend the case unless the court considering the new recusal request decides to suspend it based on a party’s request.

7. The draft addresses practical issues related to recusing the court appointed by the president to consider a recusal request. It stipulates that such a recusal request does not automatically halt the consideration of the case. To address this, the draft allows the court appointed to consider the recusal request to order the suspension of the recusal consideration if deemed necessary, based on a request from one of the parties.

8. The current guarantee amounts stipulated in the existing law are no longer sufficient to ensure seriousness due to their low value. Therefore, it was decided to raise the guarantee amounts specified in Articles 137, Paragraph Two, 150, Paragraph Two, 159, Paragraph Three, 187, Paragraph Three, and 211, Paragraph Two of the same law. These guarantees relate to appeals or petitions, lawsuits to object to judgments issued by a non-disputing party, annulment of arbitrators’ awards, and temporary issues, as stipulated in Article 2 of the present draft decree-law.

9. The value of compensation claims arising from civil liability filed against air carriers shall be estimated in Special Drawing Rights (SDR) units, equivalent to their value in Kuwaiti dinars according to the valuation adopted by the International Monetary Fund on the day the claim is filed. This estimation does not include any changes in the value of the units occurring after the claim is filed.

WH ordered to restore some withheld grant funding to UCLA

Appeals court lets Trump administration suspend or terminate billions in foreign aid

WASHINGTON, Aug 14, (AP): A divided panel of appeals court judges ruled Wednesday that the Trump administration can suspend or terminate billions of dollars of congressionally appropriated funding for foreign aid.

Two of three judges from the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit concluded that grant recipients challenging the freeze did not meet the requirements for a preliminary injunction restoring the flow of money.

In January, on the first day of his second term in the White House, Republican President Donald Trump issued an executive order directing the State Department and the US Agency for International Development to freeze spending on foreign aid.

After groups of grant recipients sued to challenge that order, U.S. District Judge Amir Ali ordered the administration to release the full amount of foreign assistance that Congress had appropriated for the 2024 budget year.

The appeal court's majority partially vacated Ali's order.

Judges Karen LeCraft Henderson and Gregory Katsas concluded that the plaintiffs did not have a valid legal basis for the court to hear their claims. The ruling was not on the merits of whether the government unconstitutionally infringed on Congress' spending powers.

"The parties also dispute the scope of the district court's remedy but we need not resolve it... because the grantees have failed to satisfy the requirements for a preliminary injunction in any event," Henderson wrote.

Judge Florence Pan, who dissented, said the Supreme Court has held "in no uncertain terms" that the president does not have the authority to disobey laws for policy reasons.

"Yet that is what the majority enables today," Pan wrote. "The majority opinion thus misconstrues the separation-of-powers claim brought by the grantees, misapplies precedent, and allows Executive Branch officials to evade judicial review of constitutionally impermissible actions."

The money at issue includes nearly \$4 billion for USAID to spend on global health programs and more than \$6 billion for HIV and AIDS programs. Trump has portrayed the foreign aid as wasteful spending that does not align with his foreign policy goals.



US President Donald Trump waves after greeting troops at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson for a refueling stop en route to Japan, May 24, 2019, in Anchorage. (AP)

Henderson was nominated to the court by Republican President George H.W. Bush. Katsas was nominated by Trump. Pan was nominated by Democratic President Joe Biden.

Also:

WASHINGTON: A federal judge has ordered the Trump administration to restore millions of dollars in National Science Foundation grants it has withheld from the

University of California, Los Angeles, saying they were made in violation of her earlier court ruling.

US District Judge Rita F. Lin ruled late Tuesday that the NSF must reinstate the research grants that were suspended for reasons she had already ruled "arbitrary and capricious," and gave the administration until Aug 19 to show compliance or explain why it hasn't restored the money.

It was not immediately clear how much funding could be returned to UCLA. The school's chancellor said last week that the Trump administration has pulled \$584 million in federal grants from various federal agencies. The judge's ruling applies specifically to NSF grants.

UCLA's money has been frozen as part of a wider pressure campaign targeting universities that Trump says are out of step with his political agenda.

University of California researchers challenged the cuts as "abrupt and unexplained" and won a preliminary injunction in June from Lin, who ruled that the NSF and other agencies could not terminate grant funding without specifically explaining why.

But on July 30, the NSF sent out a new round of letters that Lin described as "en masse, form letter funding cuts." One said the awards "no longer effectuate program goals or agency priorities." Another cited allegations of racism, antisemitism and policies around transgender athletes at UCLA. It did not elaborate.

The administration argued in a Tuesday hearing that the UCLA funding cuts were "suspensions" rather than "terminations." Lin dismissed this as semantics.

"NSF's indefinite suspensions differ from a termination in name only," and the reasons the agency provided are based on "the same type of deficient explanations as the original terminations," she ruled.

The university issued a brief statement praising the decision, saying that "restoration of National Science Foundation funds is critical to research the University of California performs on behalf of California and the Nation."

UCLA also faces a Trump administration demand to pay \$1 billion to settle antisemitism allegations. UCLA became the first public university to be targeted as the administration seeks to dominate academic institutions around the country.

America

3 killed by fallen tree in Tennessee heavy rains: A mother, father and child were killed when a tree fell on their car during heavy rain and flooding in Tennessee, where submerged roads also led to dramatic rescues of people trapped in their cars, authorities said Wednesday.

The three were killed when saturated ground caused a large tree to fall in the Chattanooga suburb of East Ridge just after midnight, Hamilton County Office of Emergency Management spokesperson **Amy Maxwell** said.

Additionally, authorities found a body Wednesday while searching for a man who was swept away when he ran past firefighters and a barricade blocking a flooded road Tuesday, according to the Chattanooga Fire Department. The local police and medical examiner will determine the cause of death.



Maxwell

The flooding prompted rescues of people stuck in homes and swamped vehicles.

At a news conference Wednesday, officials said they didn't expect so much rain and flooding to hit so quickly.

At one point, there were 60 vehicles on the flooded interstate, said Chris Adams, director of emergency management for Hamilton County. Some first responders were carrying people on their backs who couldn't move well through the water, and placed them on the raised highway divider, Adams added.

"We all know to 'turn around, not drown,' but when you look at it and it's 2 inches deep, and then next thing you know it's 4 feet deep, that's something you've never seen before," Adams said.

There were so many calls for help that 911 calls were "holding in every minute of every hour for about three hours straight," with more than 940 calls between 6 p.m. and midnight, said Barbara Loveless, director of operations

for Hamilton County 911.

Troy Plemons, a communications systems technician for EPB, Chattanooga's electricity and telecommunications utility, said he was stuck in traffic on an interstate in his bucket truck for two to three hours Tuesday evening. (AP)

10 injured after school bus rolls over in Texas: A school bus carrying 42 children rolled over Wednesday in Travis County, central Texas, injuring at least nine students and the driver, authorities said.

Two of the injured were airlifted to a hospital, according to local media reports.

Wednesday marked the first school day for the Leander Independent School District in Travis County.

Earlier on the same day, another school bus carrying 58 students overturned in Liberty County, Texas. Cleveland Independent School District said all passengers were safely evacuated and taken to the hospital for precautionary medical evaluations.

Investigations into both incidents are underway. (Xinhua)

'Robbers in truck heist took \$700K or more': Police are investigating whether the armed robbery of a Brinks truck on Tuesday outside a Philadelphia-area store is related to four other attacks on armored vehicles in and around the city this summer.

Two armed males got away with between \$700,000 and \$800,000 in the midday Tuesday heist at an H Mart in Elkins Park, according to Cheltenham Township police. The robbers - one described as armed with an AR-15-style pistol, the other with a handgun - fled with the cash and later abandoned their vehicle nearby, police said. No shots were fired, and no one was injured.

Cheltenham Township Police Lt. Andrew Snyder said it's the first such robbery in their township, but authorities are looking into whether it may be connected to four robberies of armored cars in and around Philadelphia since June that police and the FBI are investigating as possibly related. (AP)

Melania Trump demands Hunter Biden retract defamatory Epstein comments

WASHINGTON, Aug 14, (AP): US First Lady Melania Trump demanded that Hunter Biden retract comments linking her to Jeffrey Epstein and threatened to sue if he does not.

Trump takes issue with two comments Biden, son of former President Joe Biden, made in an interview this month with British journalist Andrew Callaghan. He alleged that Epstein introduced the first lady to now-President Donald Trump.

The statements are false, defamatory and "extremely salacious," Melania Trump's lawyer, Alejandro Brito, wrote in a letter to Biden. Biden's remarks were widely disseminated on social media and reported by media outlets around the world, causing the first lady "to suffer overwhelming financial and reputational harm," he wrote.

Biden made the Epstein comments during a sprawling interview in which he lashed out at "elites" and others in the Democratic Party he says undermined his father before he dropped out of last year's presidential campaign.

"Epstein introduced Melania to Trump. The connections are, like, so wide and deep," Biden said in one of the comments Trump disputes. Biden attributed the claim to author Michael Wolff, whom Trump disparaged in



Hunter Biden listens while his father, US President Joe Biden, speaks during a Hanukkah reception in the East Room of the White House in Washington on Dec 16, 2024. (AP)

June as a "Third Rate Reporter." He has accused Wolff of making up stories to sell books.

The first lady's threats echo a favored strategy of her husband, who has aggressively used litigation to go after critics. Public figures like the Trumps face a high bar to succeed in a defama-

tion lawsuit.

The president and first lady have long said they were introduced by Paolo Zampolli, a modeling agent, at a New York Fashion Week party in 1998.

The letter is dated Aug. 6 and was first reported Wednesday by Fox News Digital.

Europe braces for Trump-Putin summit

Zelenskyy meets with UK's Starmer

LONDON, Aug 14, (AP): British Prime Minister Keir Starmer welcomed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to London on Thursday in a show of the UK's support for Ukraine a day before a critical U.S.-Russia summit is set to take place in Alaska.

The two embraced warmly outside Starmer's offices at 10 Downing Street without making any comments. Around an hour later, Starmer walked Zelenskyy back to his waiting car, and the two leaders shared another embrace as the Ukrainian president departed.

Zelenskyy's trip to the British capital came a day after he took part in virtual meetings from Berlin with U.S. President Donald Trump and the leaders of several European countries.

Those leaders said Trump had assured them he would make a priority of trying to achieve a ceasefire in Ukraine when he meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday in Anchorage.

Both Zelenskyy and the Europeans have worried the bilateral U.S.-Russia summit would leave them and their interests sidelined, and that any conclusions reached could favor Moscow and leave Ukraine and Europe's future security in jeopardy.

Yet some of those leaders, like German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and French President Emmanuel Macron, praised Wednesday's vid-



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, (left), talks with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the garden of 10 Downing Street in London on Aug 14. (AP)

eo conference with Trump as constructive. Speaking after the meetings to reporters, Trump warned of "very severe consequences" for Russia if Putin does not agree to stop the war against Ukraine after Friday's meeting.

The Kremlin on Thursday said the meeting between Trump and Putin in Alaska will start at 11:30 a.m. local time. Putin's foreign policy advisor, Yuri Ushakov, told reporters that Trump and Putin will first sit down for a one-on-one meeting followed by a meeting between the two delegations. Talks will then

continue over "a working breakfast," Ushakov said.

Putin on Thursday held a meeting with top government officials on the upcoming summit. In a short video released by the Kremlin, he said that Trump's administration was making "quite energetic and sincere efforts to stop the hostilities" and to "reach agreements that are of interest to all parties involved in this conflict."

Putin also suggested agreements could be reached with the US "in the area of control over strategic offensive weapons at the next stage."

Europe

Estonia expels Russian diplomat: Estonia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared the first secretary of the Russian Embassy in Tallinn "persona non grata" on Wednesday and demanded the diplomat's departure from the country.

The ministry accused the Russian diplomat of engaging in undermining Estonia's constitutional order and legal system, sowing division in society, and violating the sanctions regime.

The ministry has officially informed the Russian charge d'affaires about the decision.

In response to Estonia's allegation and expulsion, Russia's Foreign Ministry said later on Wednesday that it has "almost grown accustomed to hostile actions from Estonia" and vowed to take retaliatory steps, according to reports by The Moscow Times.

Estonia's relations with Russia have deteriorated since the Ukraine crisis broke out in 2022. The two countries downgraded their diplomatic relations and ordered their ambassadors to leave their respective embassies in 2023. (Xinhua)

Wildfires ravage Europe in worldwide heat waves: Record heatwaves have turned Europe into a sweltering sauna above 40 degrees Celsius as raging wildfires sweep many countries on high alert.

The extreme summer heat has created favorable conditions for rampant wildfires, which have already killed several people, displaced thousands and forced firefighters to



This satellite image provided by Maxar Technologies shows an active fire line of a wildfire on Zakynthos, Greece on Aug 13. (AP)

battle blazes across large parts of Europe.

In France, a heatwave broke temperature records in the southwest, with maximums up to 12 degrees Celsius above normal, before spreading to the center-east and northeast of the country.

"Often remarkable, even unprecedented maximum temperatures, often 12 degrees above normal levels, were reached this Monday," Meteo France said Tuesday in a press release.

The intense heat, combined with dry winds and rare rainfall, has created ideal conditions for fueling wildfires, which have erupted across southern Europe and the Balkans. (Xinhua)

German government rejects US claims of deteriorating human rights

BERLIN, Aug 13, (Xinhua): The German government on Wednesday rejected a recent US report alleging a deterioration of human rights in Germany.

Steffen Meyer, deputy government spokesperson, told a press conference in Berlin that Germany is a well-established democracy with a very broad protection for freedom of expression.

Germany has a very high level of freedom of expression, and will continue to defend this, he said.

"We do not see freedom of the press and opinion restricted in Germany," said Josef Hinterseher, spokesperson with the German foreign ministry. The report issued by the US Department of State claims that the human rights situation in Germany worsened in 2024, noting "significant human rights issues" including restrictions on freedom of expression and violence motivated by antisemitism.

Meanwhile, Merz's approval rating has hit a new low, according to the latest RTLntv Trendbarometer poll released on Tuesday.

Just ahead of the 100-day mark of the new government, only 29 percent of respondents expressed satisfaction with Merz's performance, three percentage points lower than the



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, (center), attends a cabinet meeting at the chancellery in Berlin, Germany on July 30. (AP)

previous poll and also the lowest since he took office in May.

The survey, conducted by the Forsa Institute, shows that support for the ruling coalition of the CDU/CSU and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) has fallen to a combined 37 percent.

INTERNATIONAL

United States, Philippines discuss more missile system deployments

MANILA, Philippines, Aug 14, (AP): The United States is discussing the possible deployment of more missile launchers to the Philippines to strengthen deterrence against aggression in the disputed South China Sea and other Asian security hotspots, but no final decision has been reached by both sides, Manila's ambassador to Washington said Thursday.

The US military delivered a mid-range missile system called the Typhon, a land-based weapon that can fire the Standard Missile-6 and the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile, to the northern Philippines as part of joint combat exercises in April last year. That was followed by the transport by the US military of an anti-ship missile launcher in April this year to the northernmost Philippine province of Batanes, just a sea border away from Taiwan.

Beijing strongly protested the installation of the US missile systems, saying they were aimed at containing China's rise and warning that these would threaten regional stability. China has asked the Philippines to withdraw the



Ambassador of the Philippines to the United States, Jose Manuel Romualdez, answers questions from reporters after attending a trade and investment conference at a hotel in Pasay, Philippines, on Aug 14. (AP)

missile launchers from its territory, but officials led by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr had rejected the demand.

Ambassador Jose Manuel Romualdez said without elaborating that the

possible deployment by the US of more Navy Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System or NMESIS missile launchers "was being discussed for consideration by both sides."

Asia

'Thai armed forces deploying barbed wire': A Cambodian defense spokesperson said on Wednesday afternoon that Thai armed forces had deployed barbed wire and tyres in a Cambodian border village, violating a ceasefire and consensus reached by the two countries.

"On Aug 12 and 13, 2025, Thai paramilitary forces and border police officers inspected an area in front of the Chouk Chey checkpoint, setting up barbed wire and placing tyres in Chouk Chey village, Ou Beichoan commune, Ou Chrov district of Banteay Meanchey province," Cambodian Defense Ministry's Undersecretary of State and Spokesperson Lt Gen **Maly Socheata** said in a press briefing.

"Cambodia demands that the Thai side immediately and unconditionally halt all actions that violate the ceasefire and the spirit and consensus reached at the extraordinary meeting of the General Border Committee," she said. (Xinhua)



Socheata

Heavy rains lash southeastern China: Heavy rains lashed parts of southeastern China on Thursday as Tropical Storm Podul made landfall after leaving one missing on the self-governing island of Taiwan.

School was canceled in Hong Kong and Macao. Some Macao streets were closed because of flooding, and Hong Kong suspended court proceedings. The Hong Kong Observatory, the meteorological agency for the city, advised residents to stay away from the shore.

Podul made landfall shortly after midnight in Fujian province, downgraded from typhoon strength. About 15,000 people were evacuated from seaside areas in southern China ahead of the storm, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

Southern Taiwan was cleaning up after Podul made landfall Wednesday on its east coast as a typhoon before traveling out into the Taiwan Strait about five hours later.

One person was missing after being swept out to sea, about 100 people were injured and 8,000 evacuated to shelters. Electric company workers moved swiftly to restore power following complaints over a slow response following earlier storms. (AP)

□ □ □

NZ to close loopholes in trafficking laws: New Zealand is tightening trafficking and smuggling laws to close loopholes that have allowed offenders to evade real consequences for crime.

Justice Minister Paul Goldsmith said Wednesday that since 2009, over 50 trafficking victims have been found in New Zealand, but only four cases were prosecuted and two led to convictions, prompting warnings the problem is far bigger.

"Those who traffic, smuggle, and exploit other human beings are preying on some of our most vulnerable, and causing egregious harm, particularly to women and children," Goldsmith said, adding that the changes would bring the law in line with international standards and United Nations conventions.

Key reforms include removing the need to prove coercion or deception when trafficking victims are under 18, clarifying that consent is irrelevant in such cases, closing gaps that allow the use of authentic but fraudulently obtained travel documents, and improving protections for undercover police in child exploitation investigations. (Xinhua)

Powerful sister of N.Korean leader denies removal of front-line speakers

South Korea vows normalization of inter-Korean ties after North Korea rejection: govt

TOKYO, Aug 14, (Agencies): South Korea will consistently pursue the normalization of ties with North Korea, the government said Thursday, responding to Pyongyang's statement rejecting Seoul's conciliatory overtures, Yonhap News Agency reported.

"The government will consistently pursue normalization and stabilization of ties between South and North Korea in a way that can become mutually beneficial," the Unification Ministry said. "It may be necessary for Seoul to take an undaunted, long-term approach in order to turn the strength-to-strength inter-Korean ties of the past three years into ones of goodwill."

The reaction came hours after Kim Yo-jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, issued a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency, rebuffing South Korean President Lee Jae Myung administration's actions to appease North Korea and resume dialogue.

"We have clarified on several occasions that we have no will to improve relations with (South Korea) and this conclusive stand and viewpoint will be fixed in our constitution in the future,"

Kim Yo-jong said.

Kim, vice department director of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, also said her country has "never removed loudspeakers installed on the border area and are not willing to remove them," refuting Seoul's earlier announcement that Pyongyang had begun dismantling them in response to Seoul's overture.

Meanwhile, in the statement, Kim left open the possibility of resuming dialogue with Washington, saying, "If the US persists with the outdated way of thinking, the meeting between the top leaders (of North Korea and the US) will remain only the 'hope' of the US side." (end)

Kim Yo Jong Thursday dismissed South Korean claims that the North is removing some of its loudspeakers along the inter-Korean border, mocking the government in Seoul for clinging to hopes of renewed diplomacy between the war-divided rivals.

South Korea's military said over the weekend that it had detected the North removing some of its loudspeakers, days after the South dismantled its own front-line speakers used for anti-



A North Korean military guard post, left, and loudspeaker are seen from Paju, South Korea, near the border with North Korea on Aug 10. (AP)

North propaganda broadcasts in a bid to ease tensions.

Kim Yo Jong reiterated previous North Korean statements that it has no immediate interest in reviving long-stalled negotiations with Washington and Seoul, citing an upcoming joint

military exercise between the allies as proof of their continued hostility toward Pyongyang.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff did not disclose where it spotted the North removing some of its speakers. The North Korean speakers that have

been visible from civilian-accessible border areas in the South were still seen by Associated Press photojournalists after the military's announcement.

During a Cabinet meeting Tuesday, South Korea's Lee described the North's alleged steps as a "reciprocal measure" and expressed hope the Koreans could "gradually reopen dialogue and communication."

Kim accused Lee's government of misleading the public, saying that North Koreans "have never removed loudspeakers installed on the border area and are not willing to remove them."

When asked about Kim's comments, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesperson, Col. Lee Sung Joon, maintained that the South's military had confirmed the removal of some North Korean speakers and cautioned against "being easily swayed" by North Korean statements with political intent.

"It has always been the case that North Korea often makes claims that aren't true," he said.

South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said in a statement that Seoul will con-

tinue to pursue "sustained steps" to improve relations but acknowledged that the process will require patience.

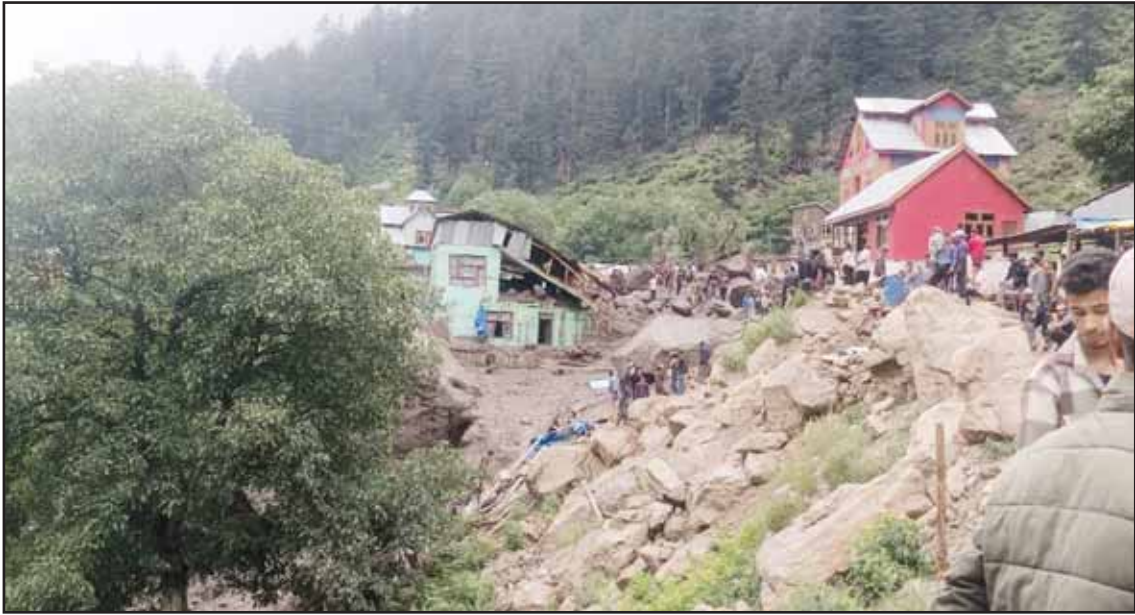
Kim Yo Jong also dismissed South Korean media speculation that the North may use this week's planned meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump to convey a message to Washington via Moscow.

Also:

SEOUL: Kim Keon Hee, wife of South Korea's former ousted President Yoon Suk Yeol, on Thursday arrived at a special counsel's office to be questioned over corruption allegations involving the presidential couple.

A prison van carrying Kim arrived at the office in central Seoul at around 9:53 a.m. local time (0053 GMT) from the Seoul Southern Detention Center in southwestern Seoul, a live broadcast showed.

Kim has been detained since a Seoul court issued a detention warrant against her on Tuesday night, requested by independent counsel Min Joong Ki, leading the investigation into the corruption charges.



People fish in a polluted water canal in Srinagar, Indian-controlled Kashmir on Aug 14. (AP)

37 people dead in Kashmir flash floods: Indian officials

At least 37 people were dead in flash floods caused by torrential rains in a remote, mountainous village in Indian-controlled Kashmir, a top disaster management official said Thursday, as rescue teams scouring the devastated Himalayan village brought at least 150 people to safety.

Mohammed Irshad said rescue teams scouring the devastated Himalayan village of Chositi brought

at least 100 people to safety. He said initial estimations suggested at least 50 others were still missing.

India's deputy minister for science and technology, Jitendra Singh, said the floods were triggered by a cloudburst in Jammu and Kashmir's Chositi area and "could result in substantial casualty."

Some of the rescued people

were badly injured and were being treated in local hospitals, said Susheel Kumar Sharma, a local official.

Chositi is a remote Himalayan village in Kashmir's Kishtwar district and is the last village accessible to motor vehicles on the route of an annual Hindu pilgrimage to a mountainous shrine. Multiple pilgrims were also feared to be affected by the disaster. (AP)

South Africa dismisses United States human rights report as 'deeply flawed'

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 14, (AP): The South African government on Wednesday dismissed the US State Department's latest assessment of the country's human rights conditions as "inaccurate and deeply flawed."

The Trump administration this week released human rights reports for countries worldwide, including South Africa, asserting that the state of human rights in South Africa had "significantly worsened" in 2024. It cited the unjust treatment of white Afrikaners after the signing of significant land reforms, which the Trump administration has claimed discriminate against the group that ruled the nation during the apartheid era.

South Africa's Foreign Ministry expressed "profound disappointment" with the report, saying its reliance on out of context information and discredited accounts was highly concerning.

The ministry highlighted that the United Nations had hailed the country's Land Expropriation Act as an important step in resolving racially unequal land ownership, underscoring the integrity of constitutional and human rights-based legislative processes.

It added that the report was 'ironic' given the US exit from the UN Human Rights Council.

"This is particularly striking given the significant and documented concerns about human rights within the United States, including the treatment of refugees and breaches in due process by its own agencies, such as ICE," the ministry said.

South Africa's government also dismissed as inaccurate the report's claims that it "did not take credible steps to investigate, prosecute and punish officials who committed human rights abuses, including inflammatory racial rhetoric against Afrikaners and other racial minorities, or violence against racial minorities."

The U.S. criticism of South Africa's domestic affairs is the latest in a series



US President Donald Trump meets South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in the Oval Office of the White House on May 21 in Washington. (AP)

of tense diplomatic exchanges between the two countries since President Donald Trump was elected to a second term.

During a state visit to the White House in May, Trump confronted President Cyril Ramaphosa with false claims that South Africa had been illegally occupying the farms of white Afrikaner farmers. The administration even speeded up the visa application processes for Afrikaners who wanted to relocate to the U.S as refugees.

UN Security Council rejects RSF plan to form rival govt in Sudan amid civil war

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 14, (AP): The UN Security Council on Wednesday rejected plans by Sudan's paramilitary group to establish a rival government in areas it controls, warning that the move threatens the country's territorial integrity and risks further exacerbating the ongoing civil war.

The strongly worded statement by the UN's most powerful body "unequivocally reaffirmed" its unwavering commitment to Sudan's sovereignty, independence and unity. Any steps to undermine these principles "threaten not only the future of Sudan but also the peace and stability of the broader region," the statement said.

The 15-member council said the announcement by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces also risks "fragmenting the country and worsening an already dire humanitarian situation."

Sudan plunged into conflict in mid-April 2023, when long-simmering tensions between its military and paramilitary leaders broke out in the capital, Khartoum, and spread to other regions, including western Darfur. Some 40,000 people have been killed, nearly 13 million displaced and many pushed



A damaged aircraft, previously destroyed during fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), lies on the tarmac at Khartoum International Airport, Khartoum, Sudan on Aug 13. (AP)

to the brink of famine, U.N. agencies say.

The RSF and their allies announced in late June that they had formed a parallel government in areas the group controls, mainly in the vast Darfur region where allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity are being

investigated.

The deputy prosecutor of the International Criminal Court said last month that the tribunal believes war crimes and crimes against humanity are taking place in Darfur, where the RSF controls all regional capitals except el-Fasher in North Darfur.

Barred from Bolivia's elections, ex-leader Morales campaigns hard for invalid votes

EL ALTO, Bolivia, Aug 14, (AP): Barred from appearing on Sunday's ballot, former leftist president Evo Morales has launched a scrappy campaign for a presidential contender with no name, no face and no formal platform.

The contender's known as "Nulo" - Spanish for the null-and-void vote.

Nulo has a reliable base in Bolivia, where voting is compulsory. For many years, voters disillusioned with Morales' increasingly high-handed attempts to prolong his presidency over three consecutive terms defaced their ballots or left them blank.

But with the coca-farming union leader disqualified from the race and seeking to distance himself from the unpopular President Luis Arce and other leftists associated with Bolivia's worst economic crisis in four decades, Morales has emerged as Nulo's greatest champion.

"Brothers, we are on the right track. Absenteeism, blank ballots, undecided voters, all of it," Morales told Radio Kawsachun Coca, his media outlet in the Bolivian jungle of Chapare, where he has been holed up for months



Stickers of former president Evo Morales sit on a table at a campaign center for supporters in favor of a null vote in the upcoming presidential elections in El Alto, Bolivia on Aug 12. (AP)

among fiercely loyal coca-growing labor unions.

If Morales leaves his tropical stronghold, he risks arrest on charges related to statutory rape. He denies the

allegations.

"Nulo is where we belong," he said, urging voters to scratch, scribble and sketch on their ballots. "We've already won here."

Dollar stable, euro & pound edge higher

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): The US dollar exchange rate against the Kuwaiti dinar remained stable at KD 0.305 on Thursday, according to the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). The euro rose 0.11% to KD 0.357 compared to Wednesday's rate, while the British pound climbed 0.47% to KD 0.414. Meanwhile, both the Swiss franc and the Japanese yen held steady at KD 0.378 and KD 0.002, respectively.

Rising profits and revenue show the success of our strategy to boost performance: Group CEO

KIPCO reports net profit of KD 10.2 mln for H1 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – reported a record operating profit of KD 88.7 million (US\$ 290.5 million) for the first six months of 2025, a 9.9% increase from the KD 80.8 million (US\$ 264.6 million) reported for the corresponding period in 2024. Operating revenue also increased 6% to reach KD 769.1 million (US\$ 2.52 billion), up from KD 725.5 million (US\$ 2.38 billion) reported for the same period last year. The increase reflects the enhanced performance of KIPCO's operations in logistics and oil services, as well as the steady results of the banking,

foodstuff, education and real estate businesses. KIPCO's net profit for the first six months of 2025 came to KD 10.2million (US\$ 33.4million), compared to KD 11.2 million (US\$ 36.7 million) reported in the first half of 2024. Earnings per share for the first half of 2025 was at 1.3fils (US\$ 0.43cents). In the second quarter of 2025 (the three months ended June 30, 2025), KIPCO's operating profit increased to KD 38.4 million (US\$ 125.7 million) from KD 37.0 million (US\$ 121.3 million) reported for the corresponding period of 2024. KIPCO reported a net profit of KD



Sheikha Dana Naser Al Sabah 5.0million (US\$ 16.4million) for the three-month period, compared to KD

5.3million (US\$ 17.4million) for the corresponding quarter in 2024. KIPCO's total revenue from operations for the three months came to KD 385.5 million (US\$ 1.26billion), an increase of 3.2% from the KD373.7million (US\$ 1.22billion) reported in the second quarter of 2024. Shareholders' equity went up 2.5% to KD 649.7million (US\$ 2.13billion) compared to KD 633.9million (US\$ 2.08billion) at the end of 2024. Commenting on the results, Sheikhha Dana Naser Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, KIPCO's Group Chief Executive Officer, said: "KIPCO's results for the first half of

2025 attest to the success of our strategy and efforts focused towards strengthening the operating and financial performance of key Group companies, as reflected in the 10% increase in our operating profit and the 6% increase in operating revenue. "It is also evident in the robust operational outcomes across our key sectors, including banking, foodstuffs, oil services, logistics, real estate and education. "These accomplishments underscore our ongoing commitment to driving growth and creating long-term value for our stakeholders."

Brent and WTI edge lower

Kuwaiti oil falls to \$68.68 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): Kuwaiti oil price dropped USD 1.10 to USD 68.68 per barrel on Wednesday compared to Tuesday's USD 69.78 pb, according to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). Globally, Brent futures dropped 49 cents to USD 65.63 pb, as West Texas Intermediate also dropped 52 cents to USD 62.65.

Iraq and Syria discuss Kirkuk-Baniyas Pipeline Cooperation

BAGHDAD, Aug 14, (Xinhua): Iraqi Oil Minister Hayan Abdul Ghani met here on Tuesday with visiting Syrian energy chief Mohammed al-Bashir to discuss the bilateral cooperation in oil, gas and energy. Abdul Ghani emphasized the depth of the historical ties between the two peoples and the importance of maintaining them in a way that serves the national interests of both countries, according to a statement by the Iraqi oil ministry. The two sides discussed the current situation of the Kirkuk-Baniyas pipeline and the possibility of using it to export crude oil, it said, adding that they agreed to form a joint committee to study the condition of the pipeline and the possibility of resuming exports through it, with a proposal to involve an international consultant to determine the pipeline's operational viability, pumping systems, and feasibility of rehabilitation. For his part, al-Bashir reviewed the current situation of the oil industry in Syria, said the statement. He stressed the importance of cooperation in the Kirkuk-Baniyas pipeline, which has suffered from sabotage and aging problems, and the urgent need for its rehabilitation, it added. The Kirkuk-Baniyas pipeline, connecting Iraq's northern Kirkuk and Syria's coastal Baniyas, went into operation in 1952. During the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, the pipeline was heavily damaged and has remained inactive since.

Assets reach \$913 billion

Saudi Arabia's PIF reports 25% revenue growth in '24

RIYADH, Aug 14, (Xinhua): Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) on Wednesday reported a 25 percent rise in total revenues for 2024 and said its assets under management grew 19 percent to 913 billion U.S. dollars as the sovereign wealth fund continues its drive to diversify the kingdom's economy. According to its 2024 annual report released on Wednesday, the fund's total revenues reached 413.4 billion Saudi riyals (around 110.2 billion dollars), a significant increase from 331.4 billion riyals in 2023. The PIF is the main engine of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030, a sweeping economic agenda aimed at wean-

ing the world's top oil exporter off its dependence on crude by building new industries and mega-projects at home and making major investments abroad. "The annual report for 2024 is marked by significant growth underpinned by solid financial health, as PIF further established its position as one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds," Yasir A. AlSalman, the fund's chief financial officer, said in the report. The fund stated its cumulative contribution to the kingdom's real non-oil GDP reached 243 billion dollars between 2021 and 2024, and it has maintained an annual average total portfolio return of 7.2 percent since 2017.

First phase set for 2026 completion

Egypt inks \$1 bln deal with China's Sailun for tire plant

CAIRO, Aug 14, (KUNA): Egypt signed on Wednesday, a contract with China's Sailun Group to establish a tire manufacturing plant in the Sokhna Integrated Zone under the Suez Canal Economic Zone, with total investments estimated at around USD one billion. According to a statement from the Egyptian Cabinet, the agreement was signed by CEO of Teda Egypt Tsao Khui, and Chairman of Sailun Tires Shi Xiaohong, in the presence of Prime Minister Dr. Mostafa Madbouly, Minister of Industry and Trade Kamel Al-Wazir, and Chairman of the Suez Canal Economic Zone Authority Walid Gamaleldien. The planned factory, spanning approximately 350,000 square meters, is expected to be completed within three years, with its first phase targeting completion in 2026, with a production capacity of three

million passenger car tires and 600,000 truck and bus tires. Upon full completion of both phases, the total annual production is projected to exceed 10 million tires, noting that the project aims to meet domestic market demand as well as export markets. Prime Minister Madbouly emphasized Egypt's ambitious strategy to localize the automotive industry and supply chains, praising the Suez Canal Economic Zone for attracting key investments, and stressing public-private cooperation to achieve regional leadership in automotive manufacturing. He also highlighted the role of national infrastructure projects, including roads, tunnels, and ports, in enhancing the zone's readiness for foreign direct investment and linking manufacturing, production, and logistics to global markets.

Business

All Share Index rises, Main Market slips

Boursa Kuwait ends session mixed

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Thursday's session with mixed performance across its indices. The All Share Index edged up 8.03 points or 0.09%, ending at 8,697.35 points, as 480.4 million shares changed hands in 25,708 transactions, valued at KD 92.3 million (USD 281.5 million). The Premier Market Index gained 17.09 points or 0.18%, closing at 9,362.74 points, with 156 million shares traded in 8,511 transactions, worth KD 50.7 million (USD 154.6 million).

In contrast, the Main Market Index slipped 26.69 points or 0.34% to 7,752.85 points, as 324.3 million shares were traded through 17,197 transactions, totaling KD 41.6 million (USD 126.8 million). The Main 50 Index also declined, losing 31.92 points or 0.41%, to close at 7,786.18 points, with 274 million shares traded in 11,524 cash transactions, valued at KD 33.3 million (USD 101.5 million).



Diplomacy meets commerce at Grand Hyatt Kuwait networking gala.

Councils aim to strengthen cross-cultural and sector ties

Kuwait's business leaders unite for annual inter-council summer dinner

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Kuwait's international business community gathered Thursday night for the annual Inter-Council Summer Dinner, an evening that blended diplomacy, commerce, and conviviality at the Grand Hyatt Kuwait. The event, a fixture on the city's business calendar, was organized by a coalition of councils and forums, including the American Business Council - AmCham Kuwait, the British Business Forum, Canadians in Kuwait, the German Business Council, the Indian Business and Professional Council, the Lebanese Business Council, and the Portuguese Business Council Kuwait. Guests, ranging from seasoned executives to emerging entrepreneurs, mingled over dinner in a setting designed as much for conversation as for cuisine. Throughout the evening, clusters of attendees exchanged ideas, established new connections, and rekindled old ones. It highlighted the lasting importance of in-person connections in today's interconnected economy. While the mood was light, the underlying mission was clear: to strengthen cross-cultural and cross-sector ties in Kuwait's diverse commercial landscape. The councils, long advocates for collaboration, see the dinner as both a social gathering and a platform for fostering partnerships that can outlast a single evening. A raffle added a celebratory note, with prizes contributed by Union Trading Company, Grand Hyatt Kuwait, Easa Husain Al-Yousifi & Sons Co., Best Al-Yousifi, and Park Inn by Radisson Hotel & Apartments Kuwait, ranging from gift vouchers to luxury hotel stays. Now in its latest edition, the Inter-Council Summer Dinner has cemented itself as a rare intersection of community and commerce, one that, for a few hours each summer, turns the business of networking into an occasion worth savoring. About us: ABCK-AmCham Kuwait: Is a non-profit organization operating since 1985 and is composed of Fortune 500 corporations, small and medium-sized companies, and prominent business leaders and entrepreneurs, both American and Kuwaiti. ABCK-AmCham Kuwait has acted as an advocate for American interest in the state of Kuwait. For More Information, please visit our website at www.amchamkuwait.org or follow us on our social media channel @abck1985 British Business Forum The British Business Forum (BBF) Kuwait, which was formed over 50 years ago, is a 'not for profit' organisation of business people which is under the aegis and patronage of the British Embassy Kuwait. The organisation aims to foster British interests and promote all that is best of UK business in Kuwait. By working closely with His Majesty's British Embassy, UK Department of Business and Trade and the British Council, the organisation supports the creation of business networks, facilitates discussions with business people, trade missions and delegations and liaises with overseas trade agencies with the purpose of winning more business and promoting the best of British products and services in Kuwait. The organisation also facilitates meetings for business sector groups including oil and gas, construction, finance and banking, education, health, defence and security, education, aviation, travel and hospitality. Monthly events and gatherings provide regular opportunities for networking and exchange of information. The success of the British Business Forum is due to the enthusiasm and commitment of its membership which while predominantly British and Kuwaiti, exceeds 30 different nationalities. Those wishing to find out more or

who are interested in joining us can contact the BBF administration officer at admin@bbfkw.com Canadians in Kuwait: CiK is a non-profit membership-based organization supported by Canadian and Non-Canadian volunteers. CiK shares Canadian culture with Kuwaitis' utilizing the talent and efforts of its members. CiK members participate actively in various events like Community-based, and national events in Canada and Kuwait. CiK offers networking to help its members expand their network and feel a home away from home through fun activities and outings. It also contributes to bringing Canadian and Kuwaitis together and provides an opportunity to experience one another's cultures. CiK offers weekly Friday breakfasts to its members and their friends at various restaurants in Kuwait. Those wishing to find out more or are interested in joining us can contact the CiK via cikeventsq8@gmail.com The German Business Council: IBPC Kuwait is a non-profit organization and apex body under the Embassy of India providing a platform for Indian businesses and professionals to enhance Indo-Kuwait trade and professional relations. It was established in 2001 under the patronage of the Ambassador of India to Kuwait. IBPC aims to provide a platform to Engage, Encourage and Empower professionals and businesses in India and Kuwait. IBPC creates enrichment opportunities by organizing networking opportunities, events (both business and cultural), trade shows, exhibitions etc. Over the years, IBPC has successfully established institutional linkage between the leading Chambers of Commerce and organizations from India such as ASSOCHAM, FICCI, CII, TPCI and FIEO and Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industries. The Lebanese Business Council: The Lebanese Business Council in Kuwait (LBCK) is a Non-Profit group established in 2020 under the Lebanese Embassy in Kuwait. It is composed of 150 members, including small and medium-sized companies. LBCK's mission is to promote trade between Kuwaiti and Lebanese businesses and to strengthen the economic and cultural exchange between the two countries. For more information, please visit our website at: www.lbc.org or follow us on our social media channels: Facebook: Lebanese Business Council in Kuwait Instagram: lbck_kuwait Twitter: @lbckkuwait The Portuguese Business Council: The Portuguese Business Council Kuwait is an organization that aims to promote economic and commercial ties between Portugal and Kuwait. It provides a platform for Portuguese companies to network, exchange information, and develop business opportunities in Kuwait. The PBCK serves as a liaison between Portuguese businesses and the Kuwaiti government, helping to facilitate trade and investment between the two countries. www.pbckw.org

Job openings fall to 7.4 mln, quits hit lowest since December

US jobless claims dip to 224K, remain historically low

WASHINGTON, Aug 14, (AP): The number of Americans filing for jobless benefits fell modestly last week, remaining in the historically low range since the U.S. economy emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Applications for unemployment benefits for the week ending Aug. 9 fell by 3,000 to 224,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That's below the 230,000 new applications that economists had forecast.

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.

Two weeks ago, a grim July jobs report sent financial markets spiraling, spurring President Donald

Trump to fire Erika McEntarfer, the head of Bureau of Labor Statistics, which tallies the monthly employment numbers. The BLS does not contribute to the weekly unemployment benefits report except to calculate the annual seasonal adjustments.

U.S. employers added just 73,000 jobs in July, well short of the 115,000 analysts forecast. Worse, revisions to the May and June figures shaved 258,000 jobs off previous estimates and the unemployment rate ticked up to 4.2% from 4.1%.

Without citing evidence, Trump accused McEntarfer of rigging the jobs data for political reasons. On Monday, Trump nominated E.J. Antoni, chief economist at the conservative Heritage Foundation, to head the BLS. Antoni's nomination was quickly met with a cascade of criticism from economists across the political spectrum.



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

While layoffs remain low by historical standards, there has been noticeable deterioration in the labor market this year and mounting evi-

dence that people are having difficulty finding jobs.

U.S. 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.

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

Many economists contend that Trump's erratic rollout of tariffs against U.S. trading partners has created uncertainty for employers, who have grown reluctant to expand their payrolls.

The deadline on most of Trump's

proposed taxes on imports kicked in last week, though some deals have been made and other deadlines for negotiations - most importantly with China - 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.

Also Thursday, new government data showed that U.S. wholesale inflation surged unexpectedly last month, a sign that Trump's sweeping taxes on imports are pushing costs higher.

Thursday's jobless benefits report showed that the four-week average of claims, which smooths out some of the week-to-week volatility, ticked up by 750 to 221,750.

The total number of Americans collecting unemployment benefits for the previous week of Aug. 2 fell by 15,000 to 1.95 million.

Lula postpones taxes

Brazil unveils \$5.5 bln plan to aid exporters hit by US tariffs

SAO PAULO, Aug 14, (AP): The Brazilian government on Wednesday unveiled a plan to support local companies affected by a 50% tariff imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump on several of the country's exports.

Dubbed "Sovereign Brazil," the plan provides for a credit lifeline of 30 billion reais (\$5.5 billion), among other measures.

Hours later, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced new sanctions against at least two Brazilian officials, in a move the South American nation's health minister rebuked.

Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva described the plan, which includes a bill to be sent to Congress, as a first step to help local exporters. The leftist leader, whose poll numbers have gone up since the tariffs against his country were announced, once again said he and Trump have never spoken, and claimed the American president does not want to negotiate.

age of a devil against the people they want to fight with," added Lula, who pledged to find markets to buy Brazilian goods that will not go to the U.S.

Lula repeated on Wednesday that Brazil's judiciary is independent. The executive branch, which manages foreign relations, has no control over Supreme Court justices, who in turn have stated they won't yield to political pressure. Bolsonaro's trial is expected to come to the sentencing phase sometime between September and October.

"If what happened at the Capitol (the U.S. riots on Jan. 6, 2021) had happened in Brazil, he (Trump) would be on trial here too," Lula said.

Earlier in August, Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who oversees the case against Bolsonaro, was sanctioned under the U.S. Magnitsky Act, which is supposed to target serious human rights offenders. De Moraes has argued that defendants were granted full due process.

US wholesale inflation up 0.9% in July, biggest rise in 3+ years

Tariffs drive costs higher

WASHINGTON, Aug 14, (AP): U.S. wholesale inflation surged unexpectedly last month, signaling that President Donald Trump's sweeping taxes on imports are pushing costs up and that higher prices for consumers may be on the way.

The Labor Department reported Thursday that its producer price index - which measures inflation before it hits consumers - rose 0.9% last month from June, biggest jump in more than three years. Compared with a year earlier, wholesale prices rose 3.3%.

The numbers were much higher than economists had expected.

Prices rose faster for producers than consumers last month, suggesting that U.S. importers may, for now, be eating the cost of Trump's tariffs rather than passing them on to customers.

That may not last.

"It will only be a matter of time before producers pass their higher tariff-related costs onto the backs of inflation-weary consumers," wrote Christopher Rupkey, chief economist at fwdbonds, a financial markets research firm.

Excluding volatile food and energy prices, so-called core producer prices rose 0.9% from June, biggest month-over-month jump since March 2022. Compared with a year ago, core wholesale prices rose 3.7% after posting a 2.6% year-over-year jump in June.

Wholesale food prices rose 1.4% from June, led by a 38.9% surge in vegetable prices. The price of home electronic equipment gained 5% from June. Both are heavily imported in the U.S.

But some aspects of Thursday's producer price report were puzzling, including a big jump in profit margins at retailers and wholesalers. Economist Stephen Brown at Capital Economics found the increase "to put it lightly, counterintuitive given the anecdotal evidence that firms are absorbing the lion's share of tariff increases in margins."

Trump's tariffs have generated considerable uncertainty about the U.S. economy, the world's largest, which could explain some seemingly contradictory trends. Trump has negotiated trade agreements with several major U.S. trading partners, including the European Union and Japan. But the details have not been published, leaving businesses uncertain about where tariff rates will end up and therefore whether and how they should adjust their own prices.

The fallout from the tariffs has also been delayed because many importers stockpiled products before the taxes took effect. Those inventories are

diminishing, however.

What's more, the U.S. courts are hearing a challenge to Trump's most sweeping tariffs and could strike them down.

The wholesale inflation report two days after the Labor Department reported that consumer prices rose 2.7% last month from July 2024, same as the previous month and up from a post-pandemic low of 2.3% in April. Core consumer prices rose 3.1%, up from 2.9% in June. Both figures are above the Federal Reserve's 2% target.

The new consumer price numbers suggest that slowing rent increases and cheaper gas are partly offsetting the impacts of Trump's tariffs. Many businesses are also likely still absorbing much of the cost of the duties instead of passing them along to customers via higher prices.

The producer and consumer inflation numbers are both issued by the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics, which is already in Trump crosshairs.

After the BLS issued a disappointing jobs report for July, Trump fired the director of the BLS, groundlessly accusing the bureau of rigging the numbers for political reasons. Trump then nominated a partisan ideologue to replace her, raising fears of political interference in economic data that investors, policymakers, businesses and the Federal Reserve rely on to make decisions.

Thursday's report is likely to complicate decisions for the Fed. After an ominous July jobs report - which also showed that hiring was much weaker than originally reported in May and June - the central bank was widely expected to cut interest rates at its meeting next month in a bid to recharge hiring.

The Fed has drawn Trump's ire for not cutting interest rates already. Under Chair Jerome Powell, it had been delaying rate cuts until better understood the impact of Trump's tariffs on inflation. "This report is a strong validation of the Fed's wait-and-see stance on policy changes," Carl Weinberg, chief economist at High Frequency Economics, wrote in a commentary Thursday. "It will mean a markdown of market expectations for a September rate cut."

Wholesale prices can offer an early look at where consumer inflation might be headed. Economists also watch it because some of its components, notably measures of health care and financial services, flow into the Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge - the personal consumption expenditures, or PCE, index.

The PCE inflation numbers for July are due out Aug. 29.

Bitcoin hits record \$123K before slipping below \$122K

Global markets mixed ahead of Trump-Putin meeting

MANILA, Aug 14, (AP): World shares were mixed Thursday ahead of a key meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin at the week's end.

Bitcoin briefly rose more than 3% to a new record of over \$123,000, according to CoinDesk. It later fell back below \$122,000.

The future for the S&P 500 was unchanged, while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average edged 0.1% higher.

Later Thursday, a report will show how bad U.S. inflation was at the wholesale level across the United States. Economists expect it to show inflation ticked up to 2.4% in July from 2.3% in June.

In early European trading, Britain's FTSE 100 was flat at 9,165.01 after the government reported that the UK economy grew at a faster than expected 1.2% annual pace in the last quarter. In quarterly terms, the economy grew 0.3%, slowing from a 0.7% expansion in January-March.

Germany's DAX rose 0.5% to 24,296.02. In Paris, the CAC 40 added 0.4% to 7,832.60.

Europe is bracing for Trump's encounter with Putin, though the U.S. president has said he will prioritize trying to achieve a ceasefire in Ukraine when he meets with Putin on Friday in Anchorage.

The Trump-Putin meeting could have major implications for energy markets, potentially leading



Currency traders watch monitors near a screen showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI), left, and the foreign exchange rate between U.S. dollar and South Korean won at the foreign exchange dealing room of the Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday, Aug. 14, 2025. (AP)

to an easing of sanctions against Moscow, or an escalation if no progress is made on ending the war in Ukraine.

Early Thursday, U.S. benchmark crude rose 28 cents to \$62.93 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, added 32 cents to \$65.95 per barrel.

During Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell nearly 1.5% to 42,649.26 as investors sold to lock in recent gains that have taken the benchmark to all-time records.

The Japanese yen rose against

\$1.1705.

In Chinese markets, Hong Kong's Hang Seng index shed 0.4% to 25,519.32, while the Shanghai composite index slid 0.5% to 3,666.44.

South Korea's Kospi rose less than 0.1% to 3,225.66.

In Australia, the S&P ASX 200 index added 0.5% to 8,873.80.

Taiwan's Taix fell 0.5% and India's Sensex edged 0.2% higher.

On Wednesday, U.S. stocks ticked higher, extending a global rally fueled by hopes the Federal Reserve will cut U.S. interest rates.

The S&P 500 rose 0.3% and the Dow climbed 1%. The Nasdaq composite added 0.1%.

Treasury yields eased in the bond market in anticipation that the Fed will cut its main interest rate for the first time this year at its next meeting in September. Lower rates can boost investment prices and the economy by making it cheaper for U.S. households and businesses to borrow to buy houses, cars or equipment, though they risk worsening inflation.

Trump has angrily been calling for cuts to help the economy, often insulting the Fed Chair Jerome Powell while doing so.

But the Fed has hesitated, worried that Trump's sweeping higher tariffs could make inflation much worse. Fed officials have said they want to see more fresh data about inflation before moving.

UK growth slows in second quarter but comes in higher than expected

LONDON, Aug 14, (AP): Britain's economy slowed down during the second quarter of the year in the face of higher taxes on businesses and global tariff uncertainties, but growth came in higher than anticipated, official figures showed Thursday.

The Office for National Statistics said output expanded by 0.3% during the second quarter from the previous three-month period, largely as a result of a strong performance in June.

Though that was lower than the 0.7% increase in the first quarter of

the year, it was ahead of market expectations of only a 0.1% rise.

The bigger than expected increase will be welcome news to the Labour government, which has made improving growth its number one priority since it returned to power in July 2024.

Higher growth will also bolster public finances as it leads to higher tax revenues. If growth continues to beat expectations in coming months, Treasury chief Rachel Reeves will be under less pressure to deliver another big tax-raising budget this fall.

Reeves said Thursday's figures were "positive" but added that there is "more to do" to drive growth in the economy.

The British economy, the sixth-largest in the world, has underperformed its long-run average since the global financial crisis of 2008-9. Critics say Reeves is partly responsible for much of the gloomy economic news since Labour returned to power after 14 years, because she was overly downbeat when taking on her role and has increased taxes, particularly on businesses.

What's On



Photos during 'India Utsav' promotion.

LuLu Hypermarket celebrates 'India Utsav' with week-long festivities and exclusive offers

In a vibrant celebration of India's Independence Day, LuLu Hypermarket has launched its much-awaited "India Utsav" promotion, running from 13 August 2025 to 19 August 2025.

The grand inauguration took place on 13 August 2025 at the LuLu Hypermarket Al Rai outlet. The event was inaugurated by Kaizer T. Shakir, Chairman of IBPC, along with Kuldeep Singh Lambha, Senior Advisory Council Board Member of IBPC; S. K. Wadhawan, Advisory Board Member of IBPC; Yusuf Al Dafferi, Acting Director of Corporate Communications, Kuwait Airways; and Ajit Barot, Expert – Corporate Communications, Kuwait Airways, in the presence of LuLu Hypermarket's top Kuwait management and senior officials.

The opening ceremony was marked by a lively traditional Indian welcome, complete with a music band performance, and a special rendition of an Indian patriotic group song that captured the spirit of the occasion. The celebrations also showcased a colorful array of Indian traditional cultural dances, including

state-wise dance performances, captivating classical items, and other artistic presentations that reflected the rich cultural diversity of India.

The shoppers can look forward to amazing discounts and offers on a wide array of Indian-branded products, including groceries, fresh and frozen foods, fruits and vegetables, meat, non-food items, health and beauty products, footwear, and fashion garments. A standout promotion is the 'Buy 2 Get 1 Free' offer on Indian sarees and churidars, appealing to lovers of ethnic wear.

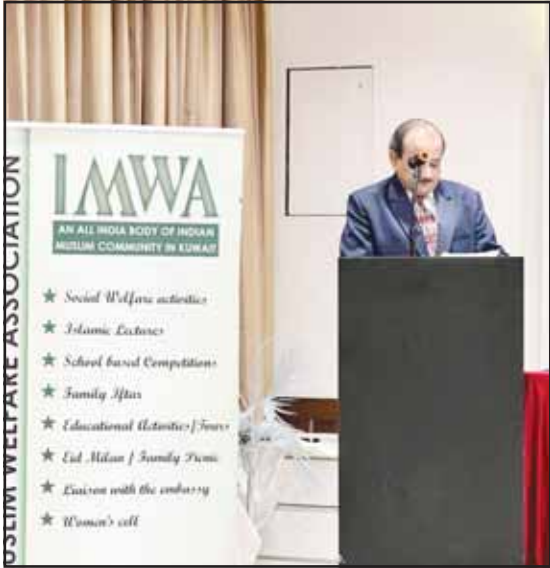
Adding to the festivities, the event featured several competitions that brought together the community. The Indian Fancy Dress Competition saw participation from over 50 students, with prizes awarded to the top three winners and special consolation gifts for others. A Bollywood Singing Contest and an Indian Sweet-Making Competition were also held, with winners receiving valuable gift vouchers.

In a significant development, the celebration also marked the launch of a new long-term partnership between the Kuwait Airways and LuLu Hypermar-

ket, offering exclusive travel benefits for LuLu Happiness Members. From 13 to 19 August 2025, members can enjoy a 12% discount on bookings via the Kuwait Airways website or mobile app using promo code LULU22, valid on routes between Kuwait and India. Additionally, members who register for the Oasis loyalty program will receive 1,000 welcome miles, with in-store bookings at LuLu Al Rai enjoying waived ticketing service charges.

The "India Utsav" is further enriched with special attractions, including traditional monument decorations, Indian ethnic wear handloom collections, and variety displays of organic Indian products. Visitors can explore new product launches such as fresh apricots from Ladakh, alongside sampling counters offering authentic Indian delicacies at dedicated food stalls.

With its cultural performances, irresistible promotions, and authentic Indian market atmosphere, LuLu's India Utsav has transformed the Al Rai outlet into a colorful hub of celebration, offering both a taste of India and unmatched shopping value.



Photos during the Annual General Body Meeting.

IMWA Kuwait holds 30th AGBM

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Indian Muslim Welfare Association (IMWA), Kuwait, held its 30th Annual General Body Meeting (AGBM) on Friday, 18th July 2025, at Rajdhani Palace Restaurant, Khaitan, in the presence of office bearers, executive council members, and general members.

The meeting began with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Mr. Mohammed Kaleem Ansari, followed by a Presidential Address by Mr. Syed Hanif Ahmad, reflecting on IMWA's three-decade journey of service and community development. During his speech, he highlighted the successes of the association under his presidency. Notable among those events was the highest attendance of students for Quran Competition from different Indian schools in Kuwait, which is a record in the association's history. Yet another feather in the cap of IMWA was the introduction of a Family Counselling event held at the Indian Community School in Khaitan. The President stated that IMWA intends to continue this family counselling event on annual basis. The formation of the Ladies Wing and Youth Wing has helped the association discover hidden talent among its ladies and youth members, who assist the executive members in organizing the association's annual mega events. He further stated that IMWA is now a registered association with the Ministry of Awqaf. He concluded his speech by saying, "IMWA has come a long way, and yet, our journey is only the beginning. IMWA is not just an organization; it is a family bound by faith, service, and a commitment to upliftment of our Indian community living in Kuwait, let us continue to be proactive, work hand in hand, with sincerity and passion, to build a better, stronger, and more united Ummah here in Kuwait".

Vice President Mr. Muzammil Malik delivered an encouraging message that was well received, he praised the performance of the executive committee members for their hard work in organizing various events, held successfully,

he thanked the gathering and wished more progress and developments to happen for the benefit of its members and community at large.

General Secretary Mr. Firdaus Allam Khan presented the minutes of the 29th AGBM (held on 30 August 2024), which were unanimously approved. He then presented the Annual Report for 2024-25, outlining key highlights: successful programs and events, outreach initiatives, membership engagement, partnerships, and the challenges managed during the year.

The Treasurer, Mohammed Asif, presented the audited financial statement for the period January 2024 to December 2024. Key figures included opening balance, total receipts, total expenditure, and closing balance. The financial statement was approved by the members after discussion and clarification. He said he was pleased to inform that membership increased by a significant percentage during the past year. He expressed his gratitude to IMWA patrons and well-wishers for their contribution to the welfare of the association.

The AGM also included a by-election to fill three Executive Council vacancies created by resignations on health and personal grounds. In accordance with IMWA bylaws, IMWA EC unanimously elected and approved by the members:

Mr. Mahboob Ahmed
Mr. Mohammed Khaleel Khan
Mr. Asim Kidwai
They were warmly welcomed into the Executive Council. The meeting saw active participation from members, including Mr. Jawed Anwar, Mr. Irfan Mohammad Khan, Mr. Kareem Irfan (FIMA President), and others, who proposed and suggested ideas for IMWA's progressive future.

The evening ended with a vote of thanks by Mr. Israr Ahmed and a Dua for the community's well-being, followed by dinner and informal fellowship.

Members unite to promote life-saving cause

Bangladeshi Group hosts Blood Donation Drive

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Various organizations of expatriate Bangladeshis in Kuwait have earned quite a reputation by conducting social activities. Especially the blood donation programs of various expatriate Bangladeshi organizations are unique. Maizbhandari Shah Emdadia Blood Donors Group Kuwait Branch organized a blood donation program. Alhaj Syed Ahmed Hossain Muhammad Irfanul Haque Maizbhandari Nayeb Sajjadanshin and Montazeme Darbare Gausul Azam Maizbhandari Gausiya Ahmadiya Manzil, Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif, Fatikchhari, Chittagong were present as the chief guests in the blood donation program on Monday afternoon at Kuwait Central Blood Bank Jabriya. He is also the Managing Trustee of Maizbhandari Shah Emdadia Blood Donors Group and Chairman of Darul Irfan

Research Institute. Like other countries in the Middle East, this organization also has a branch in Kuwait. Numerous members of the organization participated in the blood donation program in Kuwait. The leaders of the organization said that blood donation, in addition to the great work of saving people's lives, is important in brightening the image of Bangladesh abroad and establishing a sense of brotherhood between the two countries. The program was attended by the organization's Bahrain coordinator Md. Nizam Uddin, United Arab Emirates coordinator Enamul Haque and international coordinator Md. Sohel Chowdhury, President of Bangladesh Press Club Kuwait Senior Journalist Moin Uddin Sarkar Sumon, General Secretary Journalist A. H. Jubed and many others.



Blood donation program of expatriate Bangladeshis in Kuwait.

Extra 25% discount on purchases above KD 700

Kalyan Jewellers launches '2 Good To Miss' double discount campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Kalyan Jewellers, one of the most trusted and leading jewellery brands in the region, has announced its much-awaited '2 Good To Miss' campaign for patrons across the GCC. As part of this exciting offer, the jewellery brand is providing customers with a flat 25% discount on making charges on all gold and diamond jewellery purchases, with an additional 25% off for purchases exceeding KWD 700.

The limited-period offer commences will run only until 15th September, 2025, across all Kalyan Jewellers showrooms in the GCC. The offer is applicable across jewellery collections, allowing customers substantial savings on their festive and wedding purchases.

Speaking about the campaign, Mr. Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Executive Director of Kalyan Jewellers, said, "We are thrilled to launch our '2 Good To Miss' campaign, which provides our patrons exceptional value through a unique double discount on making charges. With the festive and wedding season approaching, this offer is timed perfectly to add value to any occasion because we understand the emotional quotient behind such purchases. We are confident that this campaign will be well-received, allowing customers to take home the jewellery of their choice without compromising on their budget."

At Kalyan Jewellers, customers receive the Kalyan Jewellers 4-Level Assurance Certificate, on every purchase which guarantees purity, free lifetime maintenance, detailed product information, and transparent exchange and buy-back policies, underscoring the brand's commitment to trust and quality.

Kalyan Jewellers offers a wide array of intricate and traditional jewellery designs from its popular house



Kalyan Jewellers diamond necklace



Kalyan Jewellers bangle



Kalyan Jewellers gold necklace



Kalyan Jewellers gold bangle

brands, including Muhurat (Wedding Jewellery), Mudhra (Handcrafted Antique Jewellery), Nimah (Temple Jewellery), Glo (Dancing Diamonds), Ziah (Solitaire-like Diamond Jewellery), Anokhi (Uncut Diamonds), Hera (Daily Wear Diamonds) and Rang (Precious Stones Jewellery).

For more information on the brand, its collections, and offers, visit <https://www.kalyanjewellers.net/>. T&Cs Apply.

About Kalyan Jewellers
Headquartered in Thrissur in the state of Kerala, India, Kalyan Jewel-

lers is one the largest jewellery retailers in India with a presence in the Middle East and the USA. The company has enjoyed a longstanding presence in the Indian market for over three decades and has set industry benchmarks in quality, transparency, pricing and innovation. Kalyan offers an array of traditional and contemporary jewellery designs in gold, diamonds and precious stones catering to the distinct needs of customers. Kalyan Jewellers has over 390 showrooms across India, USA and the Middle East, with a retail area exceeding 9,08,000 sq. ft.



Photo during the campaign.

Over 180 donors join life-saving initiative

PakDonors hosts 30th Blood Donation Drive

Report by M. Irfan Shafiq

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: PakDonors, in collaboration with the Central Blood Bank Jabriya, successfully organized its 30th Blood Donation Drive on Friday, 8th August 2025. The event witnessed an overwhelming response, with over 180 donors registering to donate blood. Participants included members of the Pakistani community as well as donors from various other nationalities, showcasing the spirit of humanity beyond boundaries.

The PakDonors team extended a warm welcome to all Pakistani dignitaries, distinguished guests, and donors. Special appreciation was expressed for the "Heroes of the Day" – the donors themselves – whose contributions help save countless lives.

The PakDonors Female Wing played an active and vital role in ensuring the camp's success. The event was further

honored by the presence of the Green Hand Environmental Team and the Pakistan Women Forum (PWF) female delegation, who commended the efforts of PakDonors in promoting the noble cause of voluntary blood donation.

PakDonors expressed heartfelt gratitude to local and international media outlets, as well as social media activists, for their active role in raising awareness and helping make this camp a great success. A special note of thanks was also extended to our valued sponsors, whose unwavering support forms the backbone of such events and makes them possible.

This milestone 30th blood donation drive reflects PakDonors' unwavering commitment to its mission: "Every Blood Owner Should Be a Blood Donor" – saving lives, fostering unity, and building a culture of regular voluntary blood donation.

Sabrina Carpenter to feature on new album finale

Swift reveals 12th album ‘The Life of a Showgirl,’ out Oct 3

NEW YORK, Aug 14, (AP): Look what you made her do - Taylor Swift has announced her 12th studio album, “The Life of a Showgirl.”

It will arrive October 3, she revealed Wednesday. Swift, Max Martin and Shellback are the credited producers, which includes a notable absence of her longtime collaborator Jack Antonoff. The final track, “The Life of a Showgirl,” will feature Sabrina Carpenter.

Swift announced the album on her website shortly after a countdown timer expired at 12:12 a.m. Tuesday. No release date was announced, but her site said vinyl editions of the album would ship before Oct. 13.

Fans have long theorized that Swift’s 12th album would soon arrive. On Monday, Taylor Nation - an official branch of the pop superstar’s marketing team - posted a TikTok slideshow of 12 images with the caption “Thinking about when she said ‘See you next era...’” Swift is seen wearing orange in every image.

She also revealed the album artwork, which features the singer submerged in water and continues her color scheme of orange and mint green.

A special limited vinyl edition of the album will be released in “Portofino orange glitter,” according to a pre-order page on her site. A special cassette edition is also available for preorder.

Sensing a pattern, eagle-eyed fans noticed that 12 minutes before Monday’s Taylor Nation post, the popular “New Heights” podcast posted a tease for Wednesday. The show, hosted by Swift’s boyfriend and Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce alongside his brother, former Philadelphia Eagles center Jason Kelce, posted an orange image on social media with a mysterious silhouette that many believed to be Swift.

The podcast later announced that Swift would indeed appear on “New Heights” and a teaser video posted about her appearance showed her pulling the album from a briefcase.

Here’s the full tracklist: 1. The Fate of Ophelia; 2. Elizabeth Taylor; 3. Opalite; 4. Father Figure; 5. Eldest Daughter; 6. Ruin the Friendship; 7. Actually Romantic; 8. Wi\$h Li\$t 9. Wood’ 10. Cancelled!; 11. Honey and 12. The Life of a Showgirl (featuring Sabrina Carpenter)

Swift’s episode of the “New Heights” podcast premiered at 7 p.m. Eastern on Wednesday. It is available to stream in full on YouTube. Fans who’d prefer to listen to the show, instead, can do so via most podcast streaming platforms: Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, Audible, Spotify and Wondery.

“The Life of a Showgirl” follows last year’s “The Tortured Poets Department,” announced during the 2024 Grammys and released during her record-breaking tour, which raked in over \$2.2 billion across two years and five continents, making it the highest-grossing tour of all time.

The album is also Swift’s first release since she regained control over her entire body of work. In May, the pop star said she purchased her catalog of recordings - originally released through Big Machine Records - from their most recent owner, the private equity firm Shamrock Capital. She did not disclose the amount paid.

In recent years, Swift had been re-recording and releasing her first six albums in an attempt to regain control of her music. The project was instigated by music executive Scooter Braun’s purchase and sale of her early catalog. Previous “Taylor’s Version” releases have been more than conventional re-recordings, arriving with new “from the vault” music, Easter eggs and visuals that deepen understanding of her work.



Taylor Swift accepts the award for best pop vocal album for ‘Midnights’ during the 66th annual Grammy Awards on Feb. 4, 2024, in Los Angeles. (AP)

So far, there have been four re-recorded albums, beginning with “Fearless (Taylor’s Version)” and “Red (Taylor’s Version)” in 2021. All four have been massive commercial and cultural successes, each debuting at No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

Swift’s last re-recording, “1989 (Taylor’s Version),”

arrived in October 2023, just four months after the release of “Speak Now (Taylor’s Version).” That was the same year Swift claimed the record for the woman with the most No. 1 albums in history.

Swift’s latest era is almost upon us. The superstar appeared Wednesday on “New Heights” for the first time to discuss it at length.

Part of the rollout for Tuesday’s announcement of “The Life of a Showgirl” involved the popular, typically football-focused podcast hosted by Travis Kelce - Swift’s boyfriend and Kansas City Chiefs tight end - and his brother, Jason Kelce, the former Philadelphia Eagles center. Her episode, which ran just over two hours on audio streaming and an hour and 45 minutes via YouTube, was particularly revealing.

Here’s everything you need to know about Swift’s episode.

Swift’s episode of the “New Heights” podcast premiered at 7 p.m. Eastern on Wednesday night. It is available to stream on YouTube.

Fans who prefer to listen to the show instead can do so via most podcast-streaming platforms: Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, Audible, Spotify and Wondery, which produces the show.

The audio recording of the podcast is about 20 minutes longer in duration than YouTube and includes a rapid-fire question section, where the Kelce brothers and Swift discuss cats, pop tarts, Bad Bunny in “Happy Gilmore 2,” hiding in a cleaning cart at the “Eras Tour” and more.

Little was known about Swift’s episode ahead of its airing.

On Tuesday and Wednesday morning, the podcast shared clips teasing the forthcoming episode.

Variety

SANTIAGO, Chile: Ethan Guo, an American pilot and influencer who has been trapped in Antarctica for several weeks, maintained Wednesday that he is “innocent” of the accusations against him, after being charged by Chilean authorities with submitting a false flight plan to reach the White Continent.



Guo

Guo was charged on June 29 with handing false information to ground control and landing without authorization, but on Monday a judge dropped the charges as part of an agreement with his lawyers and Chile’s prosecutors. It requires the teen to give a \$30,000 donation to a children’s cancer foundation within 30 days to avoid a trial. He must also leave the country as soon as conditions allow and is prohibited from reentering Chilean territory for three years.

According to Guo’s defense, the teen pilot was granted authorizations to deviate his initial route - from Punta Arenas, southern Chile, to Ushuaia, Argentina - and land at Teniente Marsh base in Chilean Antarctica due to “weather and technical circumstances.”

“My client’s actions are protected by a presumption of legality arising from the authorizations expressly granted by various DGAC (Directorate General of Civil Aviation) officials,” his lawyer Jaime Barrientos said in documents handed to the court and shared with The Associated Press.

According to Barrientos, evidence was presented that “Mr. Guo informed the DGAC as soon as possible of the change to the filed flight plan, receiving express authorization to land at said aerodrome.”

Guo, who turned 20 during his stay in Antarctica in July and has maintained his innocence, said in a statement sent to AP that during his original journey he “encountered instrument failures and heavy, unreported icing conditions” which created “an imminent risk of a crash.”

“Due to these cascading failures, Mr. Guo requested and received explicit, direct permission to land at the Marsh base from a high ranking DGAC official via WhatsApp, an authorization that was subsequently confirmed by the base’s air traffic controller,” it said.

The influencer added that the court’s ruling last Monday was “a direct result of the prosecutor’s refusal to acknowledge this clear evidence.” (AP)

MEXICO CITY: Nearly five centuries after Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés signed it and decades after someone swiped it from Mexico’s national archives, the FBI returned a priceless manuscript page to Mexico on Wednesday.

The FBI said in a statement that the document had changed hands various times over the years, so no one will be charged.

“This is an original manuscript page that was actually signed by Hernán Cortés on February 20, 1527,” said Special Agent Jessica Dittmer, a member of the FBI’s Art Crime Team. By then, Cortés had conquered the Aztec empire in 1521, two years after landing in present-day Mexico.

While archivists at Mexico’s General Archive of the Nation were microfilming their collection of documents signed by Cortés in 1993, they discovered that 15 pages of the manuscript were missing. They believe it was stolen between 1985 and 1993.

Mexico requested the help of the FBI’s Art Crime Team last year for this particular page. The FBI eventually narrowed the search to the United States and located the document, though the agency did not say who had it. The New York City Police Department, U.S. Department of Justice and Mexico’s government were all involved in the investigation. (AP)

Film



This image released by A24 shows Denzel Washington in a scene from ‘Highest 2 Lowest.’ (AP)

Washington faces moral dilemma in Lee’s latest

‘Highest 2 Lowest’ hits stride in NY grit

LOS ANGELES, Aug 14, (AP): Spike Lee’s “Highest 2 Lowest” takes some time to find its groove. But once it does, when the film leaves the high rises and puts its feet on the New York pavement, it really sings.

A reimagining of Akira Kurosawa’s 1963 crime thriller “High and Low,” Lee brings the story to a modern-day New York where a music mogul, played by Denzel Washington, is faced with a moral dilemma: Save a kidnapped kid or his flagging empire. Both will cost nearly everything he has.

We toss around the term “auteur” pretty casually these days. It’s become almost a shorthand for any filmmaker with an ounce of style. But “Highest 2 Lowest” is a film that has Lee’s DNA in every frame - a symphonic blend of his influences and passions: cinema, New York City, sports, Black stories, great needle drops and, of course, Washington. It’s easy enough to just go along for the ride, trusting that it will end up somewhere worthwhile, even when the green screen is a little off, the score a little distracting or the dialogue a little unnatural.

But it will require some audience patience nonetheless. In its first half, “Highest 2 Lowest” plays a bit like a melodrama crossed with a sitcom, where the beats are stilted and the dialogue feels like dialogue. There’s an awkward artificiality to the whole thing, which is likely more metaphor than accident, but it’s also not the most engaging stretch.

Washington’s character David King is a music executive and founder of a record label whose biggest days are behind him. You wouldn’t necessarily know it to look at his palatial apartment with its panoramic views of the Brooklyn Bridge and the Manhattan skyline, but the money isn’t exactly coming in like it used to. The realities of the music business, social media and the attention economy have muddled the plot. The guy who once had the “best ears in the business” can’t seem to get a handle on what works



Director Spike Lee poses for a portrait photograph for the film ‘Highest 2 Lowest’ at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France on May 20, 2025. (AP)

anymore. He has the chance to cash out and sell the business, but against the wishes of everyone around him, decides he wants to take back ownership of the thing he created.

When his beautiful wife Pam (Ilfenesh Hadera, either miscast or terribly underwritten) says she’s going to pledge half a million dollars to an arts organization, he asks her to hold off. “But we’ve always supported young Black artists,” she replies, though you suspect part of the worry is about keeping up appearances. Things come into focus quickly, however, when David learns that his son Trey (Aubrey Joseph) has been kidnapped. The ransom is \$17.5 million.

There is a twist, which perhaps shouldn’t be spoiled, but it soon becomes less obvious to the Kings whether they should pay up. It’s an interesting conundrum, and a potent one for these greedy times, but also difficult to empathize with

on a certain level. This is a guy with a lot of assets to his name and the ability to get his hands on \$17.5 million. For the audience, the choice will seem obvious. It’s never quite clear what his life will look like if that money disappears, but the bottom doesn’t seem like a possibility.

But this is all just a lead up to the more exciting and compelling cat-and-mouse portion of the film, where the kidnapper, an aspiring, down-on-his-luck rapper named Yung Felon (played by a magnetic ASAP Rocky) is finally introduced. His showdown with King is fun, tense and even includes a rap battle. ASAP Rocky more than holds his own with Washington.

In a different timeline, in a world where King listened to as many new artists as he did when he was starting out, their stories might have been different. Yung Felon might have been discovered, instead of just being one of the aggrieved talents languishing in obscurity and plotting violent revenge.

There is a lot going on in Alan Fox’s script for “Highest 2 Lowest,” which attempts to present a realistic picture of New York and all its contradictions, from the billionaire boardrooms to the Puerto Rican festivals in the Bronx to the lively Yankees fans on the subway. Jeffrey Wright, who also gets some great scenes with Washington, plays King’s friend and driver, Paul. He too is looking for his son Kyle (real-life son Elijah Wright) but gets far less respect and attention from the cops. The inequalities and prejudices run deep, and at a certain point David and Paul set off on their own to solve the case, vigilantes in a Rolls-Royce. “Highest 2 Lowest” may not reach the heights of some of Lee’s best films, but it’s the kind film that makes you hope Lee and Washington have more to make together.

“Highest 2 Lowest,” an A24 release in theaters Friday and streaming on Apple TV+ on Sept. 5, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for “language throughout and brief drug use.” Running time: 133 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

People

Partners sue

Presley accused of ‘\$50m fraud’

LOS ANGELES, Aug 14, (AP): **Priscilla Presley**’s former business partners have filed a lawsuit seeking more than \$50 million in damages, alleging fraud and breach of contract.

Brigitte Kruse and Kevin Fialko filed the lawsuit Monday in Los Angeles Superior Court. Among many other allegations, they say Presley used them to financially exploit her name, image and likeness, hiding the fact that she had sold those rights decades earlier.



Presley

The lawsuit comes just over a year after Presley, the 80-year-old former wife of Elvis Presley, sued Kruse and Fialko, alleging they engaged in elder abuse in a “meticulously planned and abhorrent scheme” to “prey on an older woman by gaining her trust, isolating her from the most important people in her life, and duping her into believing that they would take care of her (personally and financially), while their real goal was to drain her of every last penny she had.”

Kruse and Fialko’s lawyer, Jordan Matthews, said in a statement Wednesday that the “evidence will establish that the real victims here are my clients, who invested millions and years of hard work into revitalizing Priscilla Presley’s brand, only to be betrayed and falsely accused once the money was on the table and every personal and business issue had been resolved.”

An email seeking comment from Presley’s lawyer was not immediately answered.

Kruse and Fialko’s lawsuit says Kruse is a well-known auctioneer and Fialko a successful entrepreneur, both of whom dealt in Elvis Presley memorabilia. The duo previously sued Priscilla Presley in Florida.

They say she approached them in 2021 looking for help to save her from financial ruin, which they spent thousands of hours working to do.

“Kruse and Fialko deployed IP, know-how and creative marketing to enhance Priscilla’s brand,” the lawsuit said, and formed several companies to exploit her name, image and likeness.

But they say as this was happening, Presley hid from them that she had sold the rights to license her name as part of a \$6.5 million deal with Elvis Presley Enterprises in 2005.

The lawsuit says that when confronted about the previous agreement, Presley repeatedly denied making it, and later said she had forgotten about it when confronted with evidence of it.

The lawsuit also alleges Presley sought to take advantage of the 2023 death of her daughter and Elvis Presley’s heir, Lisa Marie Presley, to aggrandize herself and regain a stake in the Elvis’ estate.

Priscilla and Elvis Presley were married from 1967 to 1973, divorcing four years before the death of the rock ‘n’ roll legend.

Kruse and Fialko say they brokered a 2023 deal to end a legal fight over the estate between Priscilla Presley and Lisa Marie Presley’s daughter, actor Riley Keough, getting Priscilla Presley \$2.4 million.

But the lawsuit says she cut them off in violation of contracts soon after, publicly smeared them and later sued them.



People walk near Pinkfong characters, from the South Korean kids' content company, during a coronavirus prevention campaign at City Hall Plaza in Seoul, on Oct. 12, 2020. The writing on the character's mask reads, 'Thank you so much.' (AP)

Film



Lena Hall attends the special screening of 'Honey Don't!' at Metrograph on Wednesday, Aug. 13, in New York. (AP)

Kennedy Center

Trump to host the awards show

Trump names Sly, Kiss for Kennedy Honors

WASHINGTON, Aug 14, (AP): As the new chairman of the Kennedy Center, President Donald Trump added a highly personal stamp to this year's announcement of the recipients of the annual honors, whom he named as country music star George Strait, "Rocky" actor Sylvester Stallone, singer Gloria Gaynor, the rock band Kiss and actor-singer Michael Crawford.

Instead of the Kennedy Center revealing the names through a press release as usual, Trump announced the honorees himself during a Wednesday press conference at the site, where he was flanked by American flags and photo stands for each of the entertainers that were initially covered by red drapes. Unlike in his first term, when he didn't even attend the honors ceremony, he announced that he would be hosting it later this year and that he had been deeply involved with the selection process. He also suggested he might choose himself for a future award.

The spectacle marked a new era for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, which Trump has taken over by installing himself as chair and replacing the board of trustees with loyalists. He has even hinted he'd like to see the venue renamed the Trump/Kennedy Center.

Trump has made revamping the Kennedy Center - and what he calls its "woke" agenda - the center of an ongoing push to overhaul such cultural institutions as the National Endowment of the Humanities and the Smithsonian museums.

Ceremony

The Kennedy Center Honors were established in 1978 and have been given to a broad range of artists. Until Trump's first term, presidents of both major political parties traditionally attended the annual ceremony, even when they disagreed politically with a given recipient.

Prominent liberals such as Barbra Streisand and Warren Beatty were honored during the administration of Republican George W. Bush, and a leading conservative, Charlton Heston, was feted during the administration of Democrat Bill Clinton.

At least some of this year's winners have a history of backing Trump. Stallone is a prominent supporter who has called Trump "the second George Washington" and was named by the president, along with Jon Voight and Mel Gibson, as a Hollywood special ambassador. Founding Kiss member Ace Frehley endorsed Trump in 2020, calling him "the strongest leader we've got." Meanwhile, fellow Kiss musician Paul Stanley has often criticized the Republican president, notably his resistance to accepting his election loss to Democrat Joe Biden in 2020.



President Donald Trump speaks at the Kennedy Center, Wednesday, Aug. 13, in Washington. (AP)



President Donald Trump stands beside photos of Kennedy Center Honors nominees from left showing, country music star George Strait, actor-singer Michael Crawford and 'Rocky' actor Sylvester Stallone, at the Kennedy Center, Wednesday, Aug. 13, in Washington. (AP)



Gene Simmons, (left), and Paul Stanley of Kiss perform during the final night of the 'Kiss Farewell Tour' in New York on Dec. 2, 2023. Kiss is among the recipients of the annual Kennedy Center Honors. (AP)

US composer loses 6-year legal battle

S. Korean court rejects 'Baby Shark' copyright claim

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug 14, (AP): South Korea's Supreme Court rejected a 30 million won (\$21,600) damage claim Thursday by an American composer who accused a South Korean kids content company of plagiarizing his version of "Baby Shark," ending a six-year legal battle over the globally popular tune known for its catchy "doo doo doo doo doo doo" hook.

The top court upheld lower court rulings dating back to 2021 and 2023 that found no sufficient grounds to conclude the company, Pinkfong, infringed on Jonathan Wright's copyright.

Wright, also known as Johnny Only, released his version in 2011, four years before Pinkfong's, but both were based on a traditional melody popular for years at children's summer camps in the United States.

The courts ruled Wright's version did not differ enough from the original melody to qualify as an original creative work eligible for copyright protection, and that Pinkfong's song had clear differences

from Wright's.

The Supreme Court said its ruling reaffirms the established legal principle on existing folk tunes as derivative work.

"The Supreme Court accepts the lower court's finding that the plaintiff's song did not involve substantial modifications to the folk tune related to the case to the extent that it could be regarded, by common social standards, as a separate work," it said in a statement.

Pinkfong said in a statement to The Associated Press that the ruling confirmed its version of "Baby Shark" was based on a "traditional singalong chant" that was in the public domain. The company said it gave the tune a fresh twist by adding "an upbeat rhythm and catchy melody, turning it into the pop culture icon it is today."

Chong Kyong-sok, Wright's South Korean attorney, said he hadn't received the full version of the

court's ruling yet, but called the outcome "a little disappointing."

"Anyway, the matter is now settled," he said. "It's our work that came out first, so we can handle the licensing on our side and I guess we then each go our separate ways."

Pinkfong's Baby Shark became a global phenomenon after it was released on YouTube in 2015, with the original "Baby Shark Dance" video now exceeding 16 billion views and peaking at No. 32 on the Billboard Hot 100.

Baby Shark remains a crucial product for Pinkfong, which earned 45.1 billion won (\$32.6 million) in revenue in the first half of 2025, according to its regulatory filing. The company has turned the five-member shark family - Baby Shark, Mama Shark, Papa Shark, Grandma Shark, and Grandpa Shark - into TV and Netflix shows, movies, smartphone apps and globally touring musicals.

'Advocated peace'

Genshitsu Sen, Japanese tea master, dies at 102

TOKYO, Aug 14, (AP): Genshitsu Sen, a former Kamikaze pilot trainee and grand master of the Japanese tea ceremony who promoted peace through the art of tea, has died, officials said Thursday. He was 102.

Sen had been hospitalized since falling and experiencing difficulty walking in May. He died early Thursday after developing breathing trouble, Urasenke officials said.

As a survivor of Japan's wartime Kamikaze suicide program who saw many of his fellow pilots take off for one-way flights, Sen was a staunch anti-war advocate and promoted "peacefulness through a bowl of tea."

"Serving tea brings peace to everyone," he said. "If everyone feels peaceful, there will be no war."

Sen became the 15th Grand Master of the Urasenke school of Japanese tea ceremony in 1964. Urasenke is one of three top schools founded in the early 17th century based on the teachings of Sen no Rikyu.

As grand master, Sen performed the tea ceremony more than 300 times in 70 countries to promote the art of Chado, or the way of tea, and global peace, earning him the nickname "flying teamaster."

He hosted tea ceremonies to pray for peace in milestone years marking the end of the war and, in 2011, served tea at the USS Arizona memorial in Honolulu, Hawaii, to pay tribute to those who died in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

Sen was born in 1923 in Japan's ancient capital of Kyoto. He was only 6 years old when he first took lessons to become a grand master.

His future was mired in uncertainty during the war. In 1941, the year he entered Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan launched the war on the United States, and two years later he was among 100,000 students mobilized to fight.

In 1943, Sen was conscripted to the Imperial Navy and began training to be a Kamikaze pilot, but the war ended before he was deployed.

Sen brought his tea ceremony equipment with him when he joined the navy and served a group of several fellow trainees a farewell tea before their mission.

He handed over his grand mastership to his son in 2002, but continued to promote tea and peace until earlier this year.

His wake and funeral were to be held by close family only and a memorial is expected at a later date, Urasenke said.



Genshitsu Sen, a grand master of the Urasenke school of Japanese tea ceremony, conducts a tea ceremony during an event in Shanghai, China, March 15, 2014. (AP)

Collection to go on sale

Billy Joel closing beloved New York motorcycle shop

NEW YORK, Aug 14, (AP): Billy Joel's beloved Long Island motorcycle shop is closing down after nearly 15 years of offering fans a free peek at his personal collection of dozens of bikes.

The music icon will be shuttering 20th Century Cycles in Oyster Bay, New York, in late September and auctioning off his collection later this year because of a brain disorder he has been diagnosed with, according to a spokesperson, Claire Mercuri.

In May, Joel announced that he was canceling upcoming concerts after learning he has Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus, a fluid buildup in his brain that can affect thinking, concentrating, memory, movement and more, according to the Cleveland Clinic. The 76-year-old singer, composer and pianist was having trouble with his balance but otherwise felt good, he said in an interview last month on Bill Maher's Club Random podcast.

Joel, who grew up in nearby Hicksville, opened 20th Century Cycles in late 2010 as a place to maintain and repair his motorcycles, restore and customize ones he bought and showcase his collection for the public at no charge.

"It's basically promoting an aesthetic here," he said in a 2013 YouTube video filmed at the shop. "I like older style. I like the automotive style from the '30s to the '60s. I wanted to collect a whole bunch of those kinds of bikes, put 'em in one place and let people see what that era of bike looked like. Because it's starting to be a lost aesthetic."

He said he also wanted to bring foot traffic and business to downtown Oyster Bay - a ritzy waterfront community about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of midtown Manhattan - where part of



Billy Joel leads riders in the 9/11 Memorial Motorcycle Ride in New York on Sept. 11, 2015. (AP)

the street that includes 20th Century Cycles was renamed Billy Joel Way in 2023.

"I've been living in this community for a long time," he said in the video. "I actually grew up not far from here. And I'd like to get a little interest going into the town and the village."

Joel's nearby home in Centre Island is listed for \$29.9 million, and he has been living in South Florida, while keeping a home in Sag Harbor on Long Island.

The shop became a popular stop for motorcycle enthusiasts and tourists. It was home to Joel's collection of more than 75 bikes, dating back all the way to the 1940s and including Harley-Davidsons, Triumphs, Ducatis, Moto Guzzis, Indians and BMWs. One of the most valuable, he said, was a 1952 Vincent Rapide, which can sell for tens of thousands of dollars and sometimes more, according to auction sites.

Good sleep helps children stay focused, attentive in class

How to get kids back on a sleep schedule for school year

NEW YORK, Aug 14, (AP): After a summer of vacations and late nights, it's time to set those back-to-school alarms.

A good night's sleep helps students stay focused and attentive in class. Experts say it's worth easing kids back into a routine with the start of a new school year.

"We don't say 'get good sleep' just because," said pediatrician Dr. Gabrina Dixon with Children's National Hospital. "It really helps kids learn and it helps them function throughout the day."

The amount of sleep kids need changes as they age. Preschoolers should get up to 13 hours of sleep. Tweens need between nine and 12 hours. Teenagers do best with eight to 10 hours of shut-eye.

Early bedtimes can slip



Second-grader Aaminah Ingram-Kirk, 7, leads the way off the bus for the first day of school at Bishop McCort Catholic Elementary West on Tioga Street in Johnstown, Pa., Aug. 21, 2024. (AP)

through the cracks over the summer as kids stay up for sleepovers, movie marathons and long plane flights. To get back

on track, experts recommend setting earlier bedtimes a week or two before the first day of school or gradually going to bed 15 to 30 minutes earlier each night.

Don't eat a heavy meal before bed and avoid TV or screen time two hours before sleep. Instead, work in relaxing activities to slow down like showering and reading a story.

"You're trying to take the cognitive load off your mind," said Dr. Nitun Verma, a spokesperson for the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. "It would be like if you're driving, you're slowly letting go of the gas pedal."

Parents can adjust their back-to-school plans based on what works best for their child. Nikkya Hargrove moves her twin daughters' bedtimes up by 30 minutes the week before school

starts.

Sometimes, her 10-year-olds will negotiate for a few extra minutes to stay up and read, Hargrove said those conversations are important as her children get older and advocate for themselves. If they stay up too late and don't have the best morning, Hargrove said that can be a learning experience too.

"If they're groggy and they don't like how they feel, then they know, 'OK, I have to go to bed earlier,'" said Hargrove, an author and independent bookstore owner from Connecticut.

In the morning, soaking in some daylight by sitting at a window or going outside can help train the brain to power up, Verma said.

Sleep quality matters just as much as duration. First-day jitters can make it hard to fall

asleep no matter how early the bedtime.

Dixon says parents can talk to their kids to find out what is making them anxious. Is it the first day at a new school? Is it a fear of making new friends? Then they might try a test run of stressful activities before school starts to make those tasks feel less scary - for example, by visiting the school or meeting classmates at an open house.

The weeks leading up can be jam-packed and it's not always possible to prep a routine in advance. But kids will adjust eventually so sleep experts say parents should do what they can. After all, their kids aren't the only ones adjusting to a new routine.

"I always say, 'Take a deep breath, it'll be OK,'" Dixon said. "And just start that schedule."



A Sudanese girl receives an oral cholera vaccine during a vaccination campaign conducted by health ministry workers in Khartoum, Sudan, Wednesday, Aug. 13. (AP)

17 areas at famine risk: UN

Sudan launches a 10-day cholera vaccination drive

KHARTOUM, Sudan, Aug 14, (Agencies): Health officials in Sudan have launched a 10-day cholera vaccination campaign in the capital, Khartoum, to curb what humanitarians call a rapidly spreading outbreak of the diarrheal disease fueled by civil war, displacement and heavy rainfall.

Associated Press video footage on Wednesday showed officials administering the vaccine to children and others. Healthcare worker Aziza Berima said the campaign in Khartoum began Sunday and targets over 150,000 people.

Resident Montaser al-Sayed said he and his family recently returned home after being displaced by fighting. They feared cholera in the chaotic conditions but said the vaccination campaign reassured them.

"As a mother, I was relieved," said another resident, Razaz Abdullah.

Cholera is spreading at an alarming rate and the collapsed health system makes it "extremely hard to trace and contain," Sophie Dresser, director of programs at Mercy Corps-Sudan, told the AP.

Last month, the United Nations humanitarian office said over 32,000 suspected cholera cases have been reported in Sudan this year. Since the outbreak was declared in July 2024, more than 83,000 cases and 2,100 deaths have been reported, the U.N. said, citing Sudan's health ministry.

The UN says cases are rising in Sudan's more remote western region of Darfur. The health ministry has reported 1,440 suspected cases and 74

deaths there.

Although vaccination campaigns launched last year across some areas in Sudan, the disease has continued to spread in recent months amid the ongoing fighting between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese army.

The World Health Organization describes cholera as a "disease of poverty" because it spreads where there is poor sanitation and a lack of clean water. The diarrheal disease is caused when people eat food or water contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*. It is easily treatable with rehydration solutions and antibiotics, but in severe cases the disease can kill within hours if left untreated.

Meanwhile, 17 areas of Sudan, including parts of Darfur, the Nuba Mountains, Khartoum and Gezira, have been classified as "at risk of famine," a UN spokesman said Wednesday.

One year ago, in August 2024, famine was confirmed in the Zamzam displacement camp in Sudan's North Darfur state and has since spread to areas in Darfur and Kordofan, said Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, at a daily briefing.

Since then, the situation, especially in El Fasher, the capital city of North Darfur, has only gotten worse.

The World Food Programme (WFP) on Wednesday called for humanitarian access to El Fasher which is facing starvation and remains cut off from humanitarian assistance, Dujarric said.

Oil nations, plastic industry oppose caps

New draft of global plastic pollution treaty wouldn't limit plastic output

GENEVA, Aug 14, (AP): Negotiators working on a treaty to address global plastic pollution discussed a new draft of the text Wednesday that wouldn't limit plastic production or address chemicals used in plastic products.

The biggest issue of the talks has been whether the treaty should impose caps on producing new plastic or focus instead on things like better design, recycling and reuse. About 100 countries want to limit production as well as tackle cleanup and recycling. Many have said it's essential to address toxic chemicals.

Powerful oil and gas-producing nations and the plastics industry oppose production limits. They want a treaty focused on better waste management and reuse.

Countries with very divergent views expressed disappointment with the draft. It could change significantly and a new version is expected Thursday, the last scheduled day of the negotiations.

When they convened Wednesday night, Colombia's delegation said that the text was entirely unacceptable, because it was unbalanced, and lacked the ambition and global obligations needed to end plastic pollution. The delegation said that it wouldn't accept the wording as the basis for negotiations.

The head of Panama's delegation to the talks, Juan Carlos Monterrey Gómez, stood up and cheered. Many delegations made statements to agree, including Mexico, Chile, Ghana, Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom, the European Union and the group of small island developing states.

"Let me be clear - this is not acceptable for future generations," said Erin



Luis Vayas Valdivieso, the chair of the negotiating committee, bangs a gavel during a plenary session during the second part of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on plastic pollution at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Wednesday, Aug. 13. (AP)

Silsbe, representing Canada.

Oil- and gas-producing nations raised other concerns, with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and others saying that the draft doesn't have the scope they want to set the parameters of the treaty or precise definitions.

The United States said that six articles cross red lines, but didn't say how. India's delegation, on the other hand, said that the draft is a "good enough starting point."

The draft contains one mention of plastic production in the preamble, reaffirming the importance of promoting sustainable production and consumption of plastics. It doesn't contain an article on production from a previous draft. There is no mention of chemicals.

The new provisions seek to reduce the number of problematic plastic products that often enter the environment and are difficult to recycle and promote the redesign of plastic products, so that they can be recycled and reused. Parties to the treaty would improve their waste management.

Luis Vayas Valdivieso, the chair of the negotiating committee, wrote the draft based on the views expressed by nations over the course of the negotiations. He told them that he did it to move them closer to a legally-binding instrument, and they can shape and improve it, as well as add and delete wording.

With little time left, he said, it's time to build bridges, not dig in over red lines.

Cheese recall

S. China battles Chikungunya

NANNING, Aug 14, (Xinhua): A total of eight cases of Chikungunya fever, a mosquito-borne viral disease, have been reported in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, confirmed local authorities on Thursday.

The eight cases were found in the Qingxiu District of Nanning City, capital of Guangxi, as of 6 p.m. Wednesday, said the Qingxiu district center for disease prevention and control. All the patients showed mild symptoms and have been effectively treated.

According to a notice from the center, to check the spread of Chikungunya fever, Qingxiu District has launched special pest control work in relevant areas.

Chikungunya fever is an acute infectious disease caused by the Chikungunya virus -- featuring clinical symptoms including fever, rashes and joint pains. The virus is transmitted to humans through bites from infected mosquitoes.

□ □ □

Listeria bacteria: Singapore has ordered a recall of a French soft cheese due to the possible presence of *Listeria monocytogenes*, the Singapore Food Agency (SFA) said on Wednesday.

The recall covers the Vieux Porche Buchette cheese, imported from France, which was also recalled in France.

Consumers who have bought the affected product should not eat it, the SFA said in a statement.

Listeria monocytogenes is a foodborne bacterium that can cause food poisoning. Symptoms may include fever, muscle aches, nausea and diarrhoea. The infection can be fatal for pregnant women, infants and people with weakened immune systems, the agency said.

□ □ □

Nutrition: The Indonesian government will almost double the budget for President Prabowo Subianto's flagship free nutritious meal program in 2026 to over 300 trillion rupiahs (about 18.52 billion U.S. dollars), aiming to reach 82.9 million beneficiaries, Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said here on Wednesday.

Mulyani noted that the government has allocated 171 trillion rupiahs (about 10.56 billion U.S. dollars) for the program this year.

"Next year, if 82.9 million people receive the benefits, the budget will be more than 300 trillion rupiahs," she said on the sidelines of a national sharia economic discussion.

MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health

To advertise in this page please call: 69994428 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

For your ads on this page

Call: 69994428

E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

DEPARTMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

مرکز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE

الفاحيل FAHAHEEL

Dr. Sabitha Venkitesh MBBS, DNB (Ophthal)

Dr. Vivek P.S MBBS, DO, DNB (Ophthal)

Dr. Reshma Ravindra MBBS, MS (Ophthal)

Special package for family available for eye check up

HOTLINE: 65 95 95 34

- Comprehensive Eye screening
- Paediatric visual assessment
- Glaucoma screening
- Diabetic Retinopathy Screening
- Foreign Body removal

Mecca Street, Near Roundabout, Life Tower Fahaheel. Tel: +965 2391 9020 www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

Nigeria overpowers Madagascar after tight first half at AfroBasket

‘Connected’ Cameroon topples reigning champion Tunisia

NAIROBI, Aug 14, (Xinhua): The 31st FIBA AfroBasket witnessed another upset as Cameroon defeated reigning champions Tunisia in Group B, following Guinea’s surprise win over top-ranked South Sudan on the opening day.

The second day of action, held in the Angolan cities of Luanda and Namibe, featured first-round matchups among eight teams from Groups A and B.

Aiming for a third consecutive title, Africa’s fourth-ranked Tunisia suffered a major setback in the group stage, losing their opener 86-65 to Cameroon.

The Central African underdogs took control from the start, denying Tunisia any momentum. Cameroon sank 11 three-pointers and converted 23 of 32 free throws.

Cameroon’s small forward Williams Narace led all scorers with 20 points, including three three-pointers, and grabbed six rebounds.

“The way our players connected that was the big key for me,” said Cameroon’s head coach Alfred Roland Aboya Baliaba, praising the team’s cohesion.

“We stayed connected defensively for the entire game. Also, offensively, we moved the ball and shared the ball. We got 22 assists and 10

turnovers. Those are the big numbers that stick with me,” he added.

In an earlier Group B game, 2015 African champion Nigeria pulled away after a close first half, capitalizing on turnovers and dominating in the paint to beat Madagascar 77-59. Nigerian guard Caleb Agada scored a game-high 22 points and added seven rebounds.

In Group A, last edition’s runner-up Cote d’Ivoire edged Rwanda 78-70 in its opener, while Cape Verde, fourth-place finisher in the previous tournament, defeated the Democratic Republic of Congo 75-66. The victory put Cape Verde atop Group A, with Cameroon leading Group B.

Sun snaps five-game skid



Las Vegas Aces guard Jackie Young (0) drives to the basket between New York Liberty center Emma Meesseman, left, and guard Sabrina Ionescu (20) during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

Valkyries set franchise records for 3-pointers

UNCASVILLE, Conn., Aug 14, (AP): Leila Lacan scored 17 points in her sixth start this season, Tina Charles added 15 points and the Connecticut Sun beat the Chicago Sky 71-62 to snap a five-game skid.

Marina Mabrey added 10 points for Connecticut (6-26), which improved to 5-11 at home.

Kamilla Cardoso scored 24 points for Chicago (8-24), which has lost 11 of 12. Elizabeth Williams had 12 points and 15 rebounds, and Rachel Banham scored 10.

Chicago’s Rebecca Allen and Connecticut’s Bria Hartley were given technical fouls and ejected after they got into a shoving match in the second quarter. The Sky’s Ariel Atkins also got a technical and was ejected “for being an escalator,” referee Angelica Suffren said after the game. There was a lengthy delay while officials reviewed video of the incident.

Chicago only had eight players available in the second half, with Angel Reese (back) missing her sixth straight game.

Valkyries 88, Mystics 83

In Washington, Veronica Burton hit six 3-pointers and scored 30 points - both career

highs - Cecilia Zandalasini also made six 3s and finished with 20 points, and Golden State beat Washington for its third straight win.

The expansion Valkyries set franchise records for 3-pointers (15) and 3-point percentage (46.7%).

Burton, who made 10 of 13 from the field, finished with seven rebounds and seven assists. Tiffany Hayes scored 14 points and Janelle Salaün added 11 for Golden State (17-15), which has won all three meetings with Washington.

Sonia Citron scored 13 points for the Mystics during a 29-9 fourth-quarter run that trimmed their deficit to 86-83. Citron converted a three-point play and hit a 3-pointer before she found Sug Sutton for a 3 that capped the spurt with 53.8 seconds to play.

Hayes made two free throws with 15.4 seconds left.

Aces 83, Liberty 77

In Las Vegas, Jewell Loyd had 21 points and five 3-pointers off the bench and Las Vegas beat New York for its fifth straight victory.

It was Las Vegas’ first regular-season win against New York since Aug. 17, 2023.

A’ja Wilson had 17 points and 16 rebounds for her 15th double-double of the season. Jackie Young added 15 points and Chelsea Gray had 13 for Las Vegas (19-14). Loyd recorded her 26th

career game with at least five made 3-pointers - tied for third most in WNBA history with her coach Becky Hammon.

Emma Meesseman led New York (21-12) with 24 points and 10 rebounds. Sabrina Ionescu added 18 points and Jonquel Jones had 11 points, seven rebounds and five assists. Breanna Stewart (knee), Isabelle Harrison (concussion) and Nyara Sabally (knee) did not play.

Dream 85, Storm 75

In Seattle, Rhyné Howard scored 25 points, Allisha Gray had 22 points and 11 rebounds for her second double-double this season, and Atlanta won its ixth straight, over Seattle.

Howard made three 3-pointers in the final 30 seconds of the third quarter to take a 68-54 lead. She banked in a 3-pointer with 3.9 seconds left and then stole the inbounds pass, leading to another 3-pointer from the same spot.

Seattle got as close as 77-69 in the fourth before Gray answered with a basket and Howard added two free throws for a 12-point lead with 2:37 left.

Atlanta (21-11) moved past New York (21-12) for second place in the WNBA standings with 12 games remaining. The Dream play the Storm again on Friday in Vancouver, British Columbia. Nneka Ogwumike led Seattle (16-17) with 29 points and nine rebounds. Gabby Williams added 11 points.

Oldest in singles since 1981

Venus gets US Open ‘wild card’ at age 45

NEW YORK, Aug 14, (AP): Venus Williams will make her return to Grand Slam tennis at the U.S. Open after a two-year absence, receiving a wild-card invitation on Wednesday to compete in singles at Flushing Meadows at age 45.

The American will be the oldest entrant in singles at the tournament since Renee Richards was 47 in 1981, according to the International Tennis Federation.

Williams already had been given a wild-card entry by the U.S. Tennis Association for next week’s mixed doubles competition. Singles matches begin in New York on Aug. 24.

She is the owner of seven major singles championships - including at the U.S. Open in 2000 and 2001 - along with another 14 in women’s doubles, all won with her younger sister, Serena, plus two in mixed doubles. Serena retired with 23 Slam singles trophies after playing at the 2022 U.S. Open.

The older Williams last participated in a Grand Slam tournament at the 2023 U.S. Open, losing in the first round. She hasn’t won a singles match there since 2019.

When Williams came back to the tour last month at the DC Open for her first match anywhere in 16 months, a reporter asked whether that would be a one-time thing or if there were plans for other tournaments.

“I’m just here for now, and who knows?” she replied then. “Maybe there’s more. ... But at the moment, I’m focused just on this. I haven’t played in a year. There is no doubt I can play tennis, but obviously coming back to play matches, it takes time to get in the swing of things. I definitely feel I’ll play well. I’m still the same player. I’m a big hitter. I hit big. This is my brand.”

Last year, Williams had surgery to remove uterine fibroids and missed most of the season. In Washington this July, she competed for the first time since March 2024 at the Miami Open and became the oldest woman to win a tour-level singles match since Martina Navratilova was 47 at Wimbledon in 2004; Williams also won a doubles match at the DC Open.

In the process, Williams drew a ton of attention for her tennis, yes, but also for letting the world know she’s engaged to an Italian actor and for her half-joking comments about needing to get back on court to get covered by health insurance.

“I love Venus. We’re friends. I didn’t really know this was something she was still wanting to do. But I also didn’t know it was something she didn’t want to do,” said Mark Ein, the chairman of the hard-court tournament in Washington. “I was surprised. And it was a wonderful surprise.”

Williams also entered the Cincinnati Open via a wild card last week, exiting in the first round of singles.

In New York, she will play in the Aug. 19-20 mixed doubles tournament with Reilly Opelka, a 27-year-old American who used to be ranked in the top 20.

Other women getting singles wild cards for the U.S. Open are Americans Clervie Ngounoue, Julieta Pareja, Caty McNally, Valerie Gluzman and Alyssa Ahn, plus France’s Caroline Garcia - who’ll be playing in her last Grand Slam tournament before retirement - and Australia’s Talia Gibson.

Men’s wild cards went to Americans Brandon Holt, Nishesh Basavareddy, Tristan Boyer, Emilio Nava, Stefan Dostanic and Darwin Blanch, and France’s Valentin Royer and Australia’s Tristan Schoolkate.



In this file photo, Venus Williams, left, and Serena Williams of the United States showing their gold medals in women’s doubles at the All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon, London at the 2012 Summer Olympics. (AP)

Wallabies seek consistency in the Rugby Championship

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Aug 14, (AP): The hardness of green shoots cultivated by the Wallabies in their test series against the British and Irish Lions will be tested by the storm they’re likely to face Saturday when they take on the World Cup champion Springboks in the Rugby Championship opener.

The Wallabies were more competitive than expected against the Lions, coming within seconds of winning the second test and then winning the third in a 2-1 series loss. Their challenge now is consistency: to keep up that standard in the Rugby Championship. They’ve finished last in each of the last two years.

The task is a difficult one, beginning at altitude in Johannesburg and at the Springboks’ most formidable home ground, Ellis Park. The venue is 1,753 meters (5,750) feet above sea level where the air is thinner and breathing is difficult during physical exertion. It’s one of the toughest test venues in the world for visiting teams.

The Wallabies haven’t beaten South Africa in their last four tests, their last eight tests in South Africa and in seven tests at Ellis Park dating back to 1963. South Africa has won six of its last seven tests at the stadium against allcomers.

The Australians went into last year’s Rugby Championship after a test series win over Wales and but only won one match in the tournament, finishing last and nine points behind third-place Argentina.

“I definitely think we’re at a better place now than we were 12 months ago,” Wallabies hooker Brandon Paenga-Amosa said. “Off the back of a really good win against the Lions, we just want to continue to build that momentum going in against South Africa, Argentina and then the All Blacks.

“First stop here at Ellis Park, so we’re looking at definitely continuing that momentum.”

South Africa has named a typically formidable squad for Saturday’s match with 18 World Cup winners among the matchday 23, a sample of what New Zealand and Argentina will face later in the Championship.

Captain Siya Kolisi will wear the No. 8 jersey for the first time in a test, combining in the back row with Pieter-Steph du Toit and Marco van Staden. Eben Etzebeth will play his 135th test at lock in combination with Lood de Jager and behind a front row of Ox Nche, Malcolm Marx and Wilco Louw.

Australia, in contrast, has several injuries as a legacy of the Lions series. Flyhalves Noah Lolesio and Tom Lynagh are out of action but Paenga-Amosa still believes the Wallabies can test the Springboks.

“It’s really easy to look at what South Africa has done in the past and obviously they’re a world-class team and for us it’s just taking them for face value,” he said. “We respect what they’ve done, we respect them as a team, winning World Cups. But we’re just going to take them at face value - what we see in front of our faces in Ellis Park is how we’re going to see them.”

New Zealand will start the competition with two tests in Argentina, at Cordoba on Saturday and Buenos Aires a week later. The All Blacks will then return to New Zealand to play South Africa in two tests before finishing with two tests against Australia.

Cantero fires Lima past Universidad Catolica

Flamengo seizes advantage in Copa Libertadores last 16

Engineer required
To work as a commercial manager

* At least 15 years of experience in Tender for and Government Project.

* Fluent in English and Arabic, Spoken and Written

* Has a University Degree

Those with previous experience should send their CV. to the :

Email: info@alkazemiq8.com

Tel: 22452445 - 22413522

RIO DE JANEIRO, Aug 14, (Xinhua): A first-half goal from Bruno Henrique gave Flamengo a 1-0 home win over Internacional in the first leg of their all-Brazilian Copa Libertadores round of 16 duel.

Henrique sent a bullet header past goalkeeper Sergio Rochet after Luiz Araujo’s delivery from a corner just before the half hour at the Maracana.

Flamengo controlled the match thereafter as the visitors managed only two shots on target.

“It’s not possible to win by a big margin every match and I have to give credit to the players for grinding out this win,” Flamengo manager Filipe Luis told reporters after the match.

“Every match at this stage of the tournament is difficult and even more so if the opponent is from Brazil.” The return match will be played next Wednesday at Internacional’s Beira-Rio stadium in Porto Alegre, with Flamengo needing only a draw to progress to the quarterfinals.

In other Copa Libertadores round of 16 clash, a late Santiago Ascacibar penalty gave Argentina’s Estudiantes a 1-0 away win over Cerro Porteno.

Meanwhile, Alan Cantero scored twice as Peru’s Alianza Lima clinched a 2-0 home win over Ecuadorian side Universidad Catolica in the first leg of their Copa Sudamericana round of 16 duel.

Cantero broke the deadlock with a looping 76th-minute header and he doubled the advantage with a clinical finish on the counterattack three minutes from time.

“I’ve had a rough period with injuries and these

goals feel like a reward for my efforts,” Cantero said.

“We had several chances to put the game away earlier tonight but we showed great concentration and got the result that we were seeking.” The result means that Alianza Lima needs only to draw next Wednesday’s decisive second leg to progress to the quarterfinals.

In other Copa Sudamericana round of 16 first-leg clashes, Bolivar secured a 2-0 home win over Cienciano.

Kuwait U-18 faces tough test against Algeria

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
CAIRO, Aug 14: Kuwait's U-18 national basketball team takes on Algeria today at 7:00 p.m. in the fifth and final preliminary round match of the 22nd Arab U-18 Basketball Championship at the Cairo International Stadium sports complex.

In earlier matches, Qatar faces Tunisia at 5:00 p.m., while host Egypt clashes with top-

ranked Bahrain at 9:00 p.m. The tournament features six teams competing in a single round-robin format. The top two teams will advance to Sunday's final, with the third-place playoff held beforehand.

Kuwait has recorded one win so far, beating Qatar 61-59, but suffered losses to Tunisia (41-78) and Bahrain (57-81). Overcoming Algeria – one of the favorites – is expected to be challenging, as the team



The Kuwait basketball player defends as the opponent goes for the basket.

combines strong technical and physical abilities. Algeria previously defeated host Egypt 76-74 in double overtime but lost heavily to Bahrain (54-80), another title contender.

Coach Talal Al-Kallaf will depend on key players, including Captain Abdulaziz Al-Mutawa, Freij Al-Freij, and Abdullah Al-Juraid, to break through Algeria's defense, while center Ali Al-Hindal is expected to play a crucial role on defense.

Kuwait U-23 set for Oman and Malaysia friendlies in Thailand

BANGKOK, Aug 14: Kuwait's Olympic soccer team will face Malaysia on August 14 and Oman on August 21 in friendly matches during its training camp in Thailand, which kicked off earlier this week. The squad is also seeking to arrange a third friendly early next week.

The camp, based in Bangkok and running until August 26, is part of preparations for the AFC U-23 Asian Cup qualifiers (Saudi Arabia 2026). Kuwait will

compete in Group B alongside hosts Myanmar, Japan, and Afghanistan, with the qualifiers scheduled from September 1 to 9.

Prior to traveling to Bangkok, the Olympic team notched local friendly wins over Yarmouk, Fahaheel, and Kazma. Head coach Dario Besic of Croatia and his staff are working to ensure the squad is fully prepared and to finalize the best possible lineup for the upcoming qualifiers.



Players gather for a team meeting prior to the match.

Qadsia parts ways with Morocco's Khafi



File photo of Moroccan forward Ismail Khafi in action.

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Qadsia has officially parted ways with Moroccan forward Ismail Khafi, settling his contract which ran until June 2026. Khafi has received offers from Moroccan clubs Raja and Wydad, and is reportedly close to joining Raja.

The club is also set to strengthen its foreign roster with 31-year-old Libyan midfielder Hamdou Al-Houni, who joins from Ahli Tripoli after leading the team to the Libyan league title. Al-Houni is expected to arrive in Turkey during Qadsia's ongoing training camp.

If finalized, Al-Houni will become Qadsia's fifth foreign player alongside Libyan Mohammed Soula, Moroccan Mehdi Barhma, and Algerian Sofiane Bouchare.

Qadsia continues its daily training in Turkey and is planning two friendly matches before the camp concludes. The team previously drew 2-2 with Saudi club Al-Fais-

aly and lost 1-0 to Al-Akhdoud. Qadsia will next face UAE's Al-Ittihad on Tuesday.

Kazma will play its first friendly in Turkey against Saudi side Dammam tomorrow. The team is also scheduled to face Khaldiya, Muharraq, and Sitra from Bahrain on August 20, 24, and 27. Beninese player Samson Akinola is set to join Kazma in Turkey.

Al-Salmiya continues daily training ahead of its friendlies against Turkish club Sirik Spor on August 16, Cypriot side Magusa Trok on August 21, and Antalya Spor from Turkey on August 27. Syrian signing Mahmoud Al-Aswad, who missed the initial preparations in Kuwait, will join the team in Bordeaux, Turkey.

Al-Jazeera will depart for Turkey on August 21 for a two-week training camp, where it will play several friendly matches as part of preparations for the Zain First Division, which kicks off on September 14.

Chinese players miss out on quarters at Snooker Masters

JEDDAH, Aug 14, (Xinhua): All four Chinese players, including Zhao Xintong and Ding Junhui, failed to advance to the quarterfinals at the 2025 Snooker Masters after suffering defeats in their last-16 matches in Jeddah.

World Championship winner Zhao Xintong once again faced Chris Wakelin after having faced each other at both the World Championship and the Shanghai Masters.

Wakelin fired a century break in the third frame to establish a 3-1 lead by the mid-session interval. After the break, Zhao found his scoring touch, producing breaks of over 50 in four consecutive frames to move 5-3 ahead.

However, Wakelin capitalized on Zhao's errors to win the next three frames, sealing a 6-5 comeback victory.

Ding Junhui's clash with Barry Hawkins was equally dramatic. Ding fell 0-2 behind early on, but recovered with a 113 break in the third frame and went on to take four frames in a row. However, Hawkins fought back from the brink of defeat to force a decider and edged past Ding 6-5.

Facing China's Chang Bingyu, seven-time world champion Ronnie O'Sullivan displayed remarkable composure and competitive strength, overturning a 2-5 deficit to claim four straight frames for a 6-5 victory.

In another match, Kyren Wilson met China's rising star Si Jiahui for the second time since last month's Shanghai Masters. Fresh from winning the Shanghai title, Wilson maintained his strong form, defeating Si 6-3 once again.



Ronnie O'Sullivan of England competes during the round 6 match against Chang Bingyu of China at the Saudi Arabia Snooker Masters 2025 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (Xinhua)

French veteran Choquet claims 1st duathlon gold in World Games



Gold medalist Benjamin Choquet (center) of France, silver medalist Arnaud Dely (left) of Belgium and bronze medalist Vincent Bieri of Belgium take selfies during the victory ceremony for the Duathlon Men's Individual at The World Games 2025 in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province. (Xinhua)

China eliminated as US, Japan advance to women's softball semis

CHENGDU, Aug 14, (Xinhua): French veteran duathlete Benjamin Choquet broke through a strong Belgian field to claim the first duathlon gold medal of the Chengdu World Games in the men's individual event on Thursday.

Choquet crossed the finish line in one hour, 14 minutes and 14 seconds. Belgian Arnaud Dely followed nine seconds behind to take silver, while compatriot Vincent Bieri claimed bronze.

China's Duan Zhengyu and Tong Yujia finished 16th and 19th, respectively.

Belgium's Thibaut De Smet and Germany's Fabian Holbach, both former professional road cyclists, started strong. But Choquet, the 39-year-old silver medalist from the last Games and the oldest competitor in the field, showcased endurance and a powerful finishing kick in the latter stages. After the second transition, he climbed from ninth place to take the lead.

Bieri said he was satisfied with the result.

Both individual events follow the format of a 5km run, 30km cycling, and another 5km run. The mixed relay features teams of one male and

one female athlete competing in a four-leg sequence (female first), with each completing two shorter segments of 2km run, 6km cycling, and 1km run.

As the multi-sport discipline closest to triathlon, duathlon retains the excitement of equipment transitions while offering opportunities for athletes with exceptional cardio endurance and lower-body strength who may not be strong swimmers.

Team China fell 8-1 to Team Chinese Taipei in a Group A game at the Chengdu World Games women's softball tournament Thursday, marking their second straight defeat which kept Team China out of semifinal contention.

Team Chinese Taipei collected 11 hits, while Team China managed just one throughout the match.

In the other Group A game, Megan Faraimo threw four no-hit innings as the United States beat the Netherlands 8-1 in five innings, securing a berth in the semifinals ahead of Friday's game against Team China.

In Group B, Canada routed Australia 9-0 in six innings, and Japan defeated Puerto Rico 7-0, with both teams clinching semifinal berths. They will face each other Friday.

In its first international appearance, the Chinese women's flag football team came close to pulling off a major upset against world No. 4 Austria, fall-

ing just short 47-45 in preliminary round action at the Chengdu World Games on Thursday.

Facing Austria, who finished fourth at last year's World Championships, China showed remarkable offensive efficiency, scoring on seven of their eight drives.

The two teams traded the lead throughout the match, with Austria ahead 27-25 at halftime. Wang Xin scored China's first international touchdown just two minutes into the first half off a pinpoint throw from quarterback Niu Xinyu.

In the nail-biting second half, Austria scored to take a 47-45 lead with only eight seconds remaining, leaving no time for the hosts to mount a comeback. Both teams had seven touchdowns, but Austria converted two more extra points to seal the win.

Austria head coach Robert Riedl said his team fought hard for the win. "The Chinese team was really, really good. It was a close game, and we had to fight until the end." International Federation of American Football president Pierre Trochet also praised the home team. "To be honest, I didn't expect that a new team can really compete with the world No. 4. I have seen team spirit, energy, and I heard the support of the fans in the stadium. The potential of China team is very impressive." China is in Group A with Austria, Canada and the United States in the eight-team tournament.

26 nations participating

Tetrathlon U15 World Championships begin in Egypt

CAIRO, Aug 14, (KUNA): The UIPM 2025 Tetrathlon U15 World Championships officially opened in Alexandria, bringing together 350 athletes from 26 countries, including Kuwait.

Running until August 17, the event is hosted by Egypt in cooperation with the International Mod-

ern Pentathlon Federation (UIPM). Speaking at the opening ceremony, Egyptian Minister of Youth and Sports Dr. Ashraf Sobhi highlighted that Egypt has pursued a strategy since 2018 to position itself as a global hub for international sporting events.

He emphasized that Egypt's ad-

vanced sports infrastructure and strong logistical capabilities have earned the confidence of international sports federations.

The opening day featured a strong start for the hosts, as Egyptian duo Mahmoud and Nour Ramadan captured the gold medal in the youth relay race.

Kuwait is represented at the championships by the Kuwait Modern Pentathlon Federation (KMPPF), competing in both team and individual events.

Tetrathlon – a variation of the Modern Pentathlon that excludes fencing – comprises four disciplines: shooting, swimming, running, and riding.

ARAB TIMES

Kuwait's No.1 English Newspaper

For Subscriptions and Complaints

Please Call

51508991

51526559

NEWS



Gold medalist Dimitrios Economo (center) of Greece, silver medalist Hector Solorio (left) of Mexico and bronze medalist Dwayne Morin of Canada pose during the awarding ceremony for the Kickboxing Men's Point Fighting - 84kg at The World Games 2025 in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province. (Xinhua)
— See Page 15

Sports

Kuwait begins quest for Arab U-18 Volleyball Championship glory

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

AMMAN, Aug 14: Kuwait's U-18 volleyball team will kick off its journey tomorrow in the 17th Arab U-18 Volleyball Championship, hosted in Amman, Jordan, from August 15 to 26.

The "Blues" begin their group-stage matches against Palestine at 7:00 p.m. at Prince Hamzah Hall, following the Libya-Lebanon clash at 5:00 p.m. on the same court. Kuwait will then face Bahrain on Sunday and Iraq the following Wednesday.

Following the withdrawal of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the Arab Volleyball Association revised the tournament format. The updated groups are: Group A – Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, and Jordan; Group B – Bahrain, Palestine, Iraq, and Kuwait. The top four teams from both groups will advance to the quarterfinals.

Kuwait's delegation is led by Kuwait Volleyball Association board member Hamoud Al-Badhali and includes head coach Mohammed Abdulrazzaq, assistant coach Mishal Al-Subaie, physiotherapist Dr. Moataz Ezzeldin, team manager Abdullah Al-Rais, and 12 players: Mohammed Al-Doukhi, Salem Al-Shammari, Abdullah Al-Ali, Mishari Al-Mutawtah, Ahmed Al-Sarheed, Salem Khaddadah, Fahad Ayadah, Saad Al-Failakawi, Bader Bouarki, Bandar Al-Ahmad, Abdulaziz Al-Obaid, and Nasser Al-Sanea.

As part of its preparations, the team recently completed a training camp in Cairo, Egypt, where they played several warm-up matches.



Kuwait Under-18 gears up for the U-18 Volleyball Championship.

PSG wins UEFA Super Cup after stunning comeback against Spurs

Mendes converts winning spot kick

UDINE, Italy, Aug 14, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain produced a dramatic late rally before beating Tottenham in a penalty shootout to win the UEFA Super Cup, securing a fifth trophy of 2025 for the French club.

Nuno Mendes converted the clinching spot kick in the shootout to complete a PSG comeback that looked unlikely when Tottenham held a 2-0 lead in the 85th minute of regulation in the annual match between the most recent winners of the Champions League and Europa League.

Lee Kang-in gave PSG hope by reducing the deficit with a fierce shot into the bottom corner and fellow substitute Gonalo Ramos grabbed an equalizer in the fourth minute of stoppage time to make it 2-2 at Stadio Friuli in Udine.

Even then, Tottenham moved into position to pull off an upset by taking a 2-0 lead in the shootout after Vitinha's first-up miss for PSG.

However, Micky van de Ven and Mathys Tel failed from the spot for Spurs, and PSG scored four penalties in a row, the last of which was slammed home by Mendes.

"Sometimes football is unfair," PSG coach Luis Enrique said. "I have to say we were fortunate in the last 10 minutes that we could score

two goals."

PSG won the Champions League, Ligue 1, Coupe de France treble last season, along with the Troph e des Champions in January. The only blip came in last month's defeat to Chelsea in the final of the Club World Cup, a competition which extended PSG's 2024-25 season into mid-July.

Luis Enrique said PSG's players had only been back in training for six days and took time to get into their stride. "My players had faith until the last minute, like our supporters," he said.

It was quite the debut for Lucas Chevalier, a goalkeeper who has just joined from Lille and taken over as first choice at PSG from Gianluigi Donnarumma - regarded by many as the world's best goalie.

Chevalier was unlucky in conceding Tottenham's opening goal in the 39th, tipping Joao Palhinha's shot onto the crossbar only for Van de Ven to show quick reactions and prod home.

He was to blame, though, for the second after failing to keep out a header from newly appointed Tottenham captain Cristian Romero in the 48th. Chevalier finished the evening by saving a penalty by Van de Ven in the shootout, a match tiebreaker in which Donnarumma often thrives.

The Italian might have been watching from home, having not traveled to Italy on Tuesday before announcing he'd be leaving PSG. "I'm very happy for him because he showed a lot of personality," Luis Enrique said of Chevalier.

Thomas Frank was taking charge of his first competitive match at Tottenham after replacing the fired Ange Postecoglou, who led the team to its first trophy in 17 years with a victory over Manchester United in the Europa League final in May.

The former Brentford manager almost had a trophy to take home, with Tottenham initially outsmarting PSG and showing clearly that it is further along in its preparations for the new campaign compared to PSG.

PSG belatedly discovered its sharpness and customary slickness and hit Tottenham with the late goals in regulation, the dramatic equalizer coming from Ramos when he headed home Ousmane Dembele's right-wing cross.

Frank said Tottenham "played almost perfectly." "The single result, 2-2, is good," Frank said. "If you look into the performance, the shift the players put in ... wow, what a mentality. "There are lots of things to be happy with. That needs to be the foundation going forward.

Kuwait U-19 tops Uruguay for second President's Cup victory



Kuwaiti players celebrate after beating Uruguay.

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

CAIRO, Aug 14: Kuwait's U-19 recorded its second win in the "President's Cup" With 35-25 victory over Uruguay at the 11th IHF Men's Youth World Championship in Cairo.

Earlier, Kuwait competed in the preliminary round in Group A, losing all matches against Sweden, Austria, and Portugal, which placed them into the consolation rounds. In the President's Cup, the team initially lost to Kosovo but then secured victories over Morocco and Uruguay.

The President's Cup features 15 teams that did not advance to the second round of the championship, divided into four groups, competing for positions 16 to 32.

On the club front, Burgan has acquired national team player Hussein Al-Mutawa on a one-season loan to strengthen its first-handball team.

Burgan also renewed the contract of local coach Hussein Habib and signed Serbian professional Jovica Nikolic, who joins Japanese player Kosuke Yasuhira and Croatian Stipe Mandalinic as the club's foreign players.

The squad includes local talents Abdulaziz Al-Dosari, Nasser Al-Faraj, Mubarak Al-Randi, Hamad Al-Saqr, and Ahmed Al-Kallaf. Last season, Burgan finished as runner-up in the Kuwaiti Premier Handball League for the first time in club history.

Al-Ibrahim to serve another term on World Aquatics Water Polo Committee

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Kuwait Aquatics Association board member Fahad Al-Ibrahim has secured re-election to the World Aquatics Water Polo Technical Committee for the 2025-2029 term.

The appointment continues the association's string of international achievements and reflects the trust that continental and global sports bodies place in the expertise of its members. Al-Ibrahim also served on the same committee during the 2022-2025 term. Al-Ibrahim noted that the committee is tasked with developing and evaluating international referees, as well as overseeing the organization of World Aquatics' global competitions. The panel comprises 16 members from around the world.

He stressed that this role is a point of pride for Kuwait, pledging to represent the country with distinction and to work closely with



Fahad Al-Ibrahim

fellow members to further develop the sport.

A former player for Kuwait's national water polo team and the senior national squad, Al-Ibrahim has also managed the sport at Kuwait Club. He previously served as assistant secretary-general of the federation before joining its board.



PSG's Marquinhos lifts the trophy with teammates after the UEFA Super Cup soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Tottenham Hotspur in Udine, Italy. (AP)



Ambassador's Message

On the special occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin residing in Kuwait. I also take this opportunity to convey my profound gratitude to the leadership, government and people of Kuwait for their steadfast support for close and friendly ties between our two countries. India remains committed to further strengthening and expanding this long-standing and time-tested relationship.

Today, as we celebrate 79 years since our Independence, we take pride in India's many achievements during these 8 decades. Our commitment to equitable development has been the cornerstone of our socio-economic policies. The principles of democracy, pluralism, and unity in diversity are deeply embedded in Indian society, guided by the ancient philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family), which also shapes our foreign policy.

India today is a land of a billion opportunities, with a robust economy that has made significant strides despite global challenges in an uncertain geopolitical environment. India has recently become the 4th largest economy in the world and is poised to become the 3rd largest economy in the next couple of years. Our 'Atmanirbhar' programme through the

flagship 'Make in India' initiative is not only designed to make us self-reliant but become an integral part of global supply chains. Today we are known in the world for many things – Pharmacy of the World, leader in space technology, delivery of digital solutions worldwide by our IT companies, thriving startup ecosystem with exponential increase in number of unicorns, innovation and technological advancements and so. The recent events have also established us as a reliable manufacturer and exporter of state-of-art defence equipments. There has never been a better time to invest in India, with unprecedented momentum in modernizing our physical and digital infrastructure. India has made significant improvements in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings, the Global Innovation Index,



H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika

and is recognized as a key driver of the global economy.

India has been resolute in its 'Zero Tolerance' approach towards terrorism. The resolute stance against cross-border terrorism taken by India recently through 'Operation Sindoor' in the wake of the horrific Pahalgam terror attack shows the determination of India to fight this menace through its 'New Normal' approach.

On the international stage, India continues to play a vital role in promoting global peace, stability, and prosperity. India has taken leadership role on global issues of relevance and concern, including reforming multi-lateral institutions like the UN Security Council and issues of climate change, affordable energy access, food security etc.

An epochal event in our bilateral relations with Kuwait was the long-awaited visit of Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi to Kuwait in December 2024. The visit was historic in many respects – conferment of Kuwait's highest honour of the 'Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer on Hon'ble Prime Minister by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and upgradation of our relationship to that of 'Strategic Partner-

ship'. The back-to-back visits of Foreign Ministers of both countries prepared the agenda and successful outcomes of the high-level visit. Bilateral relations with Kuwait have become more broad-based in the last year with setting up of 7 new institutional mechanisms in areas of mutual interest. Bilateral trade and investments are growing and are expected to grow at a much greater pace. Our cultural connections resonate well with our Kuwaiti friends, and people-to-people contacts form the foundation of our bilateral relations. The Indian community continues to be the largest and the community of first preference in Kuwait.

The Indian Embassy considers the welfare and well-being of the Indian community in Kuwait, as over-riding priority, serving as a 'Home Away from Home'. I take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to Indian community associations, professional bodies, cultural groups, media representatives and all those who are making efforts to strengthen our bilateral relations with Kuwait in their own way and support the community members in distress.

On this proud and joyous occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, I wish every Indian in Kuwait and all friends of India in Kuwait, success, good health and happiness.

India Independence Day 2025:

Celebrating 79 Years of Freedom and Progress

Every year on August 15, India celebrates its Independence Day — a solemn yet joyous occasion that marks the nation's liberation from British colonial rule in 1947. As the country commemorates its 79th Independence Day in 2025, it is both a time for patriotic reflection and a celebration of remarkable progress across social, political, economic, and technological fronts.

A Historic Journey of Freedom

On August 15, 1947, India finally broke free after nearly 200 years of British dominance. The freedom movement, led by towering figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, and countless unsung heroes, was built on the principles of non-violence, civil disobedience, and immense sacrifice. At the stroke of midnight, India awakened to life and freedom, as Nehru famously declared, "Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny..."

Since that pivotal day, India has transformed from a poverty-stricken, colonized nation into one of the world's largest and most dynamic democracies.

2025 Independence Day Celebrations

This year, the Independence Day celebrations are expected to be held with great enthusiasm across the country. The main event will take place at the Red Fort in New Delhi, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to hoist the national flag and address the nation. The speech is anticipated to highlight India's recent accomplishments, future aspirations, and reaffirm its commitment to unity and inclusive growth.

The 2025 theme, "Viksit Bharat @100" (Developed India at 100),



reflects the government's focus on setting a clear vision for India's centenary of independence in 2047. Cultural performances, parades, flag hoisting ceremonies, and public programs are being organized across schools, offices, and public institutions nationwide.

Key Achievements Since Independence

Over the past 79 years, India has made remarkable strides in various domains, evolving from a fledgling state into a global powerhouse.

1. Democracy and Governance

India is now the world's largest democracy, with over 960 million eligible voters. Despite its vast diversity and complexity, the democratic process has remained robust, with regular elections, peaceful transitions of power, and active public participation.

2. Economic Growth

From a GDP of merely \$30 billion

in 1947, India's economy has grown to become the world's fifth-largest, surpassing the UK in recent years. It is a major hub for IT services, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and now emerging industries like renewable energy and semiconductors.

3. Space and Science

India's space agency, ISRO, has placed the country among global space leaders. Historic missions like Chandrayaan-3's successful lunar landing in 2023 and the launch of the Gaganyaan human spaceflight program have showcased Indian scientific excellence.

4. Digital Transformation

India's digital revolution has connected millions through affordable data, mobile services, and the world's largest biometric ID system, Aadhaar. Initiatives like UPI (Unified Payments Interface) have transformed the economy into a global leader in digital transactions.

tal transactions.

5. Education and Innovation

India is home to world-class institutions such as the IITs, IIMs, and AIIMS. In recent years, the National Education Policy 2020 and growing EdTech sector have aimed to make education more inclusive and forward-looking.

6. Healthcare

Though challenges remain, India has significantly improved life expectancy, infant mortality, and access to basic healthcare. The successful COVID-19 vaccination drive and the rollout of Ayushman Bharat, the world's largest health insurance scheme, have shown strong public health progress.

7. Global Diplomacy

India now plays a pivotal role on the global stage, participating in forums such as the G20, BRICS, and QUAD. As of 2025, India holds a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council and continues to push for a permanent one.

The Road Ahead

While India has achieved much, challenges like poverty, climate change, inequality, and infrastructure gaps still persist. The vision for 2047 — a fully developed, equitable, and green India — requires consistent policy reforms, youth participation, and unity across communities.

As Indians around the world raise the tricolor and sing the national anthem this Independence Day, they celebrate not only their history but also a shared commitment to shaping a brighter future. The journey of India — from struggle to strength — is not just a national story, but a global inspiration.



TODAY, as we joyfully celebrate India's Independence Day, let us remember that this occasion is not just a date on the calendar, nor merely a feeling to be cherished. It is a moment for reflection — to judge ourselves, to evaluate how far we have truly attained freedom in every aspect of our lives, and to ask whether we are doing justice to this priceless gift.

Freedom is not simply the absence of chains; it is the presence of responsibility. True liberty means making choices that uplift rather than harm, respecting the rights of others while safeguarding our own. It demands that we act with integrity, empathy and a sense of duty toward our fellow citizens and our nation.

The meaning and scope of freedom may vary across cultures, philosophies and political systems, but its essence remains universal — the right to live with dignity, equality and hope for a better future.

August 15 is not only a day to remember the sacrifices of our brave freedom fighters but also to honor the unity and progress of our nation. It is a call to preserve the values for which countless lives were given — justice, equality and fraternity.

*May our flag always fly high,
our spirit remain unbroken,
and our hearts beat as one.*

One Nation. One Heart. One Pride

S. Mubashshir Alam

Supplements-in-charge

Mobile: 97888405

Email: mubashshir@alseyassah.com

India Advancing Trade Relations with the GCC: Spotlight on Kuwait

INDIA'S international trade has undergone a transformative evolution over the past few decades, positioning the country as a key player in global markets. Among India's most strategically important trade partners is the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a regional bloc that includes Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain. While much attention is often given to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, India's economic partnership with Kuwait has quietly emerged as a resilient and mutually beneficial relationship, especially in the context of energy trade, investments, and human capital.

Strengthening Bilateral Trade with Kuwait

India and Kuwait share a long-standing trade relationship, dating back centuries, rooted in maritime trade across the Arabian Sea. In recent years, this relationship has gained fresh momentum. Bilateral trade between India and Kuwait stood at around \$13.8 billion in 2022–23, making Kuwait one of India's top 10 oil suppliers and a key GCC trade partner.

India's exports to Kuwait include:

☆ **Cereals (especially rice)**

- ☆ **Meat and meat products**
- ☆ **Machinery and mechanical appliances**
- ☆ **Iron and steel products**
- ☆ **Electrical machinery**
- ☆ **Pharmaceuticals**

On the other hand, India imports mainly crude oil and petroleum products from Kuwait, which remain critical to meeting India's growing energy demands. In 2023, Kuwait was the 9th largest supplier of crude oil to India, underscoring its importance in India's energy security framework.

Energy and Beyond: Investment & Economic Collaboration

While energy dominates trade statistics, the economic partnership is steadily diversifying. India is encouraging Kuwaiti investment in Indian infrastructure, renewables, digital technologies, and manufacturing sectors through initiatives such as Make in India and National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP).

The Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), one of the world's oldest sovereign wealth funds, has shown interest in expanding its portfolio in India, with potential investments in sectors like clean energy, fintech, and

urban development.

India, in turn, has expressed interest in collaborating with Kuwait in sectors such as petrochemicals, food processing, and IT services. Several Indian companies operate in Kuwait, and there is growing room for deeper business-to-business engagement.

Human Capital, Remittances, and Cultural Ties

A significant pillar of India-Kuwait relations is the Indian diaspora. Over 1 million Indians live and work in Kuwait, making them the largest expatriate community in the country. Indian workers contribute significantly to Kuwait's economy across sectors such as construction, healthcare, education, and services.

In return, remittances from Kuwait to India totaled over \$4 billion in 2022, supporting countless Indian families and boosting the country's foreign exchange reserves.

These people-to-people links have fostered a strong cultural bridge and goodwill, contributing to mutual respect and long-term collaboration.

Toward a Wider GCC Framework

India and the GCC are currently in talks to revive

negotiations on a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Although no country-specific FTA exists between India and Kuwait yet, both governments have expressed interest in streamlining trade procedures, enhancing customs cooperation, and expanding investment flows.

Kuwait also supports broader GCC-India trade integration, and its participation in a future India-GCC FTA would likely accelerate the economic engagement even further.

India's trade relationship with Kuwait may not attract the same headlines as its ties with the UAE or Saudi Arabia, but it is strategic, longstanding, and full of potential. With shared interests in energy, human development, and economic modernization, India and Kuwait are poised to deepen their partnership further.

As part of India's broader outreach to the GCC, Kuwait stands out as a stable, friendly, and valuable partner in building a prosperous regional future.



TOYOTA GAZOO Racing Clinches Historic

1-2-3-4-5 Finish at Rally Finland



** Kalle Rovanperä claims his first Rally Finland victory, setting new WRC speed record*
** Toyota extends 2025 WRC Manufacturers' Championship lead by 87 points*

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing World Rally Team (TGR-WRT) achieved a sensational result at Rally Finland, completing a remarkable clean sweep of the top five positions. Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen, secured their first victory on their home turf in spectacular fashion, leading an unprecedented 1-2-3-4-5 finish for Toyota.

The dominant performance by the No. 69 GR YARIS Rally1 crew saw them command the event from the very first forest stage. Rovanperä's victory also set a new record for the fastest rally in FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) history, maintaining an average speed of 129.95kph across four days of flat-out action.

Akio Toyoda, TGR-WRT Chairman, commented: "Congratulations to all the crews for this 1-2-3-4-5 finish! We were able to return the favour to the people of our hometown, Jyväskylä, with this fantastic result. I really appreciate everyone in the team for making this happen!"

Toyoda added: "Congratulations to Kalle and Jonne on their first victory in their home country! I'm truly happy that they were finally able to show the winning trophy to the local fans. Congratulations to the local heroes! There are five more rallies left this season, and we will work together as a team to build cars that let our drivers enjoy driving more than ever before!"

The No. 18 crew of Takamoto Katsuta and

Race Notes:

- * No. 69 Toyota GR YARIS Rally1 (Kalle Rovanperä and Jonne Halttunen)
* Position: 1st
* Time: 2 hours, 21 minutes, and 51.4 seconds
- * No. 18 Toyota GR YARIS Rally1 (Takamoto Katsuta and Aaron Johnston)
* Position: 2nd
* Time: 2 hours, 22 minutes, and 30.6 seconds
- * No. 17 Toyota GR YARIS Rally1 (Sébastien Ogier and Vincent Landais)
* Position: 3rd
* Time: 2 hours, 22 minutes, and 36.5 seconds
- * No. 33 Toyota GR YARIS Rally1 (Elfyn Evans and Scott Martin)
* Position: 4th
* Time: 2 hours, 22 minutes, and 39.5 seconds
- * No. 5 Toyota GR YARIS Rally1 (Sami Pajari and Marko Salminen)
* Position: 5th
* Time: 2 hours, 23 minutes, and 10.2 seconds

Aaron Johnston secured a strong second place, marking Katsuta's second podium finish in the last three editions of Rally Finland. The pair delivered a consistently fast and error-free performance to finish 39.2 seconds behind the winners.

Sébastien Ogier and Vincent Landais rounded out the podium in third place, with the No. 17 GR YARIS Rally1, after a closely fought battle with teammates Elfyn Evans and Scott Martin, who

finished fourth. Evans' solid performance also elevated him back into the lead of the drivers' championship standings with 176 points, closely followed by Rovanperä and Ogier with 173 and 163 points, respectively.

Completing the historic Toyota lockout was local rising star Sami Pajari and co-driver Marko Salminen, who claimed fifth overall with an impressive performance that included three stage wins and a

composed, mature drive throughout the weekend.

This remarkable result represents only the second time in WRC history that a single manufacturer has occupied all top five positions, an achievement not seen since 1990. With its eighth victory in nine rallies this season, Toyota further extends its commanding lead in the manufacturers' championship by 87 points, with a staggering total of 458 on the board.

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nürburgring 24 Hours endurance race. Toyota's participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established TGR, to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' TGR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to 'making ever-better' cars. Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, TGR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.

The next round of the 2025 FIA WRC is Rally Paraguay, taking place from 28-31 August, marking the championship's first-ever visit to the South American nation, followed by Rally Chile a fortnight later.



TOYOTA

ALL NEW 2025 COROLLA CROSS



KD 6,495



MOHAMED NASER ALSAYER & SONS EST. CO. W.L.L.
A SUBSIDIARY OF ALSAYER HOLDING.

1803 803
toyotakuw



India’s IT Revolution:

From Back Office to Global Tech Powerhouse

India’s rise in the global information technology (IT) space is one of the most remarkable success stories of the modern era. From modest beginnings in the 1980s, the country has grown into a global digital powerhouse — supplying cutting-edge software solutions, IT services, and innovation to the world. Today, as India stands tall in 2025, it is not just known as the world’s IT back office but also as a hub of digital transformation, homegrown innovation, and startup excellence.

Humble Beginnings, Bold Vision

India’s journey in the IT sector began in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when companies like Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, and Wipro began offering software services to clients in the West. With liberalization in the 1990s, the industry gained momentum. English-speaking engineers, a large technical workforce, and time-zone advantages helped India become the global center for outsourced IT services and software development.

Government initiatives such as the establishment of Software Technology Parks of India (STPIs), tax incentives, and education policy reforms created a fertile environment for IT growth. The Y2K problem in the late 1990s further boosted India’s visibility in the tech world, positioning it as a reliable partner for software solutions.

Growth into a Global Leader

As of 2025, India’s IT and business process management (BPM) industry is valued at over \$250 billion, contributing nearly 8% to the country’s GDP and employing more than 5 million professionals. Indian IT companies serve Fortune 500 clients across banking, healthcare, retail, telecom, and manufacturing, delivering everything from cloud computing and cybersecurity to artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML).

Flagship firms such as TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCLTech, and Tech Mahindra have built a global presence, with delivery centers and offices in North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, and the Middle East. They’ve evolved from simple coding service providers to end-to-end digital transformation partners.

India’s success isn’t limited to services. IT products and platforms built in India — such as Freshworks, Zoho, and Postman — are



being used by millions of businesses worldwide.

Digital India and Government-Led Transformation

A major catalyst in recent years has been the Digital India initiative launched in 2015. This ambitious program aimed to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. In the years since, the government has laid down the digital infrastructure backbone, bringing internet connectivity to even remote villages.

Key achievements include:

Aadhaar: The world’s largest biometric digital ID system, with over 1.3 billion enrollees.

UPI: A revolutionary real-time payment system enabling billions of secure transactions monthly.

DigiLocker, e-Sign, and India-Stack: Tools that support paperless governance, secure digital identities, and fintech growth.

These platforms have enabled a digital public infrastructure model admired globally and replicated in parts of Africa and Southeast Asia.

Startup and Innovation Boom

India’s IT landscape is no longer dominated only by large service companies. The last decade has seen an explosion of tech startups, many of which have achieved unicorn status (valued at over \$1 billion). India now has over 120 unicorns, making it the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world, after the U.S. and China.

Cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, and Gurugram are thriving innovation hubs. From edtech platforms like BYJU’S and upGrad, to fintech disruptors like PhonePe, Razorpay, and Paytm, Indian startups are solving local problems with global potential.

Moreover, the Semiconductor Mission and increasing focus on AI, quantum computing, and robotics signal that India is moving beyond services into high-end technology manufacturing and R&D.

Global Talent and Influence

Indian tech talent continues to shape the world. CEOs of global tech giants such as Google (Sundar Pichai), Microsoft (Satya Nadella), IBM (Arvind Krishna), and Adobe (Shantanu Narayen) are of Indian origin, showcasing the global impact of India’s education system and tech culture.

Indian engineers, data scientists, and developers are sought after worldwide, forming a significant portion of Silicon Valley’s workforce.

Challenges and the Road Ahead

While India’s IT journey has been extraordinary, challenges remain. Bridging the urban-rural digital divide, ensuring data privacy, upgrading skills for Industry 4.0, and fostering deeper innovation are essential to sustain long-term growth.

Yet, with its youthful population, expanding internet access, and growing investments in emerging technologies, India is well on its way to becoming a global tech leader, not just in execution but also in invention.

From writing code for others to building unicorns, enabling billions of digital transactions, and influencing global tech trends, India’s achievements in the IT space reflect resilience, innovation, and strategic vision. As it continues to build on this momentum in 2025 and beyond, India is not just powering its own digital future — it’s helping shape the digital future of the world.

Oriental Restaurant

The taste that touches your heart

Extends warm wishes on India’s Independence Day

Oriental Restaurant offers its sincere greetings to all Indian nationals on the auspicious occasion of India’s Independence Day. Independence represents freedom, joy and happiness. It instills a renewed sense of energy — both physically and mentally — into our lives. The feeling of being independent inspires positivity in our thoughts and actions and strengthens our spirit as individuals and as a community.

When we enjoy good health and nourishing food, we are reminded of how fortunate we are. With this in mind, Oriental Restaurant proudly invites you to celebrate the day by indulging in a rich variety of flavors. We serve a delightful fusion of Chinese, Continental, Arabic and Indian cuisines.

As we come together to honor India’s 79th Independence Day, let us reflect on the values that bind us — freedom, resilience and unity. May the spirit of independence fill your hearts with pride and joy. Let’s take this moment to appreciate our heritage, honor the sacrifices of those who came before us, and look forward to a brighter, more prosperous future.

Let’s celebrate Independence Day with enthusiasm and pride. Memories in our souls. Let’s salute the nation on this Independence Day with freedom in our minds, faith in our hearts, and pride in our souls and rejoice in the spirit of Independent India.

Let’s cherish the freedom we have today and work towards a brighter tomorrow.

The day of 15th August 1947 has been engraved in the Golden History of India. It is the day when India got its freedom from the British rule.

Freedom is our right. Unity is our strength.

“Anyone who comes to my restaurant should be satisfied with the taste, service, ambience and value for money,” said Shetty. Kuwait is renowned as a food lovers’ paradise, and half of our clientele are Kuwaitis. ‘Taste that touches your heart’ is our company’s motto and business philosophy.

According to Shetty, there’s no replacement for hard work. “But the most important thing is



N. Satishchandra Shetty
Managing Director



‘The taste that touches your heart’

to take care of one’s health and wellbeing. Only then we can be happy. Happiness is the reason for living,” he argued, while at the same time, he espoused for following basic values. “We have to treat human beings like human beings,” he said. Shetty sees hope in the younger generation. “The youth have better understanding. They will overcome all challenges.”

Wishing you all a very Happy Independence Day!

India’s Textile Industry:

A Legacy Woven Into the Future

India’s textile industry stands as one of the country’s oldest and most significant economic pillars, embodying a rich legacy that spans centuries. From hand-woven fabrics of the Indus Valley Civilization to the globally renowned cotton muslins of Bengal, Indian textiles have long been a symbol of craftsmanship, culture, and commerce. Today, the industry continues to be one of the largest contributors to the Indian economy, providing employment to over 45 million people and accounting for approximately 12% of the country’s total exports. As India positions itself for future growth in the global economy, the textile sector is undergoing a transformation that blends tradition with technology, sustainability with scale, and domestic resilience with international ambition.

The textile industry in India is highly diversified, encompassing traditional handloom and handicraft sectors alongside modern textile mills and apparel factories. It spans the entire value chain, from fiber production and spinning to weaving, dyeing, finishing, and garment manufacturing. India is the world’s second-largest producer of textiles and garments and one of the largest producers of cotton and jute. It also ranks high in silk, wool, and man-made fiber production. This gives the country a natural advantage in raw material availability, which, combined with a large skilled workforce and low labor costs, makes it a globally competitive textile manufacturing hub.

The government of India has actively supported the textile sec-

tor through policies and initiatives aimed at increasing production, modernizing infrastructure, and promoting exports. Schemes like the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for textiles and the establishment of seven PM MITRA (Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel) Parks are designed to create integrated value chains and attract large-scale investment. These efforts are intended to make Indian textiles more globally competitive while generating employment and boosting exports.

Another major development is the increasing focus on sustainability. As global consumers and brands demand more environmentally responsible practices, India’s textile industry is adapting. Many manufacturers are now adopting organic cotton, reducing water consumption, recycling textile waste, and investing in cleaner technologies. Certifications like GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) and OEKO-TEX are becoming more common among Indian exporters, helping them tap into premium global markets. Startups and established players alike are working on innovations such as plant-based dyes, biodegradable fabrics, and low-impact production processes.

Despite these strengths, the Indian textile industry faces several challenges. Competition from countries like Bangladesh, Vietnam, and China remains intense, especially in the ready-made garments sector. These countries often benefit from better trade agreements and more efficient logistics. India also contends with issues

such as fragmented supply chains, outdated machinery in many units, and fluctuating raw material prices. Labor unrest and regulatory bottlenecks in certain states can also hinder productivity and ease of doing business.

To overcome these obstacles, the industry is increasingly turning to digitization and automation. From smart textile manufacturing units using IoT and AI to blockchain-enabled supply chains that enhance traceability, technology is helping India’s textile sector move toward higher efficiency and transparency. E-commerce has also become a game-changer, enabling small and medium textile businesses to access markets across India and abroad. Indian fashion and textile brands are using digital platforms to showcase local weaves and traditional designs to a global audience, reviving interest in crafts like Chikankari, Banarasi silk, and Pashmina.

The outlook for India’s textile industry appears promising. With global brands seeking to diversify their sourcing away from China—a trend accelerated by the pandemic and geopolitical shifts—India is well-positioned to emerge as a preferred destination. The growing demand for athleisure, home textiles, and sustainable fabrics globally offers new growth avenues. Additionally, the rising middle class and increasing fashion consciousness within India are driving domestic demand for stylish and affordable apparel.

If the industry continues to innovate, invest in sustainability, and improve ease of doing business, it could significantly boost its share in the global textile and apparel market, which is projected to reach \$1.2 trillion by 2030. With the right policy support, skill development, and infrastructure upgrades, India could potentially double its textile exports in the next five years.

India’s textile story is one of resilience and reinvention. From its ancient handlooms to the high-tech looms of today, the sector has evolved while retaining its soul. As the world increasingly values authenticity, heritage, and sustainability, Indian textiles—with their deep-rooted tradition and growing modern appeal—are poised to weave an even more influential role on the global stage.



Dining Pleasure

Eat, express, experience and enjoy!

At Oriental, eating out is your personal statement to the family, friends, business clients and associates. It is your way of sharing the quality life. We serve Italian, Chinese, Continental, Arabic and Indian cuisine. But you serve to your partners the world.

Salmiya
Salmiya Commercial Complex
Opp: Jawala Club
Hamad Al-Mubarak Street
Tel: 25720788, 25720799

Sharq
Mubarak Al-Kabeer Street,
Darwaza Abdul Razzaq
Tel: 22456553, 22441673
www.orientalkuwait.com

The taste that touches your heart



AL-RASHED INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING CO.

Regional Experience with Global Vision

Extends warm wishes on India’s Independence Day



Ravi Varrier
CEO



Bassim Saud A. Al-Rashed
Chairman



Pradeep Menon
CFO

AL RASHED International Shipping Company extends its heartiest greetings to all Indians and the nation on the glorious occasion of India’s Independence Day. Celebrated every year on August 15, this day marks a defining moment in history — the day in 1947 when India gained its hard-earned freedom from British rule. It is a time to honor the immense sacrifices of countless individuals who fought with courage, resilience and unwavering commitment to secure the nation’s independence.

As we raise our flags high and remember our heroes, let us allow the tricolor to inspire strength, peace and growth in our hearts. May we always think of freedom not merely as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to do what is right. Wishing everyone a joyous Independence Day — a day filled with pride, gratitude and hope for the continued success of our great nation.

Independence Day is not just a national holiday — it is a celebration of freedom, unity and progress. From the hoisting of the tricolor to cultural programs and patriotic expressions, the day’s festivities are vibrant and filled with pride. It is also a moment of reflection — on how far India has come and the collective responsibility we share in shaping a just, inclusive and prosperous future.

AL-RASHED International Shipping Co. in association with proactive, reliable global partners, and equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure and after-sales machinery is positioned to lead the way in offering shipping and logistics solutions across the world. Treating each challenge as an opportunity that can be turned to better service to their customers, the company leads the way in providing services that are unique to the industry, leaving competition far behind in its wake.

Elaborating on the company’s strategies, Ravi Varrier, CEO of Al Rashed International Shipping Co., said, “To meet the challenges in a highly competitive business environment, we constantly assess our objectives and business activities to consistently provide innovative solutions and services to our customers. In association with proactive, reliable, professional global partners and equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure and after-sales machinery, we are positioned to lead the

way in offering shipping and logistics solutions across the world.”

Distinguished by a character that is humble and passionate, with a far-sighted mind and a crystal-clear vision for the future of the company, Mr. Varrier through his sincere leadership infuses his employees with dedication and loyalty. With a positive attitude and commitment to perseverance, the staff of Al Rashed International Shipping work cohesively towards one goal of providing the best products and services in the shipping and logistics industry.

To bring out the best in people, it is important to put sincere efforts in everything we do. After all, small things make a big difference,” says Pradeep Menon, CFO of Al Rashed International Shipping Co.

He adds, “Today, we are an established player in our own space and have created a strong foundation for future growth. Our continued initiatives towards cost rationalization and effective improvement will take us to the next level. I am confident that by focusing on delivering better services and value to our clients, we will maintain a strong and sustainable business.

We continue to strengthen our core operations while exploring diversified activities connected to the shipping industry. As a reliable logistics service provider, we are committed to offering expert solutions tailored to the needs of our clients.

Happy Independence Day!



India’s Journey towards Viksit Bharat:

11 years of Development, Progress & Nation building

As India embarked on its fast-paced human centric developmental journey to become a developed country “Viksit Bharat @2047” by the time it completes the century of the independence, the past decade has been exceptional across the national and strategic spectrum. PM Narendra Modi’s call to dispense with the slavish mentality and rise and shine with the mantra of reform, perform and transform has already begun to yield remarkable dividends. Over 1550 archaic and cumbersome laws were repealed and jurisprudence updated. At 130 in 2017 in the Doing Business Index of the World Bank India rapidly moved to 63rd place resulting in significant increase in Foreign Direct Investment. Innovation eco system has produced 1.6 Mn start ups from mere 500 ten years ago with 118 unicorns. From fragile five to become the 4th largest economy in a decade is a remarkable achievement by any standards. According to Bloomberg based on IMF data , China, India and USA are projected to be the three global growth engines from 2025-2030.

India has also emerged as a key proponent of fight against climate change and a spokesman against the ‘Green Apartheid’. India has committed to ‘zero carbon’ by 2070 but by all accounts, it seems target may be achieved much earlier. In 2015, India along with France launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA) perhaps the most consequential initiative after the NAM movement of the 1950s. A monumental achievement is that 50% of

India’s installed electricity capacity now is attributable to non-fossil sources. This is integral to the quest for India’s energy security which is essential for it to continue to remain as the fastest growing major economy in the world. India is converting ambition and aspiration into action. Not only India launched another global initiative ‘The Global Biofuels Alliance’ during the Presidency of G20 in September 2023 but also completed the ethanol mixing targets way before. Same applies to its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) where India is the first and the fastest to comply with.

The pandemic had hit the world hard in an unprecedented manner. But India’s response was unique since it was driven by its DNA dictum of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ — world is one family. When the powerful countries were hoarding vaccines and medicines for geo political ends, India, not only manufactured its own but even for others from UK and Russia, provided billions of vaccines to over a hundred countries as part of its ‘Vaccine Maitri’ — Vaccine Friendship outreach. More importantly, it had to cater for the one sixth of the world’s population which inhabits India. Since health care became a fundamental priority, India launched the government financed insurance scheme, Ayushman Bharat–Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), which is reported to have increased substantially since 2014. This is a government healthcare programme operated

on a massive scale. Under AB-PMJAY 345 million Ayushman cards have been issued, and 29,914 hospitals have been empanelled. More than sixty-five million authorised hospital admissions have taken place under the scheme. This has been further extended to include senior citizens above 70.

India is essentially an agricultural country and farmers are the back bone of India and its food security. Hence, even at the Doha rounds of WTO, India has always stood for the cause and interests of large number of developing countries. PM Modi had announced doubling of farmers’ income through various initiatives and reforms at the grass roots level. Some of these include a scheme for soil health cards to all the farmers, National Agriculture Market (e-NAM), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) which provides very low premium for farmers.” The PMKSY scheme, launched in 2015, supports the use of micro-irrigation technologies- which is a crop insurance scheme. No wonder in past decade the food grain production increased from 252 Mn tonnes to 332 Mn tonnes.

Fighting poverty has been one of the biggest tasks that the Indian Government has undertaken. Operating one of the world’s largest food security programs, the Targeted Public Distribution System under the National Food Security Act covers 81.35 (Over 800 million) beneficiaries, providing food grains to rural and urban populations. Recent decisions,

such as extending free food grain distribution under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana for another five years, exemplify Government’s commitment.

Self-Reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat) has become the key to ‘Make in India for the world’ and local for global to be part of the global value and supply chains as it emerges as the smart manufacturing hub and services centre of the world. With its zero tolerance to terror policy the indigenous defence systems rained hell on the enemy during the Op-Sindoor action against Pakistan based terror hideouts.

India has excelled not only in space exploration from first ever landing on the southern moon and Chandrayaan to Gaganyaan missions but excelled through its Digital Public Infrastructure (DBI) and Unique Digital Identity Aadhar and exceptionally large number of bank accounts across India for distribution of the benefits and payments directly into accounts .By linking Aadhaar with Jan Dhan bank accounts and mobile umbers (the “JAM” Trinity), the government streamlined the By linking Aadhaar with Jan Dhan bank accounts and mobile By linking Aadhaar with Jan Dhan bank accounts and mobile numbers (the “JAM” Trinity), the government streamlined the delivery of social welfare programs, reducing fraud and ensuring that benefits reached the intended recipients directly and efficiently. This proved particularly crucial during the pandemic, enabling swift and targeted disbursement of financial aid to those

most in need. numbers (the “JAM” Trinity), the government streamlined the delivery of social welfare programs, reducing fraud and ensuring that benefits reached the intended recipients directly and efficiently. This proved particularly crucial during the pandemic, enabling swift and targeted disbursement of financial aid to those most in need. All these digital tools and Apps and digital public goods have been made available to the world especially the developing countries. AI for All, One earth one health, one grid one world are not mere slogans but policy directives of a resurgent India steeped in its civilizational ethos.

In this fractured world order, India’s sane and value based foreign policy has become robust, resilient and result oriented as it seeks to comprehensively enhance its own power spectrum through strategic autonomy and multi-alignments entrenching reformed multilateralism and multi-polarity. This was evident recently when PM Modi was again invited by PM Mark Carney to G7 Summit in Canada, despite cooler ties with them, since he felt that it was important to have India at the table. It is increasingly becoming a rule shaper from G7 to G20 to BRICS and beyond. Interest of the Global South is served by example and advocacy and by being their credible voice while pursuing inclusivity and human centric approaches.

(Amb Anil Trigunayat is a former Indian Ambassador and a Distinguished Fellow at Vivekananda International Foundation)

India and the GCC:

A Strategic Partnership Shaping the Future

India’s relationship with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has grown steadily over the past several decades, evolving from a primarily labor and energy-based engagement into a comprehensive strategic partnership. The GCC, comprising Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain, holds immense importance for India not only because of its energy resources but also due to the strong trade ties, investments, geopolitical cooperation, and the presence of over 9 million Indians across the region. As the global balance of power shifts and both regions look to diversify their economies and global partnerships, the India-GCC relationship is poised for deeper engagement and broader collaboration in the to come.

The foundation of India-GCC relations lies in energy interdependence and people-to-people ties. The Gulf remains India’s largest source of crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG), ensuring energy security for one of the world’s fastest-growing economies. In return, India is among the top importers of hydrocarbons from the region, and Indian companies have begun investing in Gulf-based refinery and petrochemical ventures. At the same time, the Indian diaspora forms a crucial part of the Gulf’s workforce, especially in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. These expatriates not only contribute significantly to the development of host countries but also send back billions of dollars in remittances, which help support India’s foreign exchange reserves and rural economies.

Trade and economic ties between India and the GCC have flourished, with bilateral trade exceeding \$170 billion in recent years. The UAE has emerged as one of India’s top trading partners, and the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in 2022 has further accelerated trade volumes, especially in sectors like gems and jewelry, pharmaceuticals, food products, and engineering goods. Similar trade expansion is being explored with other GCC members, with talks of a broader India-GCC Free Trade Agreement gaining traction. Investment flows have also increased, with Gulf sovereign wealth funds and private investors showing keen interest in India’s infrastructure, real estate, fintech, and renewable energy sectors. On the other hand, Indian companies are expanding their presence in the Gulf, especially in construction, retail, IT, and hospitality.

Beyond economics, strategic and security cooperation is becoming a central pillar of the relationship. Shared concerns over terrorism, extremism, and regional instability have prompted increased intelligence sharing, defense dialogues, and joint military exercises. Countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia have taken steps to extradite fugitives wanted in India, signaling a growing alignment on law enforcement and counterterrorism. Moreover, with maritime security becoming a global priority, especially in the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Hormuz, India has intensified naval cooperation with Gulf states to ensure the safe passage of energy and trade routes.

Cultural diplomacy has also played a significant role in fostering goodwill. The celebration of Indian festivals, yoga days, film festivals, and food fairs in the Gulf, along with the admiration for Indian cinema and culture, has brought both peoples closer. Several Gulf rulers have honored Indian leaders and citizens with high civilian awards, acknowledging their contribution to the bilateral relationship. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visits to the region have been symbolic and strategic, helping to elevate ties and demonstrate India’s commitment to the partnership.

Looking ahead, the future of India-GCC relations appears dynamic and full of potential. As both regions strive to diversify their economies and reduce dependence on oil, new avenues for collaboration are opening up in renewable energy, digital innovation, healthcare, and education. India’s expertise in technology, startups, and pharmaceuticals aligns well with the GCC’s Vision 2030 and similar transformation agendas aimed at building knowledge-based economies. Joint ventures in solar and green hydrogen, fintech platforms, smart city infrastructure, and AI-driven industries could define the next phase of cooperation.

Moreover, the geopolitical landscape is prompting both India and the GCC to seek balanced and multipolar foreign policies. As Western influence recedes and new alliances form across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, India is increasingly seen as a reliable and stable partner that can bridge East and West. The recent participation of the UAE and Saudi Arabia in the BRICS expansion, and India’s active role in multilateral forums like the G20, signal a shared interest in reforming global governance and amplifying the voice of the Global South.

In conclusion, India’s relationship with the GCC countries is no longer limited to transactional exchanges but is now evolving into a multidimensional partnership rooted in mutual respect, shared interests, and common aspirations. With complementary strengths and a history of cooperation, both sides are well-positioned to build a future marked by strategic depth, economic resilience, and cultural synergy. The road ahead may be complex, but the foundations are strong and the vision is aligned—making the India-GCC partnership one of the most significant relationships in the 21st-century global order.



India Expanding Footprint in Global Trade



India's journey from a largely agrarian economy to a global trade powerhouse has been both dynamic and inspiring. Over the past few decades, the country has steadily increased its influence on international commerce, becoming a vital player in global supply chains and economic dialogues. With a GDP surpassing \$3.7 trillion and a population of over 1.4 billion, India now stands among the world's fastest-growing major economies—fueling demand, innovation, and cross-border partnerships across continents.

One of the most visible signs of India's growing global trade impact is its flourishing exports. The country has transitioned from primarily exporting raw materials and agricultural goods to being a top exporter of pharmaceuticals, information technology (IT) services, textiles, and automotive components. Indian pharmaceutical companies supply over 20% of the world's generic medicines, making life-saving drugs more affordable and accessible in developing and developed nations alike. Simultaneously, Indian IT giants like TCS, Infosys, and Wipro have become household names across the U.S., Europe, and Asia, powering digital transformations for Fortune 500 companies.

The "Make in India" initiative, launched in 2014, has played a critical role in reshaping India's global trade agenda. It aims to position the country as a manufacturing hub by encouraging foreign direct investment (FDI) and fostering domestic innovation. As a result, global electronics, automobile, and mobile phone manufacturers have increasingly chosen India as a key production base. For example, companies like Apple and Samsung have significantly scaled up local manufacturing, not just to serve Indian consumers but also to export to international markets.

India's strategic location further enhances its trade influence. Situated between East Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, it serves as a vital link in global maritime routes. Its major ports—such as Mumbai, Chennai, and Visakhapatnam—act as critical nodes for the movement of goods, particularly to and from the Indo-Pacific region. With the development of dedicated freight corridors, improved logistics, and digital customs platforms, India has also significantly enhanced its trade efficiency, reducing turnaround times and operational costs.

Energy trade is another area where India's presence is increasingly being felt. As one of the world's largest importers of crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG), India plays a pivotal role in shaping global energy markets. At the same time, the country is investing heavily in renewable energy, with ambitions to become a leading exporter of green hydrogen and solar technology. These steps align with global efforts to decarbonize and transition to cleaner sources of energy.

Moreover, India's expanding network of free trade agreements (FTAs) and bilateral partnerships has helped deepen its global economic integration. Recent trade pacts with countries like the UAE and Australia have opened new markets and investment opportunities. New Delhi is also negotiating major deals with the European Union and the United Kingdom, indicating its willingness to engage more robustly in global economic governance.

India's impact on global trade is not just economic—it's also cultural. Indian brands, films, cuisine, and fashion have found widespread acceptance across continents, contributing to the country's soft power and expanding its commercial footprint. The global success of Bollywood, yoga, and Indian cuisine creates new avenues for tourism and exports, reinforcing trade ties in unique ways.

As the world navigates complex challenges—from climate change to geopolitical realignments—India is poised to play an increasingly influential role. Its demographic dividend, entrepreneurial spirit, and policy reforms make it not just a consumer market but also a crucial contributor to global innovation and growth. In the coming decades, India's imprint on global trade is only set to grow deeper, reshaping economic landscapes far beyond its borders.

Literature in digital age: Double-edged influence of social media and AI

By Mohammad Saad

Class: IX – C
Fahaheel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School (FAIPS-DPS)

In the 21st century, literature finds itself at a transformative crossroads, shaped in profound ways by the rise of social media and artificial intelligence (AI). These forces are changing not only how stories are told and poems are written but also how writers and readers connect across the globe. This essay explores the growing influence of digital technology on the literary world, weighing both the opportunities and the challenges it presents.



Mohammad Saad

In the past, only a select few had access to publishers and a global audience. Today, platforms like Wattpad, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) have democratized literature, allowing writers from all backgrounds to share their work instantly. These platforms help writers build diverse communities and gain immediate feedback, which can be instrumental in refining their craft.

AI has also emerged as a valuable assistant in the creative process. Whether it's generating plot ideas, enhancing character development, rephrasing awkward sentences, or helping with editing and proofreading, AI tools offer support that can reduce the time and effort involved in writing. For research, AI can swiftly analyze massive volumes of information, streamlining the creative process even further.

Recommendation algorithms, often seen as impersonal, have proven helpful in literature by introducing readers to new books and authors based on their interests. Live author Q&A sessions on Instagram, online book clubs, and literary discussions on social platforms are strengthening

the bond between writers and readers, making literature more interactive and accessible.

However, the rapid pace of social media often prioritizes brief, attention-grabbing content over complex, thought-provoking narratives. As a result, literature risks being reduced to bite-sized trends that are quickly consumed and forgotten. The race to "go viral" can push authors to focus more on popularity than depth, potentially compromising literary quality.

While AI is a powerful tool, its growing presence also raises ethical and creative concerns. Who owns AI-generated content? Can machines truly replicate the emotional depth of human authors? There's also the danger that AI could dilute authentic voices, making it harder for original storytellers to stand out.

Moreover, social media's algorithm-driven ecosystems often create echo chambers—spaces where only familiar perspectives are amplified. This can limit exposure to diverse ideas and discourage challenging or unconventional stories. Additionally, the pressure on writers to build a public persona can shift focus away from thoughtful writing to maintaining an online image, adding stress and distraction.

The influence of social media and AI on literature is both profound and inevitable. Yet, the challenges these technologies bring are not insurmountable. The key lies in thoughtful and ethical engagement—leveraging technology to enhance storytelling while safeguarding the depth, diversity, and originality that literature requires.

As readers, students, and aspiring writers, it is vital to nurture critical thinking, support underrepresented voices, and honor the timeless power of storytelling. The future of literature should not be about replacing the human touch with algorithms but about blending innovation with imagination to create richer, more meaningful narratives. By embracing this "literally literary" revolution with awareness and care, we can ensure that the written word continues to enlighten, connect, and endure.

India's Tourism Tapestry:

A Journey Through Time, Culture and Diversity

India, a country steeped in ancient traditions and timeless heritage, has long been a magnet for travelers from around the world. With its vivid diversity, India offers an experience unlike any other. From snow-capped Himalayan peaks to sun-drenched beaches, bustling metropolises to serene villages, and sacred temples to majestic palaces, India's tourism landscape is a multifaceted mosaic that caters to every kind of traveler.

Tourism in India has evolved rapidly over the years, influenced by changing global trends, economic growth, improved infrastructure, and strategic promotional efforts. Today, the tourism industry is a major contributor to the Indian economy, providing employment to millions and promoting cultural exchange. The government's initiatives such as 'Incredible India', 'Dekho Apna Desh', and the e-visa scheme have played a significant role in making India more accessible and appealing to both domestic and international tourists.

One of the key strengths of India as a tourist destination is its deep-rooted cultural heritage. India is home to 42 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including iconic landmarks such as the Taj Mahal, Qutub Minar, Ajanta and Ellora caves, and the Red Fort. These sites reflect the country's rich history, spanning several millennia and numerous dynasties and empires. Every state and region has its unique traditions, festivals, art forms, and cuisine, offering visitors a chance to immerse themselves in a rich cultural tapestry.

Religious tourism is another cornerstone of Indian travel. As the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, India draws pilgrims and spiritual seekers from all corners of the globe.



The Char Dham Yatra in Uttarakhand, the Kumbh Mela, Varanasi's ghats, Bodhi Gaya in Bihar, and the Golden Temple in Amritsar are just a few of the revered sites that attract millions annually. These places are not only centers of faith but also architectural marvels and cultural hubs.

India's natural beauty is equally compelling. From the backwaters of Kerala and the tea plantations of Darjeeling to the deserts of Rajasthan and the mangroves of Sundarbans, the country's diverse geography offers endless possibilities for nature and adventure tourism. Wildlife enthusiasts can explore over a hundred national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, home to species like the Bengal tiger, Asiatic lion, Indian elephant, and one-horned rhinoceros. Trekkers and mountaineers head to the Himalayas for world-class trails, while beach lovers flock to Goa, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and the pristine stretches along the Konkan coast.

In recent years, India has also embraced wellness and medical tourism. With the global rise of interest in holistic health, India's centuries-old practices like yoga, Ayurveda, and meditation have gained renewed relevance. Wellness retreats in Rishikesh, Kerala, and Uttarakhand attract health-conscious travelers seeking rejuvenation. At the same time, India's advanced healthcare services at relatively affordable costs have made it a popular destination for medical tourism, particularly among patients from Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

Urban tourism has flourished in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad. These metropolitan hubs blend modernity with tradition, featuring luxury hotels, vibrant markets, art galleries, museums, and nightlife. Delhi's historical landmarks, Mumbai's film industry, Bengaluru's tech parks, and Hyderabad's cuisine and architecture together create a compelling urban experience. Meanwhile, cities like Jaipur, Udaipur, Mysuru, and Kochi offer a more


regal and leisurely charm with their palaces, lakes, and old-world ambiance.


Eco-tourism and rural tourism are also gaining ground as sustainable and off-the-beaten-path travel become more popular. Villages across India are opening their doors to tourists who wish to experience authentic local lifestyles, crafts, and farming. States like Sikkim, Meghalaya, and Himachal Pradesh have pioneered eco-tourism initiatives that not only preserve the environment but also empower local communities.

The Indian tourism sector, while vibrant, faces certain challenges. Issues such as overcrowding at popular destinations, inadequate sanitation in some areas, and inconsistent infrastructure can affect the travel experience. However, continued government and private sector collaboration, digital innovation, and community involvement are gradually addressing these hurdles. Efforts are underway to promote lesser-known destinations, improve transportation networks, and ensure safety and cleanliness for tourists.

Post-pandemic, India has witnessed a strong resurgence in domestic tourism, as Indians explore their own country with renewed curiosity. Road trips, staycations, and remote work from scenic locations have become common trends. International arrivals are also recovering steadily, with India's diverse offerings making it a competitive global destination once again.

Looking ahead, the future of tourism in India appears promising. With a young population, a growing middle class, and expanding digital connectivity, India is poised to redefine its travel landscape.







HAPPY


79th


INDEPENDENCE DAY





OF INDIA







AL-RASHED INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING CO. K.S.C.C.


Wishing you a very happy Independence Day

Let us celebrate the freedom of the nation and strive to make the country more prosperous.






kuwait@al-rashedgroup.com



www.al-rashedgroup.com



+965 2291 2800 / 2801



India’s Rise as a Global Hub for Healthcare and Medical Tourism

Over the past few decades, India has emerged as one of the most dynamic players in the global healthcare landscape, making remarkable strides in medical research, technology, infrastructure, and accessibility. From cutting-edge treatments in cardiology, oncology, and orthopedics to world-class hospitals equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, India’s healthcare system has transformed itself into a hub of excellence. This transformation has been driven by a combination of public and private sector investments, an influx of skilled medical professionals, and the adoption of modern technologies such as robotic surgery, telemedicine, and advanced diagnostics. As a result, the country is now not only meeting the demands of its own vast population but also attracting patients from all over the world.

One of the most significant aspects of India’s medical advancement is the quality of its healthcare services at a fraction of the cost compared to developed nations. Procedures such as heart bypass surgeries, knee replacements, cosmetic surgeries, and organ transplants are available in India at prices that are often 60–80 percent lower than in the United States or Europe, without compromising on quality. This cost advantage is coupled with internationally accredited hospitals and medical teams that meet or exceed global standards. Institutions like the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Apollo Hospitals, Fortis Healthcare, and Manipal Hospitals have gained international recognition for their high success rates and patient care standards.

Medical research and innovation have also played a vital role in India’s healthcare growth. The country has become a global leader in the production of affordable generic drugs, vaccines, and medical devices, benefiting millions worldwide. India’s pharmaceutical industry, often called “the pharmacy of the world,” supplies over 50 percent of global vaccine demand and a substantial portion of generic medicines. The nation’s prowess in biotechnology, stem cell therapy, and regenerative medicine has opened new avenues for advanced treatment options, while ongoing research in oncology, neurology, and infectious diseases is helping tackle global health challenges.

Medical tourism has emerged as a natural extension of India’s healthcare success story. Patients from the Middle East, Africa, Southeast Asia, Europe, and even North America are increasingly choosing India for medical treatments, attracted by the combination of affordability, expertise, and hospitality. The Indian government, recognizing the sector’s potential, has introduced streamlined medical visa policies, allowing patients and their companions to enter the country with minimal hassle. This, combined with partnerships between hospitals and travel agencies, has led to the creation of comprehensive medical tourism packages that cover treatment, accommodation, local transportation, and even post-recovery leisure

activities.

Beyond cost savings and expertise, India’s cultural values and traditions enhance the appeal of its medical tourism sector. The integration of modern medicine with alternative healing systems such as Ayurveda, Yoga, and Naturopathy offers patients a holistic approach to recovery. Wellness centers and retreat resorts across states like Kerala, Karnataka, and Uttarakhand combine therapeutic treatments with scenic, peaceful environments, catering to those seeking not just medical solutions but overall well-being. This fusion of conventional and traditional healthcare gives India a unique position in the global market, differentiating it from other medical tourism destinations.

The role of technology has been equally transformative. India has rapidly adopted telemedicine platforms, enabling patients abroad to consult with Indian specialists before traveling for treatment. Robotics-assisted surgeries, AI-based diagnostics, and precision medicine are increasingly being used to enhance accuracy, reduce recovery times, and improve patient outcomes. Additionally, digital health records, wearable health devices, and mobile applications have streamlined patient monitoring and follow-up care, making India’s healthcare system more accessible and patient-friendly.

The government’s initiatives, such as the Ayushman Bharat scheme, have also expanded healthcare coverage for millions of Indians, indirectly strengthening the medical infrastructure that benefits both domestic and international patients. Investments in medical education and training have ensured a steady supply of highly skilled doctors, nurses, and technicians, many of whom have global exposure and expertise. The growth of medical hubs in cities like Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad has further consolidated India’s position as a medical powerhouse.

However, challenges remain. Infrastructure in rural areas, disparity in healthcare access, and the need for more advanced research funding are areas that require attention. Despite these, the overall trajectory of India’s medical sector is highly promising. The synergy between government policy, private sector innovation, and a skilled workforce is propelling the nation towards becoming one of the top global destinations for healthcare and wellness.

In the years ahead, as medical technology continues to evolve and patient expectations rise, India’s healthcare sector is poised to play an even greater role in shaping the future of medicine. Its ability to offer world-class treatment at accessible costs, combined with its rich tradition of holistic healing, ensures that the country will remain a preferred choice for millions seeking quality care. Medical tourism, supported by this robust infrastructure and expertise, is not just a growing industry in India—it is a testament to how far the nation has come in transforming itself into a beacon of hope, healing, and health for people around the globe.



Almailem Group: A trusted name for spare parts and tires since decades

Extends warm wishes on India’s Independence Day

Freedom is a fundamental concept — embodying the ability to make choices, act without undue constraints and live in accordance with one’s values. It is the cornerstone of individual well-being and an essential pillar of a just and equitable society.

Freedom empowers individuals to pursue their dreams and contribute meaningfully to the world. Yet, it also carries the responsibility to respect the freedoms of others and act in the interest of the greater good.

As we reflect on these ideals, let us celebrate India’s Independence Day with pride, enthusiasm, freedom in our souls and faith in our hearts.

Let’s celebrate the freedom that unites us and realize the courage of those who defended it, and the joy of being together.

It is a time to reflect on the sacrifices made by those who fought for our liberty with pride, enthusiasm, freedom in our souls and faith in our hearts.

Let the tricolor immerse you into strength, peace, and growth.

May we think of freedom not as the right as we please but as the opportunity to do what is right.

May the spirit of freedom fill your heart with joy and pride, celebrating our freedom and the heroes who made it possible.

Today, Almailem Group is a leading player in the automotive tyres, service and aftermarket industry, and a trusted name for American and Japanese spare parts, along with garage equipment, engine oils, well-tested and well-trusted auto batteries and windshields. “It has been an eventful journey over more than 65 years during which






Kuldeep Singh Lamba
Managing Director Almailem Group




we have had our share of ups and downs. But our strength has always been a committed employee base and a clear focus on customer satisfaction and aftersales services. It is this vision that has enabled us to achieve consistent growth,” Lamba said.

“One thing which has remained constant over the years is our strong commitment towards customer service, and that is what gives us confidence in being able to handle all future challenges,” he added.

Let us rejoice in the true spirit of independence.





On the occasion of India’s 79th

INDEPENDENCE DAY


we salute the resilience, unity and spirit that define the nation

www.mughalmahal.com | [@mughalmahalkuwait](https://twitter.com/mughalmahalkuwait)


TOYO TIRES


Open Roads Await

“Open Country” has a proven track record in tough races around the world. Tough ride on any road, from on-road to off-road. Bring the world’s most authentic product to your car.



OPEN COUNTRY





ALMAILEM TIRES
www.almailemgroup.com