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Ali Marafi: The strong performance and significant growth in total assets demonstrate the strength of our financial position and solid operational model



Business Page 9

## UN, global powers urged to act against Israeli expansion

# Kuwait, 30 Arab and Muslim nations reject ‘Greater Israel’ claims

CAIRO, Aug 16, (KUNA): Thirty-one Arab and Muslim countries, including Kuwait, condemned on Friday in the strongest terms the statements made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu regarding the so-called “Greater Israel.”

“These statements represent a grave disregard for, and a blatant and dangerous violation of, the rules of international law and the foundations of stable international relations,” reads a joint statement by foreign ministers of 31 Arab and Muslim countries and the Secretaries-General of the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

“They also constitute a direct threat to Arab national security, to the sovereignty of states, and to regional and international peace and security.”

They stressed that, while their states reaffirm their respect for international legitimacy and the Charter of the United Nations, particularly Article 2, paragraph 4, which prohibits the use of force or the threat thereof, they will adopt all policies and measures that preserve peace, in a manner that serves the interests of all states and peoples in achieving security, stability, and development, away from illusions of domination and the imposition of power by force.

They also strongly condemned the approval by the extremist Israeli Minister Bezalel Smotrich of the settlement plan in the “E1” area, along with his radical racist statements rejecting the establishment of a Palestinian state.

They considered this to be a blatant violation of international law and a flagrant assault on the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to realize their indepen-

dent, sovereign state on the lines of 4 June 1967, with Occupied Jerusalem as its capital. They stressed that Israel has no sovereignty over the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

They reaffirmed their absolute rejection and condemnation of this settlement plan and of all illegal Israeli measures that constitute a flagrant breach of international law and of Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolution 2334, which condemns all Israeli settlement activities aimed at altering the demographic composition, character, and legal status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 1967, including East Jerusalem, the capital of the State of Palestine.

Continued on Page 5



Firefighter in action as KFF contains a metal factory blaze in Shuwaikh.

KFF photo

## KFF quells Shuwaikh metal factory blaze, no casualties

Fire broke out in a metal factory in Shuwaikh Industrial Area on Friday evening but without any casualties, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) re-

vealed that firefighting teams from Shuwaikh Industrial Area, Ardiya, and Shaheed fire stations rushed to the location and successfully brought the fire under control.

# Al-Durra project ignites gas push

Kuwait-Saudi fields gear up for big output

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: The completion of the initial engineering studies and design of wells for the Al-Durra field between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia signals the beginning of the implementation of the early stages of the project.**

While sources confirmed that the project will be completed according to the predetermined strategy agreed upon by both countries – expected before 2030; they stated that Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) puts importance on the Durra field due to its role in reducing gas import rates, especially since the joint field reserves between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are estimated at 60 trillion cubic feet. Kuwait’s daily share of gas production from the field is around half a billion cubic feet.

Moreover, sources revealed that Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) will expand its operations in the Al-Khafji and Al-Wafra fields to boost production. They said a high-level meeting of the executive management was recently held to discuss mechanisms for the next phase of development. Acting CEO Bader Al-Munifi, his deputy for Joint Operations and Technical and Commercial Affairs Fahd Al-Kharqawi, and the managers of the main office divisions and joint operations teams attended the meeting.

According to the sources, Gulf Oil, in collaboration with Saudi companies Chevron and Aramco -- co-managers of the joint fields -- is striving to maximize the utilization of available resources and enhance operational performance. They indicated that average production from the Khafji field for both the Kuwaiti and Saudi sides rose in the first half of 2025 to 256,000 barrels of oil per day; compared to 250,000 barrels per day last year. Sources also unveiled a plan to increase production to around 310,000 barrels per day by 2029.

Continued on Page 5

Over 130 safety musts unveiled

## Kuwait tightens shears to protect clients at salons, wellness centers

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi has approved the health requirements guide for health institutes, salons, beauty centers and personal care facilities.

In a press statement on Saturday, the Ministry of Health revealed that this guide is the result of its collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in line with the efforts of the State to raise health standards and

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## Newswatch



**4 Indian Embassy commemorates 79th Independence Day of India**



**8 KFH concludes the second edition of KFH Academy**

**8 Zain Kuwait launches region's first AI Digital Assistant to boost network O&M**

**9 Agility reports KD 8.7 million net profit from continuing operations in Q2 '25, up 196% from same period last year**



**10 NREC records KD 65.3 million one-time non-cash loss, mainly driven by share of associate's results for H1 '25**

## Kuwait stands with flood-stricken Pakistan as toll hits 307

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Saturday voiced solidarity with Pakistan in the aftermath of destructive flash flooding and landslides that caused heavy casualties and damage.

In a press release, the ministry said the State of Kuwait offers sincere condolences and solace to the government and people of Pakistan and the victims' families, while wishing a swift recovery for the injured.

The death toll from the flash floods triggered by torrential rains in Pakistan's northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province reached 307, while over 100 people sustained injuries, said authorities on Saturday.

According to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Buner district of KPK is the worst hit with at least 184 deaths so far, while rescue teams are continuing their search for missing people.

The Shangla district reported 36 deaths, Mansehra 23, Bajaur 21, Swat 22, Battagram 15, Lower Dir reported five and Abbottabad district reported one death so far, the PDMA said in a press release.

The deaths included five crew members of a provincial government chopper that crashed in Mohmand during relief and rescue efforts. The authorities confirmed that at least 30 people are still missing with over 100 people injured in the flash floods.

The deceased included 279 men, 15 women, and 13 children with most deaths resulting from collapsing houses and the sudden, punishing surge of flash floods, confirmed PDMA.

Infrastructure losses were also recorded, with 63 houses fully damaged and 74 partially damaged, along with schools and bridges washed away in several districts.

The KPK provincial government declared the severely affected mountainous districts of Buner, Bajaur, Mansehra, and Battagram as disaster-hit areas, and announced Saturday as a day of mourning.

Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif convened an emergency meeting to review the flood situation and directed the federal authorities to utilize all available resources to support the KPK government in relief and rescue efforts. The Pakistan Meteorological Department has forecast more rain for Saturday with heavy falls expected in upper KPK

and the Kashmir region.

Meanwhile, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Hussein Taha expressed on Saturday deep compassion and full solidarity with the government and the people of Pakistan after heavy rains and flash floods.

A statement by the Secretary-General commended the resilience of the affected populations, saying that the organization stands with the families of the victims.

He praised the emergency assistance and the protection efforts deployed by the relevant Pakistani authorities to relieve the affected persons.

The OIC Secretary-General called on all Member States, OIC institutions and partners to provide any possible humanitarian support to the affected populations in Pakistan.

Pakistani authorities announced earlier in the day that the death toll from the flash floods triggered by torrential rains in Pakistan's northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province reached 307, while over 100 people sustained injuries.

— Earlier Story Page 7



Local shrimp showcased at a Kuwaiti market, ready for consumers.

Fishermen union educates youth

## Kuwait's shrimp season nets 214 tons, boosts local market

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: With the conclusion of the second week of the shrimp

fishing season in Kuwait's economic waters, the Kuwaiti fishing fleet has successfully landed approximately 214 tons of shrimp, 50 tons of various local fish, and 221 tons of imported fish, thereby revitalizing local markets and strengthening the country's fish stocks.

Hamoud Al-Hamdi, Shift A Supervisor at Sharq Fish Market, explained that since the start of the fishing season on August 1, the Kuwaiti fleet has caught



Al-Hamdi

around 214 tons of local shrimp, 90 percent of which is the Umm Al-Nairah variety. Its prices have ranged between KD 45 and KD 65 per basket, with each basket weighing 23 kilograms.

Approximately 50 tons of various Kuwaiti fish were supplied to the market, including around 4.75 tons of Zubaidi fish, with prices ranging between KD 35 and KD 130 per 10-kilogram lot. The prices for Kuwaiti Hamour ranged from KD 20 to KD 65, Balool from KD 11 to KD 18, and Sha'um from KD 25 to KD 66.

Regarding imported fish, Al-Hamdi explained that around 52 tons of imported shrimp were brought in over the past two weeks. This included jumbo shrimp priced between KD 85 and KD 110 per basket, and Umm Al-Nairah priced between KD 40 and KD 76 per basket.

Approximately 221 tons of imported fish were supplied to the markets.

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## Owners warned to comply by Sept 15

## Expatriates detained as Kuwait clears illegal structures in Taimaa, Sulaibiya

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16, (KUNA): Personnel of the Ministry of Interior, represented by the security directorates sector, have removed structures illegally built on state-owned plots of land in the residential districts of Taimaa and Al-Sulaibiya.

The MoI said in a statement on Saturday that a number of expatriates were detained during the operations for un-

licensed commercial activities on these plots of land.

The operation was carried out in collaboration of Kuwait Municipality, the Ministry of Electricity and the Public Authority for Housing Welfare.

It added that houses' owners who erected irregular units were notified to remove them by September 15 or face legal action.

## Day by Day

WE appreciate the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) for its initiative in clarifying some of the unintentional and inaccurate statements made in the “Day by Day” column.

We commend KFAS for its vital role and efforts, particularly in supporting young Kuwaiti researchers through awards and recognition.

We are aware of the important responsibilities entrusted to this esteemed institution, which plays a major role in a number of national initiatives aimed at elevating Kuwait's standing.

KFAS is built on solid foundations that are clear to all, and we take great pride in its achievements.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	03:51	Asr .....	15:28
Sunrise ..	05:16	Maghrib ..	18:28
Zohr .....	11:52	Isha .....	19:50

# Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Very hot with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear later on.

### Weather

**By Night:** Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-38 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	44	36
Kuwait Airport	46	30

Abdaly	47	30
Bubyan	42	30
Jahra	47	34
Ahmadi	42	29
Nuwaib	45	30
Wafra	47	28
Salmi	48	27
Managish	49	33

## Kuwait's Amir congratulates India, Republic of Korea on their National Days

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President of India Droupadi Murmu on Friday, on her country's National Day.

His Highness wished Droupadi a long healthy life and more prosperity and development for her country and its people.

### Crown Prince

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HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince



HH the Prime Minister

### Republic of Korea

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In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the Korean president good health and Republic of Korea and its friendly people further progress and prosperity.

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# Trade with Kuwait on rise, exceeds \$547m: Mariana

80th 'versary marked; Indonesia eyes more Kuwaiti tourists

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Kuwait Lena Mariana confirmed that relations between her country and the State of Kuwait are witnessing rapid development; especially after the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Indonesian Supreme Court and the Kuwaiti Constitutional Court in 2023, and the subsequent exchange of high-level visits.

During a press conference marking the 80th anniversary of her country's independence, Mariana revealed that preparations are underway to hold the first joint political consultations between the two countries in Jakarta before the end of this year.

She also stated that the volume of trade exchange reached about \$547.5 million in 2024 -- a remarkable increase compared to that of 2020; while the first half of 2025 recorded an 18 percent growth compared to the same period last year.

She said Kuwait ranks 87th among foreign investors in Indonesia, while affirming the ongoing negotiations regarding a free trade agreement between her country and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. She pointed out that cooperation is not limited to the economic sector, as it extends to cultural and educational fields; welcoming an increase in scholarships and the ex-



Lena Mariana

change of academic and language programs.

On tourism, she disclosed that about 5,090 Kuwaitis visited Indonesia in 2024; hoping this number doubles in the coming years.

She praised the vital role of Kuwait in supporting humanitarian projects in Indonesia through its charitable institutions; citing the inauguration of the Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Complex in Garut, West Java last year.

She added more than 6,000 Indonesian citizens are currently living in Kuwait; working in various sectors such as healthcare, oil and gas, hospitality, education and industry. She emphasized that the Indonesian Embassy closely works with Kuwaiti authorities to ensure ethical employment practices and the protection of workers' rights.

On the occasion, she said Indonesia will celebrate the 80th anniversary of its independence on Sunday, with the theme, "United in Sovereignty... Prosperous People... Advanced Indonesia." She stated that this theme reflects the aspirations of the Indonesian people for unity and progress.

The celebration coincides with the first year in office for President Prabowo Subianto and Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka, who launched the National Development Plan (2025-

2029) as the first phase toward realizing the 'Golden Indonesia 2045' vision -- an ambitious plan aimed at reducing poverty, developing human capital, and achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

On the economic front, the ambassador revealed that Indonesia's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 5.12 percent in the second quarter of 2025; driven largely by investment and consumer spending. She highlighted the government's launch of its new sovereign wealth fund, 'Dhanantara', in February; which manages assets valued at \$1 trillion and presents vast investment opportunities in different sectors like metals, energy, digital technology, healthcare and agriculture. She encouraged Kuwaiti investors to take advantage of these opportunities.

Regarding foreign policy, she reaffirmed Indonesia's commitment to the principles of neutrality and non-alignment, in line with its Constitution; and stressed the importance of building a multipolar world order based on justice and respect for national sovereignty.

She concluded by expressing her confidence that the wise leadership of Kuwait -- under His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah -- will continue to strengthen bilateral cooperation in ways that serve the mutual interests of both friendly nations.

Following is a summary of vital aspects of Kuwaiti-Indonesian cooperation:

- \$547.5 million in trade volume (2024)
- 18 percent growth in the first half of 2025
- 6,000 Indonesians working in Kuwait
- 5,090 Kuwaitis visited Indonesia in 2024
- Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Complex inaugurated in West Java with Kuwaiti support



KUNA photo

Representatives of various organizations who took part in the collection of food aid for Gazans.

## 4th plane-load carries tons of food supplies for Gaza people

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16, (KUNA): The fourth Kuwaiti planeload departed Friday from Abdullah Al-Mubarak Air Base to Egypt's Al-Arish International Airport, carrying 40 tons of food supplies to Gaza as part of the ongoing second Kuwaiti air bridge.

Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Khaled Al-Maghames told KUNA that the aircraft carried large quantities of relief aid to be delivered to the Gaza Strip via Egypt in collaboration with the Kuwaiti Embassy in Cairo and Palestine Red Crescent Society.

He added that this planeload came in the context of Kuwaiti efforts to help disaster-hit people, noting that the latest aid shipment was carried out in cooperation with several Kuwaiti charities.

He also confirmed further aid flights are being arranged in cooperation with Kuwait's Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense.

Al-Maghames thanked all government bodies involved for their efforts in facilitating and delivering the aid, and affirmed KRCS's continued global humanitarian efforts.

### Other Voices

## The story of talcum powder

By Ahmad alsarraf

Just as "gripe water" disappeared from our lives and asbestos was removed from building materials, talcum powder, especially varieties containing carcinogenic substances, has almost vanished from use. So, what is the story behind talcum powder?

Talcum powder is made from talc, a naturally occurring soft mineral primarily composed of magnesium, silicon, and oxygen.

As a powder, it has high absorbency, helping to keep skin dry, reduce friction, and prevent rashes, which made it popular in personal care and cosmetic products.

The use of talcum powder dates back thousands of years. Ancient Egyptians and Romans used it for health and cosmetic purposes, such as face powder and as a base for eye makeup.

It was also used in traditional medicine and various handicrafts in ancient cultures. In the 19th century, the use of talc expanded significantly following the discovery of large deposits in Ontario, Canada, which paved the way for commercial mining.

By the 1890s, companies like Johnson & Johnson began incorporating talc into their products to soothe skin irritation caused by medical plasters.

Toward the end of the century, the company introduced Johnson's Baby Powder, helping establish talcum powder as a household essential for both children and adults. By the early 20th century, talcum powder had become a staple ingredient in baby powders, face powders, and deodorants.

Johnson & Johnson, along with



alsarraf

other companies, heavily marketed the powder to women and young children through strategic advertising, firmly embedding it in the world of cosmetics and personal hygiene.

Over time, scientific and environmental concerns began to surface regarding the use of talcum powder, as some natural talc deposits were found to be contaminated with asbestos, a known carcinogen.

By the 1970s, regulatory agencies started requiring talc-free formulations in cosmetics, following studies that raised concerns about a potential link between long-term talc use in the intimate area and an increased risk of ovarian cancer. However, the scientific consensus on this link remains controversial and inconclusive.

As a result, major manufacturers in recent years have shifted to cornstarch-based alternatives. The word "talc" has a rich and layered etymology, reflecting its long historical journey through multiple cultures and languages.

It entered European languages through Medieval Latin talcum or talc, which was used to describe transparent or shiny minerals such as talc or mica.

The Latin word, in turn, is derived from the Arabic word talaq, which was used to describe various transparent or shiny minerals. The Arabic word originates from the Persian word talka, which referred to "medicine" or "medicine" and was later used to describe this soft mineral.

Overall, the word reflects a linguistic history extending from Persian to Arabic, then to Middle Latin, and finally to modern languages.

It was used to describe minerals with transparent or greasy properties and for a variety of applications.

Finally, it is important to avoid purchasing cheap products containing this powder and to be sure to read the contents of any package, as the scientific debate over its safety is still ongoing.

□ □ □

email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

'Stick to rules, regulations'

## Raids conducted at building sites

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: The Kuwait Municipality confirmed the continuation of its field inspection campaigns in construction sites by engineers supervising the implementation of building regulations. These campaigns aim to ensure compliance with building regulations and requirements for private, industrial and investment uses.

In a press statement on Thursday, Salman Al-Otaibi -- head of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Municipality team -- underscored the importance of obtaining all the necessary permits before commencing construction work to avoid all types of violations and warnings.

He said the inspection teams of the Mu-

nicipality are always keen on taking control measures during their field visits to construction sites, as violations pose a threat to the lives of workers and the residents.

He revealed that his team conducted field tours Sabah Al-Salem on Thursday, during which 10 warnings were issued to private residences and two building code violations. He stressed that the inspection teams will not hesitate to take regulatory measures as per the building regulations and ensure compliance with the regulations.

He added that the inspection tour will be followed by others in all governorates according to the timetable prepared by the Public Relations Department team in coordination with other concerned departments to implement these campaigns in the coming weeks.

### Dept heads, staff in second phase

## MoCI in major overhaul of senior administration

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) has submitted the names of 27 new directors to the Employment Affairs Department for review and approval within its new structure; and it is now preparing to submit the names of 31 new administrative supervisors early next week for approval, say reliable sources.

Sources disclosed this is the second phase and the third phase will follow in the coming days, which will include the names of department heads and employees.

Sources said that with the approval of the department, six directors will be appointed to new departments in the structure as follows: Ali Al-Dahoum as Director of the Survey Studies and Data Analysis Department, Abdulrahman Al-Tabtabaei as Director of the Supply Department, Nafeh Kassab as Director of the Real Estate Services and Evaluation Department, Nasser Al-Mulla as Director of the Budgets and Auditors Department, Nawaf Al-Sindi as Director of the

Free and Storage Zones Department, and Dhailallah Al-Rashidi as Director of the Office for Following up the Implementation Procedures for Economic Reform Programs.

Sources added the directors raised in the new structure include the following:

- \* Marwa Al-Jaidan as Director of the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Department
- \* Abdulrahman Al-Nomas as Director of the Minister's Office Department
- \* Faisal Al-Ansari as Director of the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection Department
- \* Ahmed Al-Mutairi as Director of the Services Department
- \* Khalaf Al-Rashidi as Director of the Administrative Affairs Department
- \* Bader Al-Mahmoud as Director of the Financial Affairs Department
- \* Sheikha Al-Jawhara Al-Sabah as Director of the Strategic Planning and Research Department
- \* Sultan Al-Otaibi as Director of the Joint Stock Companies Department
- \* Maraheeb Al-Jarallah as Director of the Ku-

wait Business Center Department

\* Shaza Al-Athari as Director of the Legal Affairs Department

\* Adhari Abbas as Director of the Commercial Registry and Commercial Activities Department

\* Dina Al-Haddad as Director of the Administrative Development and Training Department

\* Mansour Al-Mubarak as Director of the Audit and Inspection Office Department

\* Fahad Al-Hajri as Director of the Advertising and Promotional Licenses Department

\* Abdullah Al-Failakawi as Director of the Gulf and Arab World Affairs Department

\* Khaled Al-Adwani as Director of the Undersecretary's Office Department

\* Kholoud Jawhar as Director of the Precious Metals Department

\* Abdul Mohsen as Director of the Commercial Organizations Department

\* Abdullah Al-Harz as Director of the International Relations Department

\* Rashid Al-Awaihan as Director of the Commercial Relations and Patents Department

\* Fatima Al-Rashid as Director of the Public Relations and Media Department

## MoE approves e-transfers in services digitalization push

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: The Ministry of Education (MoE) has announced the official issuance of electronic transfer decision for faculty members. This decision is based on the actual manpower needs of schools and vacancies in educational districts, and in accordance with the regulations and standards adopted by the relevant sectors.

In a press statement on Thursday, the ministry revealed that the decision is in compliance with the directive of Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei to complete the educational reform process, develop the educational system, and push the digitalization of services.

The ministry indicated that transfer decision for those occupying supervisory positions will be issued after completing the procedures; while taking into account the requirements of the educational field.

It stated that it has implemented 1,380 transfer decisions out of 4,101 requests submitted on the approved website.

These decisions were made in accordance

with the terms announced in the electronic transfer directive, which is based on the principle of meeting the actual manpower needs of each school.

Transfer requests for teaching staff are arranged according to seniority at the time of appointment and priority given to the oldest in the event of similar qualifications. If such similarity continues, preference is given to the one with the highest competency rating.

Teachers whose transfer requests were approved will receive this message through the notification service on the 'Sahel' application: "Your transfer request has been approved in accordance with the regulations and standards. Please log on to the website of the ministry (Administrative Services - My Data - Transfer Data) to view the new work center, or log into the 'Qararati' (My decisions) application to view the transfer decision in PDF format in the coming days."

The ministry called on all concerned parties to continuously monitor its official channels and website to be updated on developments or regulatory decisions related to transfers or faculty affairs.

## 39 minors caught driving, 28 held, cars impounded

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Over the past seven days the General Traffic Department (GTD) issued 32,159 citations for various traffic violations, referred 39 juveniles to the Juvenile Prosecution for driving without a license, detained 28 people and impounded 10 vehicles.

The weekly statistics released by GTD indicated that traffic patrols impounded 62 wanted vehicles, apprehended 38 people who previously evaded arrest and for absconding, arrested 106 violators of the Residency Law, referred two people to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) and dealt with 1,041 traffic accidents -- 196 of which resulted in injuries.

GTD affirmed that the ongoing traffic campaigns in all governorates aim to instill discipline and guarantee safety on the roads.

Meanwhile, Jahra securitymen arrested two citizens for consumption of drugs, with narcotic substances and drug paraphernalia in their possession.

According to a security source, the securitymen were patrolling in Saad Abdullah when they noticed the suspicious behavior of two people who appeared to be in an abnormal condition. The officers stopped them and verified their identification documents, leading to the discovery of narcotics and drug paraphernalia in their possession. They were referred to the concerned authorities, along with the confiscated items.



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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## Wonders of kindness in a world shrouded in misery

“HERE is a useful story. A person said, “We visited an Italian city, and while enjoying coffee at a restaurant, a man sat next to us and told the waiter, ‘Two coffees, please... one for the wall.’ The waiter brought a cup of coffee, which he drank, but paid for two cups. When he left, the waiter pinned a note to the wall that read, “One cup of coffee”. This way, whenever someone came in, they could pay for two coffees - one for themselves, and the other would be ‘on the wall’ as a prepaid cup for someone in need,” columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.



Ahmad Al-Dawas

“One day, we were in the same restaurant when a poor-looking man entered and said to the waiter, “A cup of coffee from the wall.” The waiter brought him a cup of coffee, which he drank and left without paying. The waiter then went to the wall, removed one of the notes, and threw it in the trash. We were deeply moved by this wonderful act, as it reflects the highest form of human cooperation.

“How wonderful it is to find someone who recognizes that there are people who cannot afford food and drink, so they are served through bills hung on the restaurant wall. How much we need such a “wall” in our lives.

“As for good human behavior, someone once said, “Go to grocery stores in poor neighborhoods and ask the store owner for the debt book of customers. You will find widows and the poor buying on credit, waiting for their salaries to arrive. You may think the amounts are small, but they are a heavy burden in the lives of those struggling. Pay off part of their debt and erase it from the book.

“If you are unable to do that, at least share this idea, and perhaps someone else will embrace it. Remember, God helps His servant as long as the servant helps his brother.

“In our Arab and Islamic world, we are meant to lead the world in moral and human values, and many of us are blessed with virtuous character.

“Here is another story about the kindness an American woman received from an Arab immigrant. In the U.S., a young woman came to sell her necklace at a jewelry store where an Arab man worked. She explained that she needed the money. Instead of buying the necklace, he gave her the money she needed and returned her cherished necklace. The American woman was deeply touched by his kindness, burst into tears, and expressed surprise at his kind behavior towards her.

“In another instance, during a courtroom in America, an American woman verbally abused a Muslim woman, yet the Muslim woman forgave her before the judge.

“Meanwhile, Iran continues to harm the region. Iranian boats occasionally send drug shipments from its coast toward Kuwait, which Kuwaiti Coast Guard personnel manage to intercept. Is it possible that Iran is unaware of this?

“Furthermore, Iran recently interfered in Lebanon’s affairs by supporting Hezbollah, fueling religious sectarianism, as reported by the American “Wall Street Journal” in an article on August 7. This comes at a time when Lebanon is calling on the party to lay down its arms, leading the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to issue a strong official protest.

“Many writers in British and American newspapers often take harsh stances on Arab affairs. Their analyses tend to be biased and unfair, with the possible exception of “The Guardian”. Their coverage is frequently shallow and lacking in depth.”

### Also:

“Mohammad Al-Munaie ... Just mentioning this name is enough for everyone to know who you are talking about, because of his refined quality in dealing with people, and sincerity in giving advice,” columnist Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The late Uncle Mohammad Al-Munaie was never an arrogant person, on the contrary, he was a true model of refinement. I remember as a child, whenever we saw him in Shamiya, we would rush over to greet him, amazed to see in person the same figure we had watched on television.

“May God have mercy on him ... He was always friendly towards us, and would ask each of us our name and who our father was. Sometimes, he would even ask about our school grades.

“Many years spent in Shamiya have etched many images of this man into our memories. In that area, like in many others, we share a strong sense of community, familiarity, and friendship. Like those who left a mark on us during childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood, this well-known public figure stood out with his unique style, always fostering a sense of warmth and offering sincere advice.

“When I began my union and political activities, I would visit various campaign headquarters, including those in Shamiya. I would often see Uncle Mohammad (May God have mercy on him) visiting everyone. He never voiced support for any particular candidate, but would always remind them that elections are merely a stage for competition, and that they should never ruin the bonds of friendship among the people of the area.

“Anyone who truly understands the meaning behind that advice knows that holding a position, whether in a union, parliament, or even a ministry, is a form of national service that brings honor to the one who holds it. So when I began

my political journey and ran for parliament, I was genuinely surprised to see him come to my campaign headquarters, as I had expected to be the one visiting him. He was accompanied by his son, Abdul Wahab (May God bless him).

“He told me, “Don’t lose anyone for the sake of politics. Elections come and go, but good relationships remain. Elections don’t bring much, but relationships with people and a good reputation are what truly last, as they are a person’s real wealth.”

“He was always a man who embodied the true spirit of Kuwaiti authenticity, radiating positivity wherever he went. Whenever we met, whether in diwaniyas or at the local mosque, he would say to me, “I follow what you do, and I’m pleased with your efforts.”

“This was a man who never sought out connections or favors throughout his life, as he firmly believed they were the root of corruption in any country.

“The late Uncle Mohammad Al-Munaie was an artist in the truest sense. He knew how to guide others toward goodness without pretense. At times, he was a teacher, at times a father figure or a loyal friend. His loss is profound, but such is the way of life, and no one can change the will of God.

“May God have mercy on Uncle Mohammad Al-Munaie and grant him a spacious place in paradise. May God bring comfort and patience to his family, the people of Shamiya, and all of Kuwait.”

□ □ □

“I first met my friend Ahmad Al-Nafisi, who recently passed away, when I began writing my articles for “Al-Taleea” newspaper. I used to meet him at the paper’s morning “diwaniya” (gathering), which brought together members of the ‘Al-Taleea’ group and their friends including the late Sami Al-Munais, Dr. Ahmed Al-Khatib, and Ahmad Al-Nafisi, along with others I did not have the chance to get to know well,” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali-Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Although Al-Nafisi’s name often appeared on the front page of “Al-Taleea,” the management and running of the paper was mostly handled by the late Sami Al-Munais. Al-Nafisi contributed a weekly column and penned occasional witty yet purposeful comments that gave ‘Al-Taleea’ its flavor. I believe these satirical remarks were actually read more than the articles itself and the rest of the newspaper.

“Al-Nafisi never dominated conversations at the diwaniya, nor did any of his companions or the guests. The mood was spontaneous, filled with light jabs, jokes, and passing bits of news or information. The closure of “Al-Taleea” was not only a loss to the diwaniya’s attendees, but also to its readers and loyal supporters. There had been hope it would resume after its forced suspension, but it ended without return.

“The closure of “Al-Taleea” was not simply because it was a Kuwaiti newspaper with a political stance, representing the voices of progressive thinkers who often opposed the government. In Kuwait, all Kuwaitis are, paradoxically, both opposition and loyalists. It is a phenomenon you will find only in Kuwait.

“The late Ahmad Al-Nafisi wrote not to attract readers or seek admiration. He was not chasing followers or looking for approval. He was Al-Nafisi, born into a family of stature and reputation. Anyone who doesn’t know the Al-Nafisi family likely doesn’t know where Kuwait sits on the world map. The family patriarch, Saleh Al-Nafisi, once headed the Citizenship Committee, a position that alone tells you about the family’s standing in a society built on simplicity and warmth.

“Ahmad Al-Nafisi came from a wealthy family with businesses and commercial ventures, close to the ruling system (his brother Mohammad was once the Minister of Commerce).

“This nationalist, or perhaps socialist, Al-Nafisi reminds me of Karl Marx, author of the communist theory. And though socialism or communism has fallen in modern times, it doesn’t mean the people of the world have all become wealthy or live in prosperity.

“Ahmad Al-Nafisi, although a son of privilege, lived instead as a modest and humble man and with openness and sincerity.

“In the 1973 Parliament, the trio of Sami Al-Munais, Ahmad Al-Nafisi, and Ali Al-Ghanim questioned the Minister of Commerce Suleiman Al-Adsani. During that session, a member seated on the far right side of the hall cracked a joke disguised as a question - “What brought Ali Al-Ghanim together with the socialists?” The hall erupted in laughter enough to ease the tension and allow Minister Al-Adsani a moment to catch his breath. The early parliamentary sessions often felt more like the friendly “Friday diwaniyas”.

“May God have mercy on the late Ahmad Al-Nafisi, and on all his friends from “Al-Taleea,” and from “Nadi Alistiqal” (The Independence Club).

“I suppose most of them, as elders, have passed away. The hope now lies with the youth of the club... Perhaps they will remember the pioneers of the club, the “diwaniya” of “Al-Taleea,” and the newspaper itself.

“Is there anyone who still remembers?”

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



The cartons of cigarettes found hidden in the car.

Al-Seyassah photo

## Customs foils bid to smuggle cigarettes

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: The General Administration of Customs foiled an attempt to smuggle a quantity of cigarettes concealed within a car’s interior at the Salmi border checkpoint, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In a statement, the administration reported that, while processing the departure of a vehicle driven by a Saudi national, a customs inspector grew suspicious due to the vehicle’s connection to a previous smuggling incident at another border checkpoint. Acting on that suspicion, inspectors conducted a thorough search, which led to the discovery of 35 cartons of cigarettes professionally hidden and tightly sealed within the car’s interior, making them difficult to detect.

The General Administration of Customs affirmed its commitment to combating all forms of smuggling, enhancing inspection and detection mechanisms, and taking firm action against anyone attempting to smuggle contraband.



Parts of Road No. 30 to remain closed.

## Damascus Street shuts

## Fahaheel Road to be closed for eight days

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: The General Traffic Department has announced the closure of Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa Street (Fahaheel Road No. 30) from the intersection with the First Ring Road to the intersection with the Third Ring Road, heading south toward Fahaheel, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The closure will also include all entrances and exits to Fahaheel Road from Dasma, Daiya, and the Second Ring Road. It will begin at dawn on Saturday, August 16, and will remain in effect until dawn on Sunday, August 24.

The General Traffic Department has also announced that, starting Saturday, August 16, the express and central lanes of Damascus Street will be closed in both directions for a month from Second Ring Road intersection to the Third Ring Road intersection, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.



Mol photo

Traffic police employ mobile radar to trap speeding motorists on a Kuwaiti road.

## GTD mobile radar traps 156 speeding motorists

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: As part of its ongoing efforts to curb traffic violations and ensure the safety of road users, the General Traffic Department – through the Highways Department – carried out a targeted campaign using mobile radar devices on Friday, August 15, 2025, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The operation was overseen by Brigadier Abdullah Ahmed Al-Ateeqi, Head of the Traffic Affairs and Operations Sector. During the campaign, a total of 156 traffic violations were recorded, including speeding and various other infractions. In addition, a wanted individual with an active arrest warrant was apprehended.

The Ministry of Interior reiterated its commitment to continuing these intensive field campaigns. It urged all drivers to comply with traffic laws to safeguard lives and property and encouraged cooperation with traffic officers to promote maximum road safety.

## Steep surge in vehicle recall in 2024: report

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Statistics from the Department of Suppression of Commercial Fraud and Awareness at the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection Sector in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry revealed the unprecedented increase in product and vehicle recalls in 2024, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The data, reviewed by the daily, showed that recall letters surged by 102 percent to 121 cases, while vehicle recalls due to manufacturing defects soared by 367 percent; reaching 124,808 vehicles compared to 26,708 in 2023.

In addition, 20,716 defective products were withdrawn from the market following comprehensive inspection campaigns designed to protect consumers and raise quality standards in local markets.

On tracking the country-of-origin of goods, the department completed 10 transactions in 2024—three confirmation requests and seven releases; marking a slight decline from the previous year.

Sources said the sharp rise in recalls underscored the firm commitment of the ministry to strengthen market oversight and combat commercial fraud, stressing that only safe and compliant goods will be allowed to reach consumers.

# Foul play seen in two deaths

## Bodies of expats probed

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: **The bodies of two expatriates were referred to the Forensic Medicine Department due to suspicions that their deaths were linked to criminal acts in Dabaiya and Jahra, reports Al-Anba daily.**

A security source revealed that one expatriate was found dead at his work-

place in Dabaiya. Paramedics who arrived at the scene indicated that the circumstances suggested foul play.

In another incident, the body of another expatriate was brought to Jahra Hospital; where an initial examination confirmed that the death was criminal in nature.

The Forensic Medicine Department will conduct further examinations to determine the exact cause of death in both incidents.

## Illegal parking dismantled

## Fahaheel shops, facilities shut in joint KFF, agencies campaign

By **Munif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), in cooperation with other government agencies, conducted an inspection campaign in Fahaheel Industrial Area resulting in the closure of facilities and shops for violating its regulations and the issuance of several notices and warnings.

In a press statement, KFF revealed that the campaign was conducted in coordination with the ministries of Electricity, Water, Renewable Energy, Commerce and Industry as well as the Public Authority for Industry, Environment Public Authority and Kuwait Municipality. It confirmed the administrative closure of 53 industrial facilities and shops where violations were uncovered, in addition to the issuance of 120 notices and warnings to other establishments.

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**Cars, boats lifted:** The Public Relations Department at the Kuwait Municipality confirmed the removal of 10 abandoned vehicles, scrap materials, boats and unauthorized commercial containers from various locations in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

In a press statement, the department revealed that 25 citations were issued for breaches related to public cleanliness and road obstructions.

The department added that the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Cleaning Team issued 52 removal notices for abandoned vehicles and unlicensed commercial containers in line with the commitment of the Municipality to improve waste management; while 27 old containers were replaced with new ones.

The statement affirmed that the Public Sanitation and Road Occupancy Department in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Municipality branch conducted intensive inspection campaigns in the residential areas throughout the governorate. These efforts aim to enhance overall cleanliness, eliminate obstructions affecting traffic flow, and prevent the improper disposal of waste -- outside the designated containers.

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**Illegal parking removed:** The inspection team from the Violations Removal Department of Ahmadi Municipality conducted a campaign recently to remove encroachments on state properties in Mahboubia, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The encroachments consisted of iron barriers placed in a public square and used illegally as parking.

## MPW tech care tender ends Aug 31

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) has launched a tender for the provision of maintenance and technical support services for computers, printers, scanners and engineering RAMs in line with its conditions and technical specifications, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to information obtained by the daily, the deadline for submitting bids is Aug 31 and late submissions will be automatically rejected.

Tender conditions state that bidders

should be Kuwaiti companies registered in the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) and Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT). Eligible companies must have a track record of implementing similar projects for ministries and government agencies, with at least 10 years experience in the field.

The contract is valid for one year and the ministry scheduled a preliminary meeting with interested parties on Aug 24 at its headquarters.

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Ambassador Swaika hails India’s progress, Modi’s vision and deepening India-Kuwait ties

# Indian Embassy commemorates 79th Independence Day of India

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: The Embassy of India in Kuwait celebrated the 79th Independence Day of India on August 15, 2025 at the embassy premises. Over 3,000 members of the Indian community attended the celebrations.

According to a press release issued by the Indian Embassy, the official program began at 7:30 am at the embassy.

Ambassador Dr. Adarsh Swaika paid floral tributes to the Shilaphalakam (a plaque honoring the sacrifices of Indian martyrs) and the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, followed by the hoisting of the national tricolored flag and the singing of the Indian National Anthem.

On the occasion, the ambassador read out the speech of the Honorable President of India, H.E. Smt. Droupadi Murmu, delivered on the eve of Independence Day.

In her speech, the President highlighted the country’s achievements over the past 78 years, with special emphasis on the remarkable progress made in various socio-economic sectors in recent years.

She urged Indian citizens to work diligently toward the goal of making India a developed country by 2047.

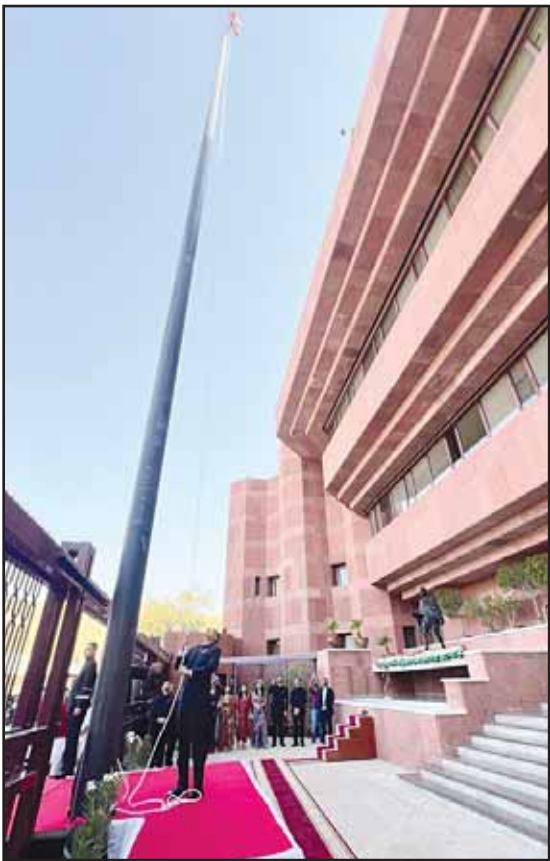
Ambassador Dr. Swaika also highlighted some important points made by the Honorable Prime Minister of India, H.E. Shri Narendra Modi, in his speech at the Red Fort on August 15.

The Prime Minister outlined the government’s successes in various sectors and introduced new initiatives aimed at advancing the country toward the goal of becoming a developed nation. He emphasized the success of “Operation Sindoor” that was launched to eliminate the threat of cross-border terrorism. He also urged citizens to contribute to a self-reliant India by promoting the “Vocal for Local” movement.

In his remarks, Ambassador Dr. Swaika stated that India-Kuwait relations are currently in one of their best phases in recent history. He attributed this to the successful outcomes of the visit of the Honorable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, to Kuwait in December 2024, as well as to the continued support of the Kuwaiti leadership for strengthening India-Kuwait ties.



Ambassador Swaika addresses the gathering at the Independence Day celebration. Inset: Dr. Swaika delivers a speech.



Ambassador Swaika leads the national flag hoisting.



Floral tributes at Gandhi statue.



Attendees join the Embassy festivities.



Indian community members at the event.



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# Housing projects gain ‘momentum’

Major contracts surpass targets

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Omar Al-Ruwaih, Deputy Director General for Development and Public Relations at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) and official spokesperson of the authority, disclosed that remarkable progress in the implementation of three major projects was witnessed in July -- South Saad Al-Abdullah, South Sabah Al-Ahmad and Affordable Housing; in addition to following up contracts related to infrastructure and public buildings in other cities.



Al-Ruwaih

Al-Ruwaih said the completion rate for South Saad Al-Abdullah project reached 41.57 percent for the main roads contract, ahead of the contractual rate. He confirmed that the specialized teams at PAHW are closely monitoring the timetable of three infrastructure contracts for 23,551 plots; as well as the implementation of South Sabah Al-Ahmad project and its four contracts. He

revealed that the completion rate of the main roads contract reached 58.32 percent, ahead of the contractual rate; while the first infrastructure contract reached 12.85 percent, the second contract 22.25 percent, and the third contract 7.95 percent.

Regarding the affordable housing project, he indicated that five of the six contracts tendered by the authority have entered the implementation phase; while the timetable for the sixth contract is being approved.

He added that the completion rate for the first contract is 10.91 percent -- covering 1,568 homes; the second contract with 7.15 percent -- covering 1,777 homes and the third contract reached 10.09 percent--covering 1,162 homes. He stated that the fourth contract recently entered the implementation phase with 0.25 percent completion rate -- 1,700 homes; and the fifth contract has achieved one percent completion, with construction commencing on 1,608 homes.

He indicated that PAHW is monitoring 217 public buildings under construction in seven projects -- 17 buildings in Sabah Al-Ahmad City, two in Saad Al-Abdullah City, 74 in the Affordable Housing Project, 109 in Mutlaa City, 13 in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak, and one building each in South Khaitan and Jaber Al-Ahmad City.

He also affirmed that the authority provided 36,648 housing services to citizens through the Citizen Services Department; 27,500 electronic services through the ‘Sahel’ app and website; 1,962 through reception centers and 7,186 through telephone and chatbot; in addition to the issuance of 32,363 ‘To Whom It May Concern’ certificates to obtain building permits for Khaitan, Mutlaa City and South Abdullah Al Mubarak housing projects.

Connections surge in July

# Energy ministry reinforces grid, powers up 806 residential plots

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy confirmed the connection of electricity to 806 plots in various residential areas in July.

According to the report released by the ministry; the private residential sector recorded the highest number of plots where electricity was connected in the aforementioned month with 744 or 63.3 percent of the total, followed by the government sector with 17 or 14.7 percent, investment sector with 20 or 9.4 percent, industrial sector with 13, commercial sector with eight and agricultural sector with four.

The report indicated that the total electrical load provided to new customers in different sectors reached 111,740 kilowatts -- a confirmation of the efficient response of the ministry to the growing demand for electricity.

It stated that the ministry imported

668,845 megawatts from the Gulf Interconnection Network during the same month.

It added that the highest power consumption was recorded on July 30 -- 17,710 megawatts; while the lowest was recorded on July 6 -- 11,300 megawatts. This shows the variation in consumption depending on climatic conditions and usage requirements.

The ministry affirmed that it is continuing the implementation of projects to strengthen the electrical grid and develop the energy infrastructure through several major projects announced recently. This move will ensure that the electricity needs in relation to urban and economic developments in the future are met, while supporting the plan of the country to transition to more sustainable energy sources.

It reiterated its call for citizens and expatriates to rationalize electricity consumption; especially during peak hours, by using energy-saving devices to stabilize the power network and guarantee the continuity of high-quality service.





Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

## Diplomatic transfer

### Kuwait's Ambassador to Bahrain finishes tenure

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Kingdom of Bahrain Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs head office in accordance with Decree No. 155/2025, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In line with diplomatic protocol, Sheikh Thamer is now preparing to bid farewell to the Kingdom's political leadership and senior officials. This comes after a successful tenure, during which he played a pivotal role in strengthening the deep-rooted ties and enhancing cooperation between the two brotherly nations.

The Ambassador expressed his sincere appreciation for the unwavering support and cooperation extended to him throughout his mission, which greatly contributed to the fulfillment of his diplomatic responsibilities.

# Al-Naayem Industrial Project and bachelor housing cities – A qualitative step towards developing Kuwait

Statement by Real Estate Expert **Sabeekah Mohammed Al-Bahar**, Member of the Kuwait Real Estate Valuers Association and the Real Estate Brokers Union

Kuwait is currently working to develop its infrastructure in a balanced manner that integrates the establishment of modern industrial zones with the improvement of living conditions for single workers, contributing to sustainable economic and social development. At the forefront of these efforts is the Al-Naayem Industrial Project, alongside the construction of 12 dedicated bachelor housing complexes in Amghara, Subhan, and Ahmadi. These initiatives reflect an increasing awareness of the importance of creating a modern work and living environment that meets the needs of the coming phase.

What distinguishes these projects is their reliance on the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, one of the most advanced tools for delivering infrastructure and development projects efficiently. Under this framework, the government is responsible for planning and establishing the regulatory and legislative framework, while the private sector – represented by developers and investment companies – undertakes financing, execution, and operational management. This coordination ensures greater flexibility in implementation, transfers expertise and modern technologies, and distributes financial risks in a calculated manner. It also gives the developer an active role in managing projects, combining urban planning, engineering design, and operations according to global standards. The State is committed to applying the latest occupational safety and environmental protection regulations, with strict and sustainable monitoring mechanisms to ensure full compliance with international standards.

**Al-Naayem Industrial Project**  
Located in southwest Jahra, the Al-Naayem Industrial Project covers a total area of 6 km² (6,000,000 m²). It aims to establish a fully integrated industrial zone that accommodates a wide range of modern and advanced industries. The project is not limited to factory construction, but focuses on creating a sustainable industrial environment by adopting clean energy and recycling technologies to minimize environmental impact.

The Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) is overseeing development in partnership with the private sector under the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model. The project draws inspiration from successful industrial zones in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, with adjustments tailored to the Kuwaiti market.

**Key Operational Goals:**

- Establish 200 diversified manufacturing facilities over the next five years.
- Create 15,000 direct and indirect job opportunities for Kuwaitis and residents, with a focus on technical job localization.
- Use solar power to meet 50% of the project's electricity needs.
- Recycle 80% of industrial water used within the zone.
- Launch 3 industrial incubators to support entrepreneurs within the first two years of operation.
- Implement continuous training programs in partnership with educational institutions to develop national workforce skills.

**Timeline:**

- Updated economic and financial studies: early 2023.
- Completion of design proposal: early 2024.
- Infrastructure design and master planning: early 2025.
- Tendering for implementation: Q4 2025.

**Bachelor Housing Complexes**  
In parallel, Kuwait has allocated 12 sites for modern bachelor housing in Amghara, Subhan, and Ahmadi, with a total area of 700,000 m². These complexes are expected to accommodate about 30,000 workers, providing a safe and healthy living environment that moves away from overcrowded traditional housing.

**Main Components:**

- Residential units: single and shared rooms.
- Service facilities: restaurants, laundries, pharmacies.
- Recreational and sports facilities: gyms, green areas.
- Transportation: group bus services.
- Security and healthcare: police stations and health centers.

**Key Operational Goals:**

- Accommodate 30,000 residents within 3 years across 12 complexes.
- Dedicate 20% of total space to recreational and sports facilities.
- Implement an integrated smart service management system via a resident mobile app.
- Connect all complexes to a modern public transportation network covering 100% of daily commuting needs.
- Reduce housing-related accidents and health issues by 40% in the first years of operation.
- Establish cultural and community centers in each complex to promote social integration.



Sabeekah Mohammed Al-Bahar

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## Beloved actress Hayat Al-Fahad hospitalized after sudden stroke

By **Faleh Al-Anzi**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Veteran actress Hayat Al-Fahad was rushed to the hospital without prior warning after suffering a sudden health issue, which was later diagnosed as a stroke.

Following medical evaluation, the attending specialist decided to place her in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) under 24-hour observation. Visitors are currently not permitted until her condition improves.

The Kuwait Federation for Artistic and Theatrical Production and Entertainment Industry, where Al-Fahad



Veteran actress Hayat Al-Fahad

serves as vice president, issued a statement confirming her condition and urging the public to respect her privacy during this critical time.

The daily prays for her speedy recovery.

## Society ranks third, plans Umrah trips

# Farwaniya Co-op marks legacy of service

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Farwaniya Cooperative Society Chairman Fawaz Saad Al-Marshad affirmed that cooperative work is an integral part of his career, asserting that he was “born into a cooperative home” as his father was a member of the cooperative before the invasion.

Al-Marshad explained that cooperative work is based on the spirit of solidarity and teamwork; pointing out that cooperative societies leave an imprint in various governorates through their social, cultural, religious and sports activities, in addition to supporting the residents in their respective areas through various events.

He said the Farwaniya Cooperative Society operates in a commercial and investment zone despite the absence of shareholders; indicating that it ranks third in terms of sales in the governorate in the midst of competition with parallel markets which are not subject to any government agency.

He revealed that the cooperative will hold a festival this month featuring more than 250 products at reduced prices -- up to 50 percent for some items. He confirmed that monthly promotional campaigns will continue to boost sales; while confirming the readiness of the cooperative to contact the Ministry of Social Affairs, in accordance with approved procedures, to offer a number of investment stores.

He also announced that after obtaining approval from the ministry and the relevant department, the cooperative will open for companies to apply to organize an Umrah trip for shareholders at the end of October, upon completion of the necessary procedures.

He thanked Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, Undersecretary of the Ministry Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi and Assistant Undersecretary for Financial, Administrative and Cooperative Affairs Sayed Issa for their unwavering support for cooperative work.

# Al-Jalal approves internal scholarship admissions

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: The Secretariat General of the Private Universities Council announced on Saturday that Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal has approved the results of admission for the internal scholarship program

for bachelor's and diploma programs for the academic year 2025/2026 for those holding a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Acting Secretary General of the council Adel Al-Bader stated that the number of admitted students has reached 6,250. He stressed the need for students to adhere to the schedule specified by the universities and colleges to which they were nominated in order to complete the final registration procedures and submit their original high school certificates.

He also underscored the importance of complying with the internal scholarship regulations to ensure a stable and supportive educational environment that enables students to thrive academically and reach their goals.

He encouraged students to strive for excellence in their academic journey so they may become active contributors to national development and progress.

He added that the names of the admitted students are available on the official website of the Secretariat General of the Private Universities Council: [www.puc.edu.kw](http://www.puc.edu.kw)

## Kuwait, 30

They also reaffirmed the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which emphasized the illegality of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory, and underscored the need to end it immediately, to remove its consequences, and to provide reparations for the damages caused.

They warned of the grave dangers of Israeli intentions and policies aimed at annexing Palestinian territory, and warn of the dangers of the continued expansionist settlement policy in the Occupied West Bank pursued by the extremist Israeli government, including attempts targeting Islamic and Christian Holy Sites, foremost among them Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif; settler terrorism; daily incursions into Palestinian cities, towns, and refugee camps; the systematic destruction of Palestinian refugee camps and the displacement of Palestinian civilians from their homes.

“These actions directly fuel cycles of violence and conflict and undermine prospects for achieving just and comprehensive peace in the region,” they cautioned.

“They also warn against reliance on ideological and racist delusions, which risk fueling the conflict in ways that are difficult to control or predict, thereby threatening both regional and international security and stability.”

In a related context, they reiterated their rejection and condemnation of Israel's crimes of aggression, genocide, and ethnic cleansing.

They underlined the need for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, along with ensuring unconditional humanitarian access to end the policy of systematic starvation that Israel is pursuing as a weapon of genocide.

The Foreign Ministers also reiterated their unequivocal rejection of the displacement of the Palestinian people in any form and under any pretext, and call on the international community to exert pressure on Israel to end its aggression and to fully withdraw from the Gaza Strip, in preparation for enabling the creation of conditions conducive to the implementation of the Arab-Islamic plan for early recovery efforts and the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip.

In this regard, they called on the international community, especially the permanent members of the Security Council, particularly the United States of America,

to shoulder their legal and moral responsibilities and to take immediate action to compel Israel to halt its ongoing aggression against the Gaza Strip and its dangerous escalation in the Occupied West Bank, to stop the illusory and inciting statements made by its officials, and to provide international protection to the Palestinian people.

They further called for enabling the Palestinian people to obtain their legitimate rights, foremost among them the right to establish their independent sovereign state on their national soil, and for holding accountable those responsible for crimes and violations against the Palestinian people.

The statement was signed by foreign ministers of Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Turkiye, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the Secretary-General of the Arab League, the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

## Kuwait tightens

guarantee a safe environment on par with international best practices.

The ministry said the new guide consists of more than 130 directives and requirements; covering different areas like infection prevention, sterilization, public health, environmental protection and protection from radiation.

It also confirmed the formation of a joint committee between the ministries of Health and Commerce and Industry to monitor health supervision in these facilities.

It pointed out the most important aspects of the guide as follows: requiring health institutes to provide trainers with training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and life-saving techniques, requirement to have a certified lifeguard on duty at all times, and the obligation of every employee to obtain a valid health fitness certificate before beginning work.

It added that the guide stipulates safety standards for swimming pools, saunas, jacuzzis and steam rooms — including the approved chlorine levels; underscores the

need to use licensed and reputable cosmetic products, imposes strict hygiene protocols for tool sterilization, bans the reuse of shaving blades or sharp instruments on multiple clients, and prohibits the use of permanent tattoo devices in salons.

The ministry also stressed the need to ensure child safety, stating that the guide forbids hair dyeing for children and restricts skin-related treatments for individuals below 18 years old. It mandates the service providers to remove accessories and jewelry while working, and prohibits them from providing services if they suffer from skin or infectious diseases.

The ministry affirmed that these regulations aim to protect public health; indicating this initiative is a significant step toward ensuring the quality of services in such a vital sector, simultaneously achieving the highest level of safety for the whole society.

## Kuwait's shrimp

This included Hamour (grouper) priced between KD 17 and KD 58 per basket, Balool priced between KD 4 and KD 21 per basket, and Sha'um ranging from KD 12 to KD 40 per basket.

**Local fish prices:**  
Umm Al-Nairah shrimp: KD 45-65 per basket; Zubaidi fish: KD 35-130; Balool fish: KD 11-18; Hamour fish: KD 20-65; Sha'um fish: KD 25-66.

Imported fish prices: Jumbo shrimp: KD 85-110 per basket; Umm Al-Nairah shrimp: KD 40-67 per basket; Zubaidi fish: KD 35-107; Hamour fish: KD 17-58; Balool fish: KD 4-21; Sha'um fish: KD 12-40.

In related news, Vice President of Kuwait Fishermen Union Jaber Al-Ali affirmed that the union is working diligently to provide all types of fresh fish and shrimp on a daily basis, in accordance with the fishing seasons set by the Fisheries Sector at the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR).

Al-Ali made the statement during a symposium conducted by union for students attending the 'Blue Pioneer' summer camp, organized by the Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment. He confirmed the commitment of the union to protect the marine environment through its vital role in educating fishermen.

He stressed that the members of the union

are licensed fishermen using trawls, nets, traps, integrated 'lanjat' and trawlers.

He disclosed that the shrimp fishing season in the economic waters of Kuwait started on Aug 1, while the season in regional waters will begin early next month.

He said all vessels in the Kuwaiti fishing fleet continue their operations to ensure marine food security for consumers in the country. He asserted that the union, in cooperation with PAAAFR, is regulating the fishing process and maintaining fish stocks in accordance with the laws.

He also expressed appreciation for the efforts of PAAAFR, particularly its full support and cooperation with the union in achieving the sustainable development of marine resources. He said this collaboration serves the interests of both fishermen and consumers; as per the directives of Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem.

He acknowledged as well the cooperation of the Coast Guard General Department with the union, stating that the department ensures maritime security. He praised the efforts of Director General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah and the contributions of various government agencies involved in supporting the fishing sector like the Ministry of Finance, Environment Public Authority, Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, and Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

## Al-Durra

Regarding the joint Wafra field, sources indicated that its capacity reached 155,000 barrels of oil per day at the end of the fiscal year ending March 31; down from a previous level of around 170,000 barrels per day. They pointed out that exploration efforts are ongoing at full capacity in the Wafra field to enhance its production potential, especially since the Wafra Joint Operations discovered new reservoirs yielding 200 to 380 barrels per day per well.

It is worth mentioning that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia announced in May the discovery of a new oil field in the divided zone – five kilometers north of the Wafra field. This is the first such discovery since the resumption of Kuwaiti-Saudi joint production operations in the divided zone and the adjacent offshore area in mid-2020.



The late Ahmed Yousef Al-Nafisi

## Kuwait mourns loss of Ahmed Yousef Al-Nafisi

By **Suzanne Nasser**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: In a solemn procession, Ahmed Yousef Al-Nafisi has been laid to rest.

With his passing, Kuwait lost a towering national figure who stood at the forefront of thought, politics, and responsible free media.

He never wavered in his commitment to Kuwaiti democracy, nor did he hesitate to defend public freedoms and the noble humanitarian values that defined Kuwait during its period of renaissance and the construction of the modern state.

The late Ahmed Al-Nafisi also left a lasting and positive impact on the memory of Kuwaitis, particularly through his election to the National Assembly in 1971.

He also left an honorable national legacy in the field of political media and enlightened free opinion, always anticipating the future with insightful vision and a sober, balanced understanding of events.

On the Arab level, Al-Nafisi took prominent stances in defending the nation's causes during the era when these issues dominated the world and captured the public's attention amid the Arab nationalist surge of the 1960s and 1970s.

May Allah have mercy on Uncle "Abu Bader" and grant his family, friends, and loved ones patience and solace.

To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return...

# MoHE extends external scholarship registration

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: The Ministry of Higher Education extended the registration period for the external scholarship plan for holders of the English secondary school certificate and International Baccalaureate (IB/DP) certificate for the 2025/2026 academic year, until 12:00 noon on Aug 22.

In a press statement on Thursday, the ministry explained that this decision was taken for the largest possible number of students to complete the registration procedures and ensure that those wishing to obtain external scholarship do not miss this opportunity.

It stressed the need for students to adhere to the specified deadlines and complete their application through its official website in accordance with the rules and conditions announced in the scholarship plan.

It urged the students and their parents to review the registration instructions and guidelines available on the website and make sure that the required data and documents are entered accurately to guarantee that the application is accepted.



# US Democrats release plan to boost party’s California House seats in fight for Congress

LOS ANGELES, Aug 16, (AP): In a display of cutthroat yet calculated politics, Democrats unveiled a proposal Friday that could give California’s dominant political party an additional five US House seats in a bid to win the fight to control of Congress next year.

The plan calls for an unusually timed reshaping of House district lines to greatly strengthen the Democratic advantage in the state ahead of mid-term elections, when Republicans will be defending a fragile majority.

It amounts to a counterpunch to Texas, where the GOP is trying to add five seats to its House delegation at the urging of President Donald Trump as he tries to avoid losing control of Congress and, with it, prospects for his conservative agenda in the later part of his term.

If approved by voters in November, the California blueprint could nearly erase Republican House members in the nation’s most populous state. The Democratic plan is intended to win the party 48 of its 52 US House seats, up from 43.

The campaign arm of House Democrats, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, released the maps Friday, and the Democratic-led Legislature later posted them online. State lawmakers plan to hold hearings and vote on the new maps next week.

“This is about more than drawing lines on a map. It’s about drawing a line in the sand to stop Texas and Trump from rigging the election,” state Senate Democratic leader Mike McGuire said in a statement.

While a general notion behind drawing districts is to unite what’s called communities of interest - neighborhoods and cities that share similar concerns or demographic traits - the proposed remapping would create a jigsaw of oddly shaped districts to maximize Democratic clout.

The 1st Congressional District is currently anchored in the state’s conservative far northeast corner and is represented by Republican Rep. Doug LaMalfa, a Trump supporter. The district has a nearly 18-point GOP registration edge.

Under the proposal, Democrats would end up with a 10-point registration advantage there after drastic reshaping to include parts of heavily Democratic Sonoma County near the Pacific Coast.

In a post on the social platform X, LaMalfa called the proposal “absolutely ridiculous.”

In the battleground 41st District east of Los Angeles, home to long-serving Republican Rep. Ken Calvert, Democratic and Republican registration is currently split about evenly.

But in the redrawn district, Democratic registration would jump to 46% with GOP registration falling to 26%.

Other Republicans whose districts would see major changes intended to favor Democrats include Reps. Kevin Kiley in Northern California, David Valadao in the Central Valley farm belt and Darrell Issa in San Diego County. Also, embattled Democratic incumbents would see their districts padded with additional left-leaning voters.



California Gov Gavin Newsom speaks during a news conference on Aug 14, in Los Angeles. (AP)

## US president holds calls with European leaders

# Zelenskyy to meet Trump on Monday after US-Russia summit secured no halt to fighting

KYIV, Ukraine, Aug 16, (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he will meet US President Donald Trump in Washington on Monday after a Russia-US summit ended without an agreement to stop the fighting in Ukraine after 3 1/2 years.

In a reversal only few hours after meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin, Trump said an overall peace agreement, and not a ceasefire, was the best way to end the war. That statement echoed Putin’s view that Russia is not interested in a temporary truce, and instead is seeking a long-term settlement that takes Moscow’s interests into account.

Trump and Ukraine’s European allies had been calling for a ceasefire ahead of any negotiations.

Zelenskyy, who was not invited to Alaska for the summit, said he held a “long and substantive” conversation with Trump early Saturday. He thanked him for an invitation to meet in person in Washington on Monday and said they would “discuss all of the details regarding ending the killing and the war.”

It will be Zelenskyy’s first visit to the US since Trump berated him publicly for being “disrespectful” during an extraordinary Oval Office meeting on Feb. 28.

Trump, who also held calls with European leaders Saturday, confirmed the White House meeting and said that “if all works out, we will then schedule a meeting with President Putin.”

Trump rolled out the red carpet on Friday for Putin, who was in the US for the first time in a decade and since the start of his full-scale invasion of Ukraine. But he gave little concrete detail afterward of what was discussed. On Saturday, he posted on social media that it “went very well.”

Trump had warned ahead of the summit of “very severe consequences” for Russia if Putin doesn’t agree to end the war.

Zelenskyy reiterated the importance of involving European leaders, who also were not at the summit.

“It is important that Europeans are involved at every stage to ensure reliable security guarantees together with America,” he said. “We also discussed positive signals from the American side regarding participation in guaranteeing Ukraine’s security.”

He didn’t elaborate, but Zelenskyy previously has said that European partners put on hold a proposal to establish a foreign troop presence in Ukraine to deter future Russian aggression because it lacked an American backstop.

Zelenskyy said he spoke to Trump one-on-one and then in a call with other European leaders. In total, the conversations lasted over 90 minutes.

Trump said in Alaska that “there’s no deal until there’s a deal,” after Putin claimed the two leaders had hammered out an “understanding” on Ukraine and warned Europe not to “torpedo the nascent progress.”



US President Donald Trump meets with Russia’s President Vladimir Putin on Aug 15, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. At left is Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and second from right is Secretary of State Marco Rubio. (AP)

During an interview with Fox News Channel before returning to Washington, Trump insisted the onus going forward might be on Zelenskyy “to get it done,” but said there would also be some involvement from European nations.

In a statement after speaking to Trump, major European leaders said they were ready to work with Trump and Zelenskyy toward “a trilateral summit with European support.”

The statement by French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Finnish President Alexander Stubb, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and the European Union’s two top officials said that “Ukraine must have ironclad security guarantees” and welcomed US readiness to provide them.

“It will be up to Ukraine to make decisions on its territory,” they said. “International borders must not be changed by force.” They did not mention a ceasefire, which they had hoped for ahead of the summit.

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said “the harsh reality is that Russia has no intention of ending this war anytime soon,” noting that Moscow’s forces launched new attacks on Ukraine even as the delegations met.

“Putin continues to drag out negotiations and hopes he gets away with it. He left Anchorage without making any commitments to end the killing,” she said.

Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala said the summit confirmed that “while the US and its allies are looking for ways to peace, Putin is still only interested in making the greatest possible territorial gains and restoring the Soviet empire.”

Ukrainian and Russian forces are fighting along a 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line. Since spring, Russian troops have accelerated their gains, capturing the most territory since the opening stages of the war.

“Vladimir Putin came to the Alaska summit with the principal goal of stalling any pressure on Russia to end the war,” said Neil Melvin, director of international security at the London-based Royal United Services Institute. “He will consider the summit outcome as mission accomplished.”

Zelenskyy voiced support for Trump’s proposal for a trilateral meeting with the U.S. and Russia. He said that “key issues can be discussed at the level of leaders, and a trilateral format is suitable for this.”

But Putin’s foreign affairs adviser, Yuri Ushakov, said on Russian state television Saturday that a potential meeting of Trump, Putin and Zelenskyy has not been raised in U.S.-Russia discussions. “The topic has not been touched upon yet,” he said, according to Russian state news agency RIA Novosti.

Zelenskyy wrote on X that he told Trump that “sanctions should be strengthened if there is no trilateral meeting or if Russia tries to evade an honest end to the war.”

Russian officials and media struck a largely positive tone, with some describing Friday’s meeting as a symbolic end to Putin’s isolation in the West.

Former President Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia’s Security Council, praised the summit as a breakthrough in restoring high-level dialogue between Moscow and Washington, describing the talks as “calm, without ultimatums and threats.”

Russian attacks on Ukraine continued overnight, using one ballistic missile and 85 Shahed drones, 61 of which were shot down, Ukraine’s air force said. Front-line areas of Sumy, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk and Chernihiv were attacked.



Serbian gendarmierie officers guard the street during an anti-government protest near Serbian Progressive Party office in Belgrade, Serbia on Aug 14. (AP)

## Serbia’s police fire tear gas at anti-govt protesters in Belgrade

Police fired tear gas at anti-government protesters in downtown Belgrade as they clashed for the third day on Friday in the Serbian capital and other cities amid reports of police brutality and excessive use of force during the unrest.

The anti-government rallies were held on Friday night across Serbia under the slogan: “Let’s show them we are not a punching bag.” Police deployed armored vehicles in parts

of the capital as protesters faced off against riot police separating them from pro-government supporters in downtown Belgrade.

Groups of protesters, most of them wearing facemasks, fired flares and threw rocks and eggs at the riot police, who charged them while mounted on armored vehicles in the wide boulevard in front of the Serbian government headquarters.

Some people were seen getting

first aid, but there were no immediate reports of how many were injured.

Thrash cannisters were rolled onto the streets, some set on fire. The chaotic scenes in Belgrade were repeated in similar clashes in several other cities and towns.

Earlier Friday, Serbian police said they detained hundreds of demonstrators who took part in anti-government protests throughout the country this week. (AP)

# Spain, Portugal and Greece battle wildfires as heat wave expected to last for days

MADRID, Aug 16, (AP): Firefighters in Spain, Portugal and Greece battled ongoing wildfires Friday, an important religious holiday in all three countries, as persistent hot, dry conditions challenged efforts to contain the blazes.

Spain was fighting 14 major fires, according to Virginia Barcones, general director of emergency services. Temperatures were expected to climb over the weekend.

“Today will once again be a very tough day, with an extreme risk of new fires,” Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez wrote on X.

The national weather agency AEMET warned of extreme fire risk in most of the country, including where the largest blazes were burning in the north and west. A heat wave which brought temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) on several days this month was expected to last through Monday.

Fires in the Galicia region forced the closure of several highways. The high speed rail line connecting it to Spain’s capital, Madrid, remained suspended.

The fires in Spain this year have burned 158,000 hectares or 610 square miles, according to the European Union’s European Forest Fire Information System. That is an area roughly



A man tries to put out a wildfire in Larouco, northwestern Spain on Aug 13. (AP)

as big as metropolitan London.

The wildfires raged on Friday as many European countries celebrated a religious holiday devoted to the Virgin Mary, known in Catholic countries like Spain and Portugal as the Feast of the Assumption.

In Portugal, nearly 4,000 firefighters were battling fires on Friday. Seven major fires were active. Authorities extended the state of alert until Sunday

as high temperatures were expected to last through the weekend.

The Portuguese government on Friday requested assistance from the EU’s civil protection mechanism, a firefighting force that European countries in need can call upon. A day before, Spain received two Canadair water bomber aircraft after requesting EU help to tackle blazes for the first time ever.

## Europe

**Sweden shooting kills one:** One person was killed and another injured in a shooting in the Swedish city of Orebro on Friday, police confirmed.

The deceased was identified as a 25-year-old man, police said at a press conference on Friday evening. The injured victim, also in his twenties, remains hospitalized, with the severity of his condition undisclosed. Both victims were previously known to law enforcement, police said.

A preliminary investigation into murder, attempted murder and aggravated weapons offenses has been opened.

No arrests have been made. “We are fully hunting the perpetrator right now. We are, of course, doing this by gathering information through witness interviews and conducting extensive investigative work with internal intelligence,” a police spokesman said. (Xinhua)

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**11 dead in western Russia factory fire:** A fire at an industrial facility in western Russia’s Ryazan region killed 11 people and injured 130 others, the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations said on Saturday.

“The bodies of two more people were found during rubble clearing. In total, unfortunately, 11 people died and 130 people were injured,” the ministry reported on its Telegram channel.

Earlier, a person, whose location was detected by one of the canine units deployed as part of the air-mobile group, was rescued from the debris, the ministry said.

More than 360 specialists and 90 units of equipment have been deployed to the scene, while search and rescue operations continue at the incident site, it added.

The fire broke out at around 10:30 a.m. local time



Police on scene outside a mosque after a shooting in Orebro, Sweden on Aug 15. (AP)

(0730 GMT) in a production workshop of a factory in Lesnoy, Shilovsky District.

Local investigative authorities had opened a case over violations of industrial safety requirements at hazardous production facilities in connection with the incident. (Xinhua)

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**Bulgaria detains 28 illegal migrants:** Bulgaria has detained 28 illegal migrants found hidden in a van, the country’s Interior Ministry said.

On Monday, Bulgarian border police received a tip-off that a group of migrants had boarded a van near the village of Brodilovo, the ministry said.

The authorities stopped the vehicle on the road and discovered 28 undocumented migrants in the cargo hold.

The driver and passengers were arrested at the scene. (Xinhua)

# Train collides with vehicle in Denmark, killing one person and injuring 20 others

BERLIN, Aug 16, (AP): A passenger train collided with a vehicle at a crossing near the town of Tinglev in southern Denmark on Friday, leaving one person dead and injuring some 20 others.

The extent of the injuries is still unclear, but photos from the scene show derailed and overturned carriages.

A large number of emergency services were on the scene, and local news outlet TV2 said they had deployed drones and search dogs.

The company in charge of operating Denmark’s rail network, Banedanmark, said on X that the accident happened when the train collided with a vehicle at a level crossing.



Emergency services attend the passenger train derailment at the village of Bjerrdup between Kliplev and Tinglev in Southern Jutland, Denmark on Aug 15. (AP)



Subianto appeals for support from members of cabinet, political parties

## Indonesia’s president vows tough stance against corruption in State of Nation address

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Aug 16, (AP): President Prabowo Subianto marked the 80th anniversary of Indonesia’s independence by vowing to root out corruption and crackdown on food cartels that caused billions of dollars of annual state losses.

Subianto, who took office in October, delivered the remarks in his first State of the Nation address Friday after 299 days leading the country.

“I have a deeper understanding of the magnitude of the challenges we face and the extent of corruption within our government,” Subianto told members of Parliament and other top officials.

The 73-year old former general said that since early this year his administration has identified and saved 300 trillion rupiah (\$18.5 billion) in the state budget that may have been lost to corruption, including from domestic and international travel by government officials and office stationery.

“We are facing the reality of a massive leakage of our nation’s wealth, we are in a net outflow of national wealth condition,” Subianto said. “Therefore, I am obliged to take action even if it is difficult and disliked by certain parties.”

In the fiery, televised speech, Subianto also vowed to fight food cartels that caused losses up to \$6.1 billion each year in a phenomenon that he called “serakahnomics,” a play on words combining economics with the Indonesian term for greedy, “serakah.”

He pledged to enforce the law and take action against companies regardless of whether there are powerful figures or military generals and police who support them “to make sure that the Indonesian people would not be victims of serakahnomics.”

Subianto said it was “very strange and unreasonable” that Indonesia, the world’s largest palm oil producer, experienced cooking oil shortages twice in 2022 causing skyrocketing prices and some people lacked access to affordable food despite the government’s rollout of agricultural equipment, fertilizer and pesticide subsidies and irrigation reservoirs.



Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, (centre), delivers his annual State of the Nation address ahead of the country’s Independence Day, in Jakarta, Indonesia on Aug 15. (AP)

Subianto accused the country’s rice mills of buying the farmers’ unhusked, dry rice below the government-set price of Rp 6,500 (40 U.S. cents) per kilogram and enjoying millions of dollars profit each month from an unfair food trade.

## South Korea president vows to restore 2018 inter-Korean army deal to ease tensions

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug 16, (AP): South Korea’s new liberal president, Lee Jae Myung, said Friday he will seek to restore a 2018 military agreement with North Korea aimed at reducing border tensions and urged Pyongyang to respond to Seoul’s efforts to rebuild trust and revive dialogue.

Speaking on the 80th anniversary of Korea’s liberation from Japanese colonial rule, Lee’s overture came amid soaring tensions fueled by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un’s nuclear ambitions and deepening ties with Russia over the war in Ukraine.

The 2018 military agreement, reached during a brief period of diplomacy between Kim and South Korea’s former liberal President Moon Jae-in, created buffer zones on land and sea and no-fly zones above the border to prevent clashes.

South Korea’s previous conservative government suspended the deal in 2024, citing tensions over North Korea’s launches of trash-laden balloons toward the South, and moved to resume front-line military activities and propaganda campaigns. The step came after North Korea had already declared it would no longer abide by the agreement.

“To prevent accidental clashes between South and North Korea and to build military trust, we will take proactive, gradual steps to restore the (2018) Sept. 19 military agreement,” Lee said in a televised speech.

Lee said his government affirms “our respect for the North’s current system” and that the wealthier South “will not pursue any form of unification by absorption and has no intention of engaging in hostile acts.”

Lee said South Korea remains com-



South Korean President Lee Jae Myung speaks during a ceremony to celebrate the 80th anniversary of Korea’s liberation from Japanese colonial rule in Seoul, South Korea on Aug 15. (AP)

mitted to an international push to denuclearize North Korea and urged Pyongyang to resume dialogue with Washington and Seoul. Amid a prolonged diplomatic stalemate with its rivals, Kim’s government has made clear it has no intention of giving up the weapons it sees as its strongest guarantee of survival and would reject any future talks on denuclearization.

“Denuclearization is a complex and difficult task that cannot be resolved quickly,” Lee said. “However, inter-Korean and U.S.-North Korea dialogue as well as international cooperation will help us approach a peaceful resolution.”

Japan’s defeat in World War II liberated Korea from colonial rule, but

the peninsula was then divided into a U.S.-backed, capitalist South and a Soviet-supported, socialist North - a separation cemented by the devastating 1950-53 Korean War.

Lee’s meeting with Ishiba will come just before he flies to Washington for a meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump over trade and defense issues, a setup that underscores how Trump’s push to reset global trade and US security commitments is drawing the often-feuding neighbors closer.

Ishiba, eager to improve ties with Seoul, has acknowledged Japan’s wartime aggression and has shown more empathy toward Asian victims than his recent predecessors.

## Verdict, sentencing for Brazil’s former prez Bolsonaro set for early September

SAO PAULO, Aug 16, (AP): A verdict and sentence in the coup trial against former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro will be delivered early next month, the country’s Supreme Court announced Friday.

The court said the five-justice panel that heard the right-wing leader’s case will deliver verdicts and sentences on the five counts against him from Sept. 2 to 12.

Bolsonaro, who has drawn the strong support of US President Donald Trump and who remains under house arrest, is accused of leading a conspiracy to stay in office after his narrow election defeat in 2022 to current President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Bolsonaro denies wrongdoing.

Prosecutors say Bolsonaro and several of his allies headed a criminal organization that plotted to overturn the election, including plans to kill Lula and Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who is overseeing the criminal case. Prosecutors have presented message exchanges, handwritten notes and other evidence allegedly detailing the plot.

Defense attorneys have argued that



Demonstrators rally in support of former president Jair Bolsonaro at the entrance to his residential complex, to denounce his house arrest order by the Supreme Court, in Brasília, Brazil on Aug 5. (AP)

no coup went forward and that Bolsonaro allowed the presidential transition to Lula to take place, undermining any

allegations that he tried to thwart that process.

There are two five-justice panels at Brazil’s top court, and Justice de Moraes brought the case to the one he sits on. Bolsonaro, who governed from 2019 to 2022, appointed two members of the court, but both sit on the other panel.

There are five counts against Bolsonaro issued by the country’s prosecutor-general: attempting to stage a coup, involvement in an armed criminal organization, attempted violent abolition of the democratic rule of law and two counts involving destruction of state property.

The prosecution finished presenting its case in July and the defense wrapped up its arguments this week.

Bolsonaro’s trial has gripped a sharply divided Brazilian public.

It received even more attention after Trump directly tied a 50% tariff on imported Brazilian goods to his ally’s judicial situation. Trump has called the proceedings a “witch hunt” against a political opponent, triggering nationalist reactions from many Brazilian politicians.

## Canadian Prime Minister Carney to meet with Mexican president in Mexico next month

TORONTO, Aug 16, (AP): Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney will visit Mexico in September to meet with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, a senior official familiar with the matter said Friday.

The meeting comes as America’s neighbors deal with US tariffs and prepare for a review of the free trade deal between the three countries next year.

The official confirmed the visit on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

Carney sent his foreign minister as well as his finance minister to meet with Sheinbaum earlier this month in a bid to diversify trade. They also met a large group of Canadian and Mexican business leaders, including key players supporting North America’s integrated economy, trade infrastructure and supply chains.

Sheinbaum visited Canada during the G7 summit in Alberta in June.

Goods that comply with the 2020 United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement that US President Donald Trump negotiated during his first term are ex-



Canada’s Prime Minister Mark Carney welcomes Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum to the G7 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta on June 17. (AP)

cluded from the US tariffs.

But Trump has some sector-specific tariffs, known as 232 tariffs, that are having an impact. There is a 50% tariff on steel and aluminum imports and a 25% tariff on auto imports.

Mexico is Canada’s third largest trading partner after the US and China. Canada was Mexico’s fifth-largest trading partner in 2024.

## Australian and Philippine forces launch largest-ever joint military exercises

MANILA, Philippines, Aug 16, (AP): Australia on Friday launched its largest military exercises with Philippine forces, involving more than 3,600 military personnel in live-fire drills, battle maneuvers and a beach assault at a Philippine town facing the disputed South China Sea, where the allies have raised alarm over Beijing’s assertive actions.

The exercises are called Alon, meaning wave in the Philippine language, and will showcase Australia’s firepower. The drills will involve a guided-missile navy destroyer, F/A-18 supersonic fighter jets, a C-130 troop and cargo aircraft, Javelin anti-tank weapons and special forces sniper weapons.

Military officials said defense forces from the United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Indonesia will join as observers.

“This exercise reflects Australia’s commitment to working with partners to ensure we maintain a region where state sovereignty is protected, international law is followed and nations can make decisions free from coercion,” Vice Admiral Justin Jones of the Royal Australian Navy said in a statement.

The combat exercises are “an opportunity for us to practice how we collaborate and respond to shared security challenges and project



In this photo provided by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Maj Gen Francisco F Lorenzo Jr, (left), commander of the AFP Education, Training and Doctrine Command, pins the Alon Exercise 2025 patch on Deputy Chief of Joint Operations Maj Gen Hugh McAslan during the opening ceremony of joint military drills between Australia and the Philippines in Palawan province, Philippines on Aug 15. (AP)

force over great distances in the Indo-Pacific,” Jones said.

The exercises will run until Aug 29.

Australia is the second country after the US with a visiting forces agreement with the Philippines, allowing the deployment of large numbers of troops for combat exercises in each other’s territory.

The Philippines has signed a

similar pact with Japan, which will take effect next month. It is in talks with several other Asian and Western countries including France and Canada for similar defense accords.

China has deplored multinational war drills and alliances in or near the disputed South China Sea, saying the U.S. and its allies are “gang-ing up” against it and militarizing the region.



Rescue workers and local residents use heavy machinery to search for bodies of the victims of Friday’s flash flooding through the rubble of damaged houses at Qadir Nagar village near Pir Baba, Buner district, in Pakistan’s northwest on Aug 16. (AP)

## Pakistan floods kill 220 as rescuers pull more bodies from landslides in northwest district

BUNER, Pakistan, Aug 16, (AP): Flooding in a northwest Pakistani district has killed at least 220 people, officials said Saturday, as rescuers pulled 63 more bodies overnight from homes flattened by flash floods and landslides.

One eyewitness, who escaped the deluges in Buner, described seeing floodwaters carrying hundreds of boulders and “tons of rocks” crashing down.

Pakistan has received higher-than-normal monsoon rainfall this year, which experts link to climate change, triggering floods and mudslides that have killed some 541 people since June 26, according to the National Disaster Management Authority.

Hundreds of rescue workers are still searching for survivors in Buner, one of several places in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province where torrential rains and cloudbursts caused massive

flooding on Friday, said Mohammad Suhail, a spokesman for the emergency services. Dozens of homes were swept away.

First responders have been trying to recover bodies from the worst-hit villages of Pir Baba and Malik Pura, where most of the fatalities were, said Kashif Qayyum, a deputy commissioner in Buner.

Local police officer Imtiaz Khan, who narrowly escaped the deluges, said floodwaters carrying hundreds of boulders struck and flattened homes within minutes.

“A stream near Pir Baba village in Buner swelled without warning. At first, we thought it was a normal flash flood, but when tons of rocks came crashing down with the water, 60 to 70 houses were swept away in moments,” Khan told The Associated Press, adding

that many bodies were left mutilated.

“Our police station was washed away too and if we hadn’t climbed to higher ground, we would not have survived.”

Rescuers said they saw large swathes of Pir Baba village destroyed, wrecked homes, and giant rocks filling the streets as the water started to recede.

“It was not just the floodwater, it was a flood of boulders as well, which we saw for the first time in our lives,” said Sultan Syed, 45, who suffered a broken arm.

Mohammad Khan, 53, said the floods “came so fast that many could not leave their homes.”

Most victims died before reaching the hospital, said Mohammad Tariq, a doctor in Buner. “Many among the dead were children and men, while women were away in the hills collecting firewood and grazing cattle,” he said.

### Africa

**23 dead, 21 injured in Niger heavy rains:** Up to 23 people were killed and 21 others injured in the torrential rains across Niger this year, the commander of the national fire brigade group said at a press briefing on Thursday.

The rains also caused the collapse of 3,615 houses and displaced 5,855 households -- affecting a total of 42,559 people, Lieutenant-Colonel Ali Abdoul Azize added.

He reminded people to avoid crossing waterways during or after rainfall, blocking drainage passages, staying in potentially dangerous areas and occupying makeshift shelters.

In 2024, heavy rains in Niger resulted in 396 deaths, dis-

placed 206,474 households -- affecting 1,526,653 people -- and destroyed 158,767 houses. (Xinhua)

**Mali arrests 2 generals, others in ‘coup plot’:** Mali’s military rulers said they have arrested a group of military personnel and civilians, including two Malian generals and a suspected French agent, accused of attempting to destabilize the country.

The announcement followed rumors in recent days of arrests of Malian army officers and was made by Mali’s security minister, Gen. Daoud Aly Mohammedine on the evening news on the local media. He assured the audience that a full investigation was underway and that “the situation is completely under control.” (AP)



## Kuwait oil price surges to \$69.49 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil rose by 51 cents to US 69.49 per barrel (pb) in Friday's trading, compared to USD 68.98 pb on Thursday, announced Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday.

Globally, price of Brent crude went down by 99 cents to USD 65.85 pb, and West Texas Intermediate crude fell by USD 1.16 to USD 62.80 pb.

# Business

Offering comprehensive training within a professional banking environment

## KFH concludes the second edition of KFH Academy

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has concluded its second enhanced edition of KFH Academy, which offered a comprehensive training experience combined with theoretical knowledge and practical application.

The program provided a professional learning model within a leading banking environment for preparing Kuwaiti youth across diverse areas including Public Relations (PR) and Media, Digital Transformation and Innovation, in addition to Engineering Projects.

A special honoring ceremony for the trainees was held, attended by Acting Group Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Group CEO Transformation, Technology and Operations, Haytham Alterkait, along side several officials from the Bank.

This edition builds on the success of the inaugural PR Academy, launched by KFH last year, expanding the scope of training and introducing new areas of learning. The program aims to meet the aspirations of a wider segment of university students and recent graduates from various disciplines. It also reflects KFH's commitment to empowering Kuwaiti youth competencies.

In his address, Acting Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, **Ahmad Alhammad**, said: "At KFH, we are proud to reiterate our unwavering commitment to empowering young national talents by offering the best specialized training programs. These initiatives pave new paths for students and recent graduates to develop their skills and prepare for the job market with confidence and knowledge."

He added that KFH Academy, in its upgraded edition, is a continuation of the first PR Academy. This year's edition included an expanded training scope with new key areas such as PR and Media, Digital Transformation and Innovation, and Engineering projects, all designed to meet the ambitions of a broader group of students from diverse academic backgrounds.

Alhammad highlighted that the program was designed in accordance with the highest global training standards, combining rich theoretical learning with real-world, practical experience in a professional banking environment. The program also featured field visits and intensive workshops in collaboration with KFH partners from both the public and private sectors.



Ahmad Alhammad delivers his speech.



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh delivers his speech.



Haytham Alterkait surrounded by a number of Kuwait Finance House officials during the ceremony.

■ **Alhammad:** Investing in young talents is the best investment to achieve sustainable success

■ **Al-Ruwaieh:** The program reflects KFH's commitment to empowering Kuwaiti youth and providing them access to the best expertise

"At KFH, we believe that investing in people is the smartest investment. Building a capable, attentive, and innovative generation is the foundation for sustaining our success as a leading financial institution," he remarked. Meanwhile, Head of Public Relations and Media at KFH, **Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh**, said that the upgraded edition of KFH Academy de-

livered an actual training model for empowering Kuwaiti youth to excel in a professional banking environment through diverse fields.

"This program's is an extension of the previous successful PR Academy, but with wider scope, reflecting KFH's commitment to continuous development and offering programs that meet the evolving needs of the employment market," he commented, "It also reaffirms the Bank's leadership in supporting national talent and youth, while providing a comprehensive training program that combines theoretical learning with practical application at Kuwait's largest bank and the world's second-largest Islamic bank."

Al-Ruwaieh stressed KFH's commitment to organizing relevant impactful programs. This commitment aligns with the Bank's social responsibility and leadership in supporting the youth and investing in honing their skills to prepare them as future leaders.



A photo of a group of trainees with Kuwait Finance House officials.



Alterkait, Alhammad and Al-Ruwaieh honor one of the trainees.

### Other Voices

## No more 'Drill, Baby!'

By Kamel Al-Harami  
Independent Oil Analyst

The once-famous statement of the U.S. administration urging American oil companies to ramp up drilling and search for more crude oil has now taken a turn. Today, U.S. oil producers are singing a different tune - "Baby, Wait", as oil prices have dropped so low that they no longer cover production costs.

Today, the price of U.S. crude oil stands below \$64 per barrel, while the breakeven price for many producers is around \$68 per barrel. As a result, American oil companies are scaling back, cutting investments by more than \$2 billion this year, and taking a wait-and-see approach, hoping for improvements and a recovery in oil prices.

On the other hand, OPEC+ is continuing its push by increasing oil supply to the market in an effort to regain lost market share.

This move by OPEC+ is a legitimate attempt not only to reclaim its previous volume but also to utilize its spare production capacity and boost much-needed cash flow amid falling oil prices. The aim may also be to compensate for revenue losses incurred over the past three years.

Most OPEC+ members are currently facing budget deficits and are in urgent need of cash to bridge financial gaps. With rising annual budget expenditures, new hires, and job creation initiatives, many of these countries require oil prices of \$90 or higher to balance their budgets.

The challenge of the future, which, in fact, is already upon us, is how to improve our oil revenues while trying to avoid or even reduce annual expenses, despite rising state costs. Meeting these additional expenses requires a dedicated team with clear vision and foresight.

Here in Kuwait, we must address both our current and future challenges. Oil resources will



Al-Harami

not last forever, and even if they did, relying solely on oil will leave us short of cash unless we actively seek new sources of income beyond total oil dependency.

Perhaps the biggest challenge would be to create meaningful job opportunities for our upcoming graduates from all levels. This cannot be achieved without a serious, coordinated effort from the government and full cooperation with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Together, they must manage and coordinate the arrival of different nationalities into our country, especially following the recent decision of the Ministry of Interior to allow almost all nationalities to enter Kuwait with minimal restrictions.

This move hopefully signals greater openness and expanding business opportunities for the future.

Perhaps this will lead to prosperity and more job opportunities, hopefully welcoming newcomers along with their families. It is certainly a positive move that could pave the way for prosperity for all.

Oil prices, however, are expected to take a long time to recover and reach the \$70-per-barrel level, which is bad news for all oil producers, including U.S. shale producers. The recovery will be slow due to weak or sluggish demand from major consumers such as China, India, and Brazil.

At this moment, it is not economically viable to drill for more oil when the prices are hovering around \$66 per barrel. This does not make any economic sense to the U.S. shale producers, as they are not covering their annual expenses with the current low prices, and this situation may last for a while. Borrowing from international banks is an option, but the question remains - for how long?

Meanwhile, we in Kuwait might continue selling our overseas assets, the so-called "future generations reserves", unless oil prices return to their previous high levels, which would likely come at the expense of giving up OPEC+ market share while maintaining the "drill baby drill" policy.



Email: [nafikuwaiti@yahoo.com](mailto:nafikuwaiti@yahoo.com)

'AI integration boosts efficient, and reliable networks.'

## Zain Kuwait launches region's first AI Digital Assistant to boost network O&M

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Zain Kuwait announced the launch of the Digital Assistant for Wireless Site Engineers across its network, making it the first in the region to introduce this type of artificial intelligence technology into operations and maintenance within its technical infrastructure.

This achievement comes as part of Zain's strategy to enhance its network infrastructure and accelerate its digital innovation and transformation journey, positively impacting service quality and efficiency, enhancing the customer experience on its network - rated the best and fastest in Kuwait\* - and reinforcing its leading position in the telecommunications and ICT sector.

The Digital Assistant, FME Mate - developed and implemented in collaboration with Zain's strategic partner Huawei - helps identify and analyze fault causes with precision and propose instant repair solutions, leveraging the latest large language model (LLM) technologies in the industry.

With its natural language interaction feature, site engineers no longer need to enter complex system commands. They can access fault data and connection topologies quickly and easily, improving fault-handling efficiency by more than 20% in approximately 90% of cases. This solution is expected to reduce site downtime by more than 2,250 hours annually.

Commenting on this achievement, Daaij Al-Oud, Chief Technology Officer of Zain Kuwait, said: "The launch of the Digital Assistant solution for wireless site engineers reflects Zain's strategic commitment to accelerating the pace of digital transformation within our technical infrastructure, employing the latest technology solutions to enhance efficiency. It is a pivotal step toward building smarter, more efficient, and more reliable networks."

He added: "Integrating artificial intelligence into our operations will bring a qualitative leap in the quality of services we offer, while boosting our network's readiness to support Kuwait's vision of becoming a regional hub for the digital economy. We will continue to explore more intelligent solutions with our partners to build an advanced digital ecosystem that meets future needs."

This launch highlights Zain Kuwait's position as a regional leader in adopting cutting-edge technological innovations to sustain and optimize operations and maintenance efficiency, ensuring the continuity of high-quality digital services in line with its strategy to deliver the best possible experience to consumer, corporate, and govern-



Daaij Al-Oud

ment customers.

The project also reinforces Zain's standing at the forefront of telcos investing in building intelligent, adaptable networks capable of keeping pace with the rapid changes in the industry. By harnessing the power of generative AI to develop innovative solutions that support proactive operations and improve fault response times, it serves as a cornerstone of the company's efforts to achieve maximum operational efficiency and sustain service quality.

The impact of this innovation goes beyond merely improving technical performance. It sets new benchmarks for intelligent maintenance and opens the door to developing more smart applications across various areas of the network.

Zain continues to deliver on its vision to be a driving force for digital transformation in Kuwait and the region, through sustained investment in advanced technologies and the establishment of strategic partnerships that strengthen its position as a leading provider of future-ready digital solutions.

\*Based on Ookla® Speedtest® results for Q3 and Q4 of 2024.



Zain headquarters



Net interest income up 28% to EGP 3.8 bln

# ABK–Egypt achieves 35% EGP 2.6 bln net profit in H1 2025

CAIRO, Aug 16: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait – Egypt (ABK-Egypt) achieved outstanding financial results for the first half of the year 2025 with net profit recording EGP 2.6 billion by the end of June 2025, reflecting an increase of 35% compared to EGP 1.9 billion for the same period last year, after excluding foreign exchange revaluation impact. Net interest income grew by 28% to reach EGP 3.8 billion compared to EGP 3 billion in the first half of 2024.

Meanwhile, total assets grew by 15% to reach EGP 163.4 billion compared to EGP 141.6 billion at the end of 2024. Total customer deposits increased by 16%, reaching EGP 139.1 billion compared to EGP 119.9 billion in December 2024, and total gross loans portfolio increased by 20% to reach EGP 83.4 billion compared to EGP 69.3 billion at the end of 2024. Moreover, the non-performing loans (NPL) ratio recorded 1.59% at the end of June 2025 compared to 1.74% at the end of 2024.

Commenting on these results, Mr. Ali Marafi, Chairman of ABK-Egypt, said, “The Bank’s strong performance, particularly the significant growth in total assets, demonstrates the strength of our financial position and our solid operational model across key business lines. These results underscore our ability to continue on our successful journey despite global and regional economic turbulence.” He also expressed his gratitude for the efforts of the Executive Management and their unwavering commitment to realizing the Bank’s ambitious growth strategy, which emphasizes agility and innovation to ensure adapting to the evolving economic landscape.

Marafi stated that during the first half of 2025, ABK-Egypt continued to expand its footprint with the opening of a new branch in 6th of October City. This move aligns with the Bank’s ambitious strategy for carefully planned geographic expansion and establishing a presence in prime locations to grow its customer base. He emphasized the Bank’s unwavering commitment to excellence and innovation as key drivers in strengthening its competitive position and increasing its market share in Egypt.

**Strategic Vision**

Marafi added, “Our ambitious vision focuses on boosting our geographical presence across Egyptian governorates as well as diversifying our range of products and services that meet the rising needs of various customers to best attract new segments and expand our customer base.” He further stated that this expansion agenda is a fundamental pillar for supporting national directions and the Central Bank of Egypt’s (CBE) efforts in promoting financial inclusion, which is considered a cornerstone in Egypt Vision 2030 and a catalyst for achieving sustainable development goals and fostering a competitive and diversified economy.

Marafi stated that ABK-Egypt is continuing its digital transformation journey by introducing advanced technologies within its branches and enhancing its banking solutions to serve customers with the highest technical standards. These efforts, he noted, contribute significantly to boosting customer satisfaction and strengthening their trust in the Bank.

He concluded by affirming that ABK-Egypt is fully com-



Ali Marafi, Chairman of ABK-Egypt



Khaled El Salawy, CEO and Managing Director of ABK-Egypt

■ **Mr. Ali Marafi:** The strong performance and significant growth in total assets demonstrate the strength of our financial position and solid operational model.

■ **Mr. Khaled El Salawy:** The results affirm the Bank’s ability to seize business opportunities for growth as well as its ongoing commitment to delivering added value to both customers and shareholders.

mitted to supporting and financing development projects, as well as assisting national initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable growth across various sectors. This commitment reflects the Bank’s role as a responsible financial institution in the Egyptian market. Marafi also expressed his appreciation for the strong support the Bank receives from CBE and all regulatory authorities in Egypt, which play a key role in enhancing its performance and expanding its presence among diverse customer segments.

**Added Value**

In the same context, Mr. Khaled El Salawy, CEO and Managing Director of ABK-Egypt stated: “The Bank managed to achieve EGP 3.4 billion profit before tax, representing a growth rate of 32% compared to EGP 2.6 billion for the same period last year, after excluding foreign exchange revaluation impact. This affirms the Bank’s efficiency in adapting to changing market conditions, seizing business opportunities for growth as well as its ongoing commitment to delivering added value to both customers and shareholders.”

Khaled El Salawy added, “Over a period of ten years marking our presence in the Egyptian market, we have managed to build a strong track record of achievements in terms of revenues and market position.” He primarily attributed this success to the collective efforts of the entire team and the support of the Executive Management, who were keen on orchestrating efforts to maximize performance efficiency and deliver innovative products and outstanding services to a diverse customer

base.

He continued, “We will continue on our digital transformation path to enhance operational efficiency and ultimately improve customer experience. This can be attained through leveraging data and advanced technologies to personalize banking services, while upholding the highest standards of transparency and security in all financial transactions.”

**A New Chapter**

El Salawy affirmed that ABK-Egypt is embarking on a new chapter in its journey in the Egyptian market aimed at achieving more ambitious milestones for growth and development. The Bank looks to the future with a clear strategy and strong vision, supported by a solid track record of success. ABK-Egypt also confirms its innate understanding of the crucial impact of corporate social responsibility in the development of local communities, through launching an array of social initiatives across Egyptian governorates that promote economic empowerment for various segments. The Bank also takes pride in supporting the development of key sectors as part of its active role in driving Egypt’s economic and social progress.

El Salawy noted that in the first half of this year, the Bank continued forging strategic partnerships to deliver exclusive offers to its customers. He highlighted the launch of several promotional campaigns and special discounts designed to reward customers for using the Bank’s diverse range of cards and solutions in completing their financial and banking transactions.

He further emphasized the Bank’s strong commitment to supporting young entrepreneurs and owners of small and medium-sized enterprises by providing the essential funding and resources needed to bring their projects to life successfully. El Salawy also underscored the Bank’s dedication to developing the skills of its employees across all departments, considered a cornerstone of its success and growth plans, through comprehensive training programs. These initiatives aim to enhance staff performance, increase productivity and innovation, improve the quality of customer service, and attract more clients to the Bank’s continuously expanding family.

**New Awards**

On another successful note, the Bank has recently received two prestigious awards from International Business Magazine. ABK-Egypt was named ‘Best Corporate Banking Services Bank – Egypt,’ in recognition of its outstanding efforts in delivering innovative and integrated financial solutions to its corporate customers. In addition, El Salawy was honored as ‘Best CEO – Egypt 2025,’ in recognition of his distinguished professional career and exceptional leadership capabilities that were reflected through a solid track record. This recognition reinforces the pivotal role he has played since assuming the position of CEO and Managing Director of ABK-Egypt.

These accolades join a growing list of awards the Bank has earned in recent years from leading performance evaluation institutions, underscoring its excellence and distinction across a wide range of assessments at the local, regional, and global levels.

## Results reflect one-off, non-cash loss from remeasurement of discontinued operations

# Agility reports KD 8.7 million net profit from continuing operations in Q2 '25, up 196% from same period last year

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Agility Public Warehousing Company KSCP (“Agility KSCP”), a supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company, today reported Q2 2025 results following a repositioning of the company’s strategy.

**Q2 Recap of New Strategic Direction**

On 17 June 2025, Agility KSCP’s Board of Directors approved a new strategic direction aligned with Kuwait Vision 2035, aiming to accelerate national infrastructure development and reaffirm the company’s original mission set in 1979 to develop critical warehousing and logistics in Kuwait.

To execute on this strategic direction, Agility KSCP announced that it will position its capital, operations, and leadership to support Kuwait’s economic priorities, with planned investments exceeding KD 100 million through 2030 in high-priority sectors. The company announced that it was taking several structural steps as part of this strategy, including national alignment, fostering Kuwaiti talent, and rebranding.

The Board of Directors of Agility KSCP, based on the authorization given at the Company’s Ordinary general meeting held on 22 May 2025, also approved the distribution of in-kind dividends representing 20.09% of the shares held by Agility KSCP in ADX-listed Agility Global Plc.

This strategic step aimed to offer shareholders a direct stake in a high-growth business while enhancing Agility Global’s free float, improving



share liquidity, and boosting price discovery. This move is expected to raise Agility Global’s market visibility and support potential inclusion in major equity indices, underscoring the Board’s commitment to long-term value creation and alignment with shareholders.

**Results from Continuing Operations**

Following the announcement of this in-kind dividend distribution, Q2 2025 is the first quarter that Agility KSCP is reporting its results from continuing operations, and accounting for the one-off, non-cash impact of the remeasurement of Agility Global in Agility KSCP.

Q2 2025 net income from continuing operations stands at KD 8.7 million, up 196% from the same period last year, equivalent to 3.48 fils per share. Revenue stands at KD 36.1 million, and EBITDA was KD 16.2 million, up 36% year-over-year.

For the six months ending June 30, 2025, net income from continuing operations stands at KD 18 million, equivalent to 7.22 fils per share, a 45.3% increase from same period last year. Revenue stands at KD 73.9 million, and EBITDA was KD 32.2 million up 5.3% year-over-year.

**One off, Non-Cash Loss from Discontinued Operations**

In accordance with account-



Tarek Sultan, Vice Chairman of Agility

ing standard IFRS 5, in Q2, Agility Global PLC was classified as “held for distribution to shareholders”.

As a result, the company recognized a non-cash loss of KD 292 million attributable to shareholders. This loss reflects the initial measurement of Agility Global, representing the difference between its book value and its market value as of 30 June 2025.

Including this one-off loss from discontinued operations, the reported consolidated net result for Q2 2025 was a loss of KD 282 million, equivalent to negative 113 fils per share.

This loss is an accounting adjustment as a result of the distribution of in-kind dividends as mentioned above and does not reflect the economic value of Agility Global, which continues to perform strongly.

**Tarek Sultan, Vice Chairman of Agility KSCP said:**

“Operating performance in the second quarter remained stable, and net income from continuing operations improved year-over-year. While

Continuing Operations	Q2 2025 (Million KD)	Q2 2024 (Million KD)	Variance (%)	1H 2025 (Million KD)	1H 2024 (Million KD)	Variance (%)
Revenue	36.1	36.1	0%	73.8	72.7	1%
Net Revenue	30.2	27.3	10%	62.3	59.0	5%
EBITDA	16.2	12.0	36%	32.2	30.6	3%
EBIT	14.2	10.0	42%	28.2	26.7	4%
Net Profit	8.7	3.0	196%	18.0	12.4	50%
EPS (fils)	3.48	1.17	197%	7.22	4.97	45%
Discontinued Operations						
Net Profit Reported	-282.0	6.0	-4,800%	-270.4	24.7	-1,180%
EPS (fils) Reported	-113.21	2.41	-4,800%	-108.55	9.91	-1,195%

Numbers above are rounded.

the reported consolidated loss reflects a one-time, non-cash accounting adjustment under IFRS-5, it does not impact the fundamentals of the business. Our focus remains on positioning Agility KSCP for sustainable growth, with a particular emphasis on Kuwait-centric opportunities.”

**Continuing Operations: Business Update**

In Kuwait, the company’s portfolio businesses remain committed to executing their growth strategies while actively pursuing opportunities to enhance value and returns for shareholders.

GCS continues to prioritize both expansion and operational efficiency, positioning itself to capture new market opportunities. Meanwhile, MRC achieved a significant milestone by winning the bid to develop and operate a state-of-the-art Metal Reclamation Facility (MRF) that will process spent catalysts from KNPC and KIPIC refineries, contributing to Kuwait’s sustainability and industrial recycling goals.

Agility’s Kuwait Logistics Parks business is also making steady progress on the development of S2, or South Village—an integrated commercial, logistics, and crafts/services hub designed to serve Sabah Al-Ahmad City, Kuwait’s next-generation urban development. This project underscores Agility KSCP’s role as a key enabler of modern infrastructure in support of national growth.

**Investments: Agility Global Business Update**

As of end June 30, 2025, Agility KSCP still owned 51% shares in Agility Global, however post the distribution which happened in July, Agility KSCP will own 25% of Agility Global and will be deconsolidated and accounted for as an associate in Agility KSCP Books starting in the third quarter of 2025. However, for the second quarter, Agility Global was reported as per IFRS 5 as mentioned above.

In Q2 2025, Agility Global reported healthy profitability growth with stable margins, driven mainly by Menzies and Agility Logistics Parks. Tristar delivered steady top-line growth and operational ramp-up; but certain challenges in its maritime segment limited its EBIT expansion.

Agility Global reported Q2 2025 earnings of \$24 million, EBIT grew 5% to \$97 million, EBITDA increased 8% to \$181 million, and revenue rose 8% to \$1.2 billion. Agility Global’s balance sheet remains strong with total assets at \$12.7 billion and shareholder equity at \$5.8 billion.



Operating revenue KD 1.6 mln, EBITDA loss KD 60.6 mln, assets KD 539 mln

# NREC records KD 65.3 million one-time non-cash loss, mainly driven by share of associate’s results for H1 ’25

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: National Real Estate Company (NREC) reported its financial and operational results for the period ended June 30, 2025, recording a net loss of KD 65.3 million and a loss per share (LPS) of 34.01 fils for the first half of 2025, compared to a net profit of KD 1.6 million and earnings per share (EPS) of 0.91 fils for the same period in 2024.

The Company posted year-to-date operating revenue of KD 1.6 million and total assets of KD 539 million as of June 30, 2025.

In Q2 2025, NREC reported a net loss of KD 66.5 million, a loss per share of 34.63 fils, and operating revenue of KD 0.8 million.

Commenting on the Company’s results, NREC Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Faisal Jamil Sultan Al-Essa, said: “On 18 June 2025, Agility KSCP announced an in-kind distribution of Agility Global PLC shares to its shareholders. This move triggered a revaluation of Agility Global in accordance with IFRS, resulting in a one-time, non-cash loss in Q2 2025.”

“As the largest shareholder in Agility KSCP, NREC recognized its proportionate share of this impact during the period. It is important to emphasize that this one-off, non-cash accounting adjustment does not reflect the underlying economic value of Agility Global, which continues to deliver strong performance, nor does



it affect the solid fundamentals of NREC’s business.”

“We remain firmly committed to enhancing the performance of our core assets while actively pursuing growth opportunities in our key markets. With a clear strategy and a resilient portfolio, we are well-positioned to create sustainable, long-term value for our shareholders and to capture the growth potential ahead.”

**Key Projects Update**

Reem Mall – Abu Dhabi: 219 Active Units and Bright Prospects

Sultan stated: “Since opening in May 2024, Reem Mall has quickly become a premier retail and lifestyle destination in Abu Dhabi. With 219 units actively trading, the mall demonstrates strong early engagement and a growing retail presence. A vibrant environment is taking shape, featuring a mix of leading international brands and exciting new entrants. This momentum highlights the mall’s appeal and adaptability to an evolving market.”

He added: “Abu Dhabi continues to see steady growth in family-oriented tourism, driven by world-class attractions, expanding leisure infrastructure, and a year-round



events calendar. Reem Mall is well-positioned to capitalize on this trend, offering a diverse range of entertainment, dining, and retail experiences, including unique attractions like Snow Abu Dhabi, catering to residents and the growing number of family visitors from across the region and beyond.”

NREC is a co-investor in the \$1.3 billion Reem Mall on Reem Island. Featuring digital innovations such as a mobile app for hands-free shopping, in-mall navigation, and smart parking, the mall leads in integrating online and in-person experiences. It houses the world’s first Bloomingdale’s Beauty, exclusive private viewing rooms at VOX Cinemas, and top brands including Carrefour, Nike, Eataly, Zara, Sephora and Marina Home.

Financial highlights for the periods ended June 30, 2025 (Million KD)						
Item	Q2 2025	Q2 2024	Variance (%)	H1 2025	H1 2024	Variance (%)
Revenue	0.8	1.2	-31%	1.6	2.6	-39%
Net Revenue	0.5	0.6	-10%	1.1	1.5	-23%
EBITDA (Negative EBITDA)	(64.1)	1.2	-5,573%	(60.6)	6.3	-1,069%
Net Profit / (Loss)	(66.5)	(1.3)	-5,143%	(65.3)	1.6	-4,090%
EPS (fils)	(34.63)	(0.70)	-4,847%	(34.01)	0.91	-3,837%

**Grand Heights – Egypt: A Modern, Integrated Community near Cairo**

Sultan said: “The Grand Heights project, developed by KUWADICO, continues to make steady progress in its development. This fully integrated, gated community is designed to provide residents with a modern, secure, and sustainable living environment. It combines residential, commercial, and recreational spaces, offering a balanced lifestyle in a prime location near Cairo.”

He added: “The development spans 3.8 million square meters and is being executed in phases to meet the growing demand for premium housing options in the area.”

**South Aqaba Investment Park – Jordan**

NREC’s logistics and industrial

park in South Aqaba continued to deliver steady performance in H1 2025, maintaining full occupancy and generating stable rental income.

Sultan noted: “Despite regional uncertainties, the park has maintained strong performance, demonstrating both resilience and operational strength.”

**Enhancing the Portfolio for Sustainable, Long-Term Growth**

Sultan stated, “Our priority remains optimizing the portfolio in line with NREC’s strategic vision. We are focused on maximizing the performance of core assets, exiting non-strategic holdings, and pursuing new local and regional investments that drive sustainable growth and deliver lasting value to shareholders.”

**Advancing Sustainability for a**

**Stronger Tomorrow**

Sultan stated, “Sustainability is central to NREC’s growth strategy. We are dedicated to integrating responsible practices across all operations, from reducing environmental impact to fostering social inclusion and maintaining robust governance. Through our ESG initiatives, we strive to create lasting, positive impact in the communities we serve while delivering resilient, long-term value for stakeholders.”

Established in 1973 and listed in Boursa Kuwait, National Real Estate Company (NREC) is a real estate investment, development, and property manager based in the Middle East and North Africa. The Company’s portfolio comprises a mix of retail, commercial, and residential properties in the region.

133 deals worth KD 63.8 mln

## Kuwait real estate transactions dip 20% in first week of August

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: The number of real estate transactions in the first week of August reached 133 worth KD63.8 million – 20.4 percent decrease in number and 28.3 percent decrease in trading value compared to the last week of July, which recorded 167 transactions worth KD89 million.

The weekly statistical report on real estate trading activity at the Real Estate Registration and Documentation Department from Aug 3-7 indicated the registration of 100 residential transactions worth KD29.8 million and 33 investment transactions worth KD34 million. This is in contrast to zero transaction in commercial, craft, banks, warehouses, showrooms, shops and the coastal strip sectors.

Ahmadi Governorate ranked first in terms of the number and value of transactions during the week, with a total of 57 transactions worth KD16.9 million; followed by Jahra Governorate with 11 transactions worth KD4.9 million, Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Hawalli gov-

ernorates with 10 transactions each worth KD14.7 million and KD12 million respectively, and Farwaniya and Capital governorates with six transactions each worth KD4.9 million and KD4 million respectively.

Based on the type of real estate, land and houses shared the first place with 50 transactions each or 75.2 percent of the total of 100 transactions; buildings followed with 18 or 15.5 percent and apartments with 15 or 11.3 percent.

In terms of the areas, Sabah Al-Salem recorded the highest with the 875-square-meter investment building sold for KD3.05 million, 1,000-square-meter investment building sold for KD2.14 million, 750-square-meter building sold for KD2.1 million and 862.5-square-meter investment building sold for KD1.35 million.

The report also revealed the awarding of three deals at public auction as follows: 855-square-meter investment building in Salmiya for KD1.88 million, 762-square-meter residential plot in Farwaniya for KD1.05 million and finally 604-square-meter house in Sabahiya for KD197 million.

## Lulu Retail reports H1 revenue of \$4.1 billion, increasing 5.9% YoY

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Lulu Retail has announced its H1 2025 financial results, delivering a solid 9.1% year-on-year increase in net profit to \$127.0 million. Revenues rose to \$4.1 billion (up 5.9% YoY), and like-for-like sales increased by 3.8%, driven by robust performance across key categories. In Q2 2025, the company reported revenues of \$2.0 billion, up 4.6% YoY with a strong sales growth. This performance was bolstered by continued growth in private label and the e-commerce category. Private label grew 3.5% YoY, accounting for 29.7% of retail revenue, while e-commerce maintained its momentum with sales up 43.4% YoY to \$108 million, representing 5.6% of retail revenue. Gross profit increased 6.5% YoY to \$468 million. EBITDA grew 7.6% YoY to \$204 million.

Lulu Retail has declared an interim dividend of \$98.4 million (3.5 fils per share), corresponding to a payout ratio of 78% of H1 2025 distributable profits – consistent with the IPO dividend policy.

**Key Highlights – H1 2025**

- Revenue: \$4.1 billion (up 5.9% YoY), driven by strong volume and category growth
- EBITDA: \$418 million (up 7.0% YoY); Q2 2025: \$204 million (up 7.6% YoY). Margins improved by 28 basis points in Q2.
- Net Profit: \$127 million (up 9.1% YoY), with a net margin of 3.1%
- Private Label Growth: Up 3.5% YoY in Q2, accounting for 29.7% of retail revenue
- Declares interim dividend of \$98.4 million (3.5 fils per share)
- E-commerce: Q2 sales up 43.4% YoY to \$108 million (5.6% of retail revenue); 45.4% increase in customer count YoY
- Loyalty Program: The Happiness loyalty program added 1 million new members during the quarter, bringing total membership to 7.3 million.
- Store Expansion: Seven new stores opened in H1 plus 4 more in July, taking the total to 259; full-year target of 20 new stores remains on track
- Growth Strategy: Private label and e-commerce continue to play pivotal roles in Lulu’s growth approach

“Our steady and resilient H1 2025 performance is a testament to our well-established growth pillars, enabling record sales and margin improvements. We expect our growth momentum to persist as we focus on expanding our store network, launching new outlets, enhancing operational efficiency, and unlocking further potential through private label and e-commerce offerings,” said Saifee Rupawala, CEO of Lulu Retail.



**Regional Performance:**

- UAE (largest market): Q2 revenue up 9.4% YoY, driven by continued high demand for fresh food and supported by Lulu’s omnichannel strategy
- Saudi Arabia (KSA): Revenue grew 3.8% YoY, aided by strong electrical goods sales and new store openings
- Kuwait: Revenue up 4.9% YoY; consistent positive performance

**About Lulu Retail:**

Founded in 1974, Lulu Retail – together with its subsidiaries – is the largest full-line retailer in the GCC by selling space, sales, and store count, operating 256 hypermarkets, express, and mini-market stores across the region. The Group supports a robust e-commerce presence via its mobile app, online storefront, and partner channels. Serving more than 690,000 daily shoppers from 130 nationalities, Lulu sources products from 85 countries and operates 19 on-the-ground sourcing offices. Its strong brand reputation across the GCC fuels store growth, network expansion, and elevated customer loyalty.

Personalized app experience tailored to customer segments

## Warba Bank partners with ‘Zayoom’ to expand digital offers marketplace

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Warba Bank today announced a strategic partnership with Zayoom, a specialized consumer electronics store, aimed at enriching the bank’s digital offers marketplace with exclusive benefits, including special discounts, limited seasonal deals and Marketplace e-store offers. This collaboration enhances the value offered to the bank’s customers and aligns with their aspirations.

Commenting on the announcement, Muhanad Issa Bourahma, Director of Product Development and Customer Segments at Warba Bank, said: “This partnership comes as part of our ongoing commitment to delivering the best digital experience for our customers, in line with our vision to create unique value both within and beyond banking services. Through the Warba app, we empower our customers to access the latest offers and modern products directly via the dynamic and ever-evolving Marketplace section. This collaboration reflects our spirit of innovation and our constant drive to keep pace with their modern lifestyles and enrich their daily experiences.”

The partnership gives Warba Bank a genuine opportunity to expand its engagement with customers, leveraging the app’s advanced architecture that personalizes content for each banking segment. Each segment has its own unique design, colors and character within the app, enabling the delivery of offers tailored to their needs and interests, moving away from the “one-size-fits-all” concept. The Marketplace is also distinguished by its flexibility and dynamism, with constantly updated offers, including rapid seasonal Flash Deals at unbeat-



able prices, transforming the app into a comprehensive digital destination full of surprises.

As part of this partnership, Zayoom is launching an exclusive, limited-time summer travel season offer: the Essential Tech Pack, a bundle containing all the smart devices customers need while traveling, offered at an exceptional price. This package represents a true Flash Deal and an opportunity not to be missed.

From his side, Mohamed Fawzy, Chief Executive Officer of Zayoom, said: “We are proud of this partnership with Warba Bank, a bank that entered the market recently yet has succeeded in reshaping the banking sector through the adoption of the latest technologies and its dedication to delivering the highest level of service. Warba is renowned for its advanced app, which has redefined banking interaction and provided customers with



a fully integrated, seamless digital experience. We see this partnership as a strategic opportunity that opens new horizons for us, allowing us to reach a broad segment of customers interested in technology and smart products. We believe it is a strong step toward realizing our vision of delivering the best tech solutions in Kuwait.”

This collaboration embodies Warba Bank’s core values of trust, innovation, performance, collaboration, and ambition, and reaffirms its commitment to supporting the digital economy ecosystem while promoting a culture of smart utilization of tech offers.

With this strong start alongside Zayoom, Warba Bank promises its customers more surprises and upcoming partnerships that will enhance their lifestyles and broaden their choices, ensuring Warba remains the preferred choice for ambitious individuals and businesses in Kuwait.

Jafurah holds 229T cubic feet gas

## Aramco inks \$11 bln leaseback deal for Jafurah gas facilities

RIYADH, Aug 16, (KUNA): Saudi Arabia’s energy giant Aramco signed a USD 11 billion lease and leaseback deal with international consortium, led by Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP) - a part of BlackRock, to develop its Jafurah gas processing facilities.

Jafurah is the largest non-associated gas development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, estimated to contain 229 trillion standard cubic feet of raw gas and 75 billion stock tank barrels of condensates.

It is a key component in Aramco’s plans to increase gas production capacity by 60% between 2021 and 2030, to meet rising demand, Aramco said in a press release on Thursday.

As part of the transaction a newly-formed subsidiary, Jafurah Midstream Gas Company (JMGC), will lease development and usage rights for the Jafurah Field Gas Plant and the Riyas NGL Fractionation Facility, and lease them back to Aramco for a period of 20 years.

JMGC will receive a tariff payable by Aramco in exchange for granting Aramco the exclusive right to receive, process, and treat raw gas from Jafurah, according to the statement.

Aramco will hold a 51 percent majority stake in JMGC, with the remaining 49 percent held by investors led by GIP.

The transaction, which will not impose any restrictions on Aramco’s production volumes, is expected to close as soon as practicable, subject to customary closing conditions.

“Jafurah is a cornerstone of our ambitious gas expansion program, and the GIP-led consortium’s participation as investors in a key component of our unconventional gas operations demonstrates the attractive value proposition of the project,” said Amin H. Nasser, Aramco President and CEO.

“This foreign direct investment into the Kingdom also

highlights the appeal of Aramco’s long-term strategy to the international investment community.

“As Jafurah prepares to start phase one production this year, development of subsequent phases is well on track,” he noted.

“We look forward to Jafurah playing a major role as a feedstock provider to the petrochemicals sector, and supplying energy required to power new growth sectors, such as AI data centers, in the Kingdom,” Nasser added.

On his part, Bayo Ogunlesi, Chairman and CEO of GIP, said, “We are pleased to deepen our partnership with Aramco with our investment in Saudi Arabia’s natural gas infrastructure, a key pillar of global natural gas markets.

“Today’s announcement builds upon BlackRock and GIP’s longstanding relationship with Aramco to serve growing market needs for cleaner fuels, energy security and energy affordability.”

“The opportunity to invest in one of the region’s most significant natural gas developments garnered significant interest from investors worldwide,” Ogunlesi pointed out.

“Co-investors in the transaction include leading institutional investors from Asia and the Middle East. When completed, the transaction will support the optimization of Aramco’s assets and capture additional value from the development of the Jafurah gas field,” he went on.

GIP’s mid-market infrastructure equity team, which invests in diversified and contracted mid-market infrastructure assets and businesses around the world, has a robust, long-term track record of successful investments in the Middle East.

This investment also builds upon the strong existing relationship between Aramco and BlackRock.

In 2022, BlackRock co-led a consortium of investors in a separate minority investment in Aramco Gas Pipelines Company.



## Animated blockbuster aims for worldwide appeal

## Yeoh brings Chinese hit ‘Ne Zha 2’ to life in English dub

LOS ANGELES, Aug 16, (AP): When **Michelle Yeoh** first saw “Ne Zha 2” in Hong Kong, she walked away dreaming about a dubbed version.

The Chinese blockbuster, which this year became the highest-grossing animated film of all time with over \$2.2 billion in ticket sales, had seemed to her like an ideal movie for a global, all-ages audience. But even she, who had the benefit of knowing Mandarin, was having trouble keeping up with the subtitles and all the spectacular things happening on screen. How would a kid stand a chance?

The Oscar winner, who is fluent in English, Malay and Cantonese, wasn’t alone in thinking a dub was a good idea. The film studio A24 was already making plans to broaden the audience with an English-language version in collaboration with CMC Pictures. Not too long after, Yeoh got a call asking if she wanted to voice Ne Zha’s mother, Lady Yin. Her response?

“Hell yes,” she told The Associated Press in a recent interview. The English-language dub opens in over 2,500 North American theaters on Aug. 22.

The film tells the story of a rebellious little child, Ne

Zha, born as the reincarnation of a demon to mortal parents, who is out to prove his fate is not predetermined. In the first film, he sacrifices himself. In the second, he’s put to the test to try to save his friend and his village. Don’t worry if you haven’t seen the first either - the sequel tells the audience everything they need to know.

And while this character might be new to American audiences, the mythology is well known in China. Yeoh grew up watching various TV and movie versions, but had never seen it done so vividly.

The making of “Ne Zha 2” took five years and required the work of some 4,000 people from 138 Chinese animation companies. The finished film, which runs an epic 143 minutes, includes 2,400 animation shots and 1,900 special effects shots.

“I think the director and his amazing team, they pushed all the boundaries,” Yeoh said. “They created this magical world that I hadn’t seen to this level of superb anima-



This image released by A24 shows the characters Lady Yin, (left), and Ne Zha in a scene from ‘Ne Zha 2.’ (AP)

tion before. The intricacies are mind-blowing.”

Yeoh also put her stamp of approval on the translation, which she admits is a tricky art.

“With translation, a lot of the times the nuances are lost, right? Because also you have to sync and find the right number of words to say the same thing. And with the Chinese language, especially with the folklores and things like that, the way they say it is very poetic as well. So it is not easy,” she said. “I think they struck a very good balance of not making it too classical, but also more contemporary.”

North American audiences already showed interest in “Ne Zha 2” earlier this year, when the subtitled version earned over \$20 million. Some Chinese communities in the US even rented theaters to screen the film. Now, Yeoh believes that the English version will help it resonate globally.

“It’s such a universal language of family, of love, of the underdog, of someone who’s ostracized, misunderstood just because you’re born different,” Yeoh said. “It immerses you into our culture. And it’s such a beautiful way to cross that bridge.”

## People

## \$1m scam

## Kingston gets 3.5-yr jail term

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Aug 16, (AP): Singer **Sean Kingston** was sentenced to three and a half years in prison Friday after being convicted of a \$1 million fraud scheme in which he leveraged his fame to dupe sellers into giving him luxury items that he then never paid for.

Kingston, whose legal name is Kisean Paul Anderson, and his mother, Janice Eleanor Turner, were convicted in March by a federal jury of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and four counts of wire fraud. Turner was sentenced to five years in prison last month.

Before US Judge David Leibowitz handed down Kingston’s sentence, the singer apologized to the judge in the South Florida courtroom and said he had learned from his actions. His attorney asked if he could self-surrender at a later date due to health issues, but the judge ordered him taken into custody immediately. Kingston, who was wearing a black suit and white shirt, removed his suit jacket and was handcuffed and led from the courtroom.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Marc Anton described Kingston as someone addicted to his celebrity lifestyle even though he could no longer afford to maintain it.

“He clearly doesn’t like to pay and relies on his celebrity status to defraud his victims,” Anton said Friday.

The federal prosecutor described a yearslong pattern by Kingston of bullying victims for luxury merchandise and then refusing to pay.

“He is a thief and a conman, plain and simple,” Anton said.

Defense attorney Zeljka Bozanic countered that the 35-year-old Kingston had the mentality of a teenager - the age he was when he vaulted to stardom. The attorney said Kingston had almost no knowledge of his finances, relying on business managers and his mother.

“No one showed him how to invest his money,” Bozanic said. “Money went in and money went out on superficial things.”

Bozanic said Kingston has already started paying back his victims and intends to pay back every cent once he is free and can start working again.

Leibowitz rejected the idea that Kingston was unintelligent or naive, but the judge said he gave Kingston credit for accepting responsibility and declining to testify rather than possibly lying in court. That was in contrast to Kingston’s mother, whose trial testimony Leibowitz described as obstruction.

Kingston and his mother were arrested in May 2024 after a SWAT team raided Kingston’s rented mansion in suburban Fort Lauderdale. Turner was taken into custody during the raid, while Kingston was arrested at Fort Irwin, an Army training base in California’s Mojave Desert, where he was performing.

According to court records, Kingston used social media from April 2023 to March 2024 to arrange purchases of luxury merchandise. After negotiating deals, Kingston would invite the sellers to one of his high-end Florida homes and promise to feature them and their products on social media.

Investigators said that when it came time to pay, Kingston or his mother would text the victims fake wire receipts for the items, which included a bulletproof Escalade, watches and a 19-foot (5.9-meter) LED TV, investigators said.

## Film



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Bob Odenkirk as Hutch Mansell in ‘Nobody 2.’ (AP)

## Odenkirk struggles to balance comedy and action

## ‘Nobody 2’ fails to hit the mark

LOS ANGELES, Aug 16, (AP): The workaholic assassin Hutch Mansell is in a funk as “Nobody 2” opens. He’s sick of the daily grind, by which we mean he spends hours a day grinding people’s skulls into mush. What about a family vacation?

“You need to have happy memories,” he tells his wife and kids. Unfortunately, no one in the theater will have a happy memory - or maybe even recall that they saw this C-level offering - by the time it’s over, mercifully after less than 90 minutes. The movie opened in theaters Friday.

Bob Odenkirk makes another awkward stab as an assassin-turned-nice-guy in a sequel that still isn’t funny or stylish enough to be anything but “John Wick Lite.” Is it a send-up? A riff? A new lane?

In a departure from this summer dominated by insanely larger-than-it-needs-to-be sequels - like “M3GAN 2.0” and “The Bad Guys 2” - “Nobody 2” concentrates not on global destruction but at a threadbare amusement park, Plummerville. (Christopher Plummer’s estate really

should sue.)

Odenkirk’s Hutch thinks he can reconnect with his doubtful kids and frustrated wife (a dutiful Connie Nielsen) by going to the same place he had so much fun when he was a young lad. But there, they accidentally uncover a corrupt town, a police force led by an unconvincing baddie in Colin Hanks and a deeply evil criminal syndicate. Time to get killing again, kids.

Director Timo Tjahjanto, taking over from Ilya Naishuller, abandons the more dark, noirish vibe of the original in favor of a more “National Lampoon’s Vacation” feeling, only if that was drenched in blood and amputations. There’s even duck boats now, albeit with goons impaled by an anchor and buoy.

The lighter setting means we can see heads smashed into a pinball machine or a Whack-a-Mole game by an ordinary looking dad in a Hawaiian shirt. The violence escalates so fast that we are soon dealing with stacks of shrink-wrapped currency and huge oil drums helpfully labeled “Explosive Material.”

The screenplay by a returning

Derek Kolstad - and Aaron Rabin - seems to want to talk about violence as an inherent trait and how it can pass through generations. When Hutch’s son gets into a brawl, dad is unhappy. “There are other ways to handle things,” he says. “You have to be better than your old man.”

Even the criminal organization head, who has Hutch working off a \$30 million debt from the first movie, is unconvicted that his prized assassin can even stop killing. “Nature always wins,” he tells Hutch.

“Nobody 2” draws from a rich mine of macho wish-fulfillment fantasy dug by the likes of Charles Bronson and Clint Eastwood. But too often, Odenkirk is stuck in a no-man’s land between real action hero and comic relief without a punchline. Fans of the 2021 original will note echoes - like the duck boat fight mimicking the bus fight of the first movie and another scene in which currency is lit on fire.

The person having the best time seems to be Sharon Stone, who is an absolute psychotic in tailored men’s clothes and slicked back hair as she

pets a bulldog and stabs at people. “Scorched earth,” she tells a flunky. “No survivors.”

Christopher Lloyd makes a baffling cameo - he has a few quick scenes and then simply disappears - and RZA returns for a Japanese-inspired martial arts battle tacked on at the end that feels forced onto a peanuts-and-Cracker Jack movie.

“Nobody 2” climaxes in a sort of R-rated “Home Alone,” where the good guys make deadly all the things we love about amusement parks or county fairs: The Ferris wheel is booby-trapped to hit you in the face, the ball pit has a tripwire to a landmine, the water slide has knives sticking out of it and the hall of mirrors is a way to confuse the thugs as they unload all their bullets. Happy summer, America.

Somebody, anybody, should drag Odenkirk away from this nobody franchise.

“Nobody 2,” a Universal Pictures release that’s only in theaters, is rated R for “strong bloody violence, and language throughout.” Running time: 89 minutes. One star out of four.

## Obituary

## Iconic ‘GH’ spy

## Tristan Rogers has died at 79

LOS ANGELES, Aug 16, (AP): Tristan Rogers, who played legacy character Robert Scorpio on ABC’s “General Hospital,” died Friday, less than one month after he made a special appearance on the soap opera. He was 79.

“The entire ‘General Hospital’ family is heartbroken to hear of Tristan Rogers’ passing,” said Frank Valentini, the show’s executive producer, in a statement. “Tristan has captivated our fans for 45 years and Port Charles will not be the same without him (or Robert Scorpio).”

Born in Melbourne, Australia, Rogers’ first foray into performing was in his early twenties and playing drums in a rock band with a group of friends. They weren’t successful so Rogers turned to commercial work and modeling to earn some money. When the band dissolved, Rogers decided to give acting a try. After various roles in Australia, he also worked as a DJ and eventually moved to Los Angeles to try to break into Hollywood. He said casting directors were initially turned off by his accent but he eventually landed a two-day role on “General Hospital” in 1980.

“I had no idea at the point how big the show was,” Rogers told fellow “General Hospital” actor Maurice Benard on the YouTube show, “State of Mind with Maurice Benard” in 2022.

“I had no name. I was brought in expressly to beat up the hero, Luke, (played by Anthony Geary), and then disappear,” Rogers said. His first day was half-over when then-executive producer Gloria Monty asked if he would like to stay on. They had no character written for him so for three weeks Monty asked him to just appear in scenes “looking furtive, looking suspicious” until they came up with a storyline. It was decided he would play a spy known as “CK8” and eventually he was given the name Robert Scorpio. The character would remain a fixture in Port Charles for the rest of Rogers’ life, even when he wasn’t a current cast member.

Scorpio’s on again/off again romance with Emma Samms’ character, Holly Sutton, remained a favorite among fans. Scorpio also had a romance, and many storylines with another spy, Anna Devane, played by Finola Hughes. Scorpio and Devane shared a daughter, Robin, played by Kimberly McCullough. Samms returned to the show for a stint last fall where it was revealed that Scorpio was the father of her adult daughter, Sasha Gilmore (played by Sofia Mattson).

Rogers and Samms left the show together in November 2024 in scenes taped with a nod to “Casablanca.” He returned to the show in July for one episode when Sasha arrived to his home in France with her new baby. It was then revealed that Rogers had lung cancer



Tristan Rogers arrives at the 43rd annual Daytime Emmy Awards at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel on Sunday, May 1, 2016, in Los Angeles. (AP)

## Variety

**NEW YORK:** Robert A. Caro’s latest literary honor is very close to home.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning historian has been named the first-ever Founders Historian Laureate by The New York Historical, the venerable museum and cultural center where Caro’s archives are stored and a research room is named for him. Caro, a lifelong New Yorker, visits on occasion to sign copies of his books, including his classic work on municipal builder Robert Moses, “The Power Broker,” the subject of a recent exhibit at the museum. Caro, 89, is also known for his series of Lyndon Johnson biographies and is currently writing the fifth and final volume. No release date has been announced.

He will be formally honored at a Sept. 17 gala, where The New York Historical also will present a

History Makers Award to Grammy-winning conductor Gustavo Dudamel, who next year is to become the musical and artistic director of the New York Philharmonic. He had led the Los Angeles Philharmonic since 2009.

“We feel deeply privileged to name Robert A. Caro our Founders’ Historian Laureate - a singular distinction in our 221 years of institutional history - for his luminous writing - the museum’s board chair, Dr. Agnes Hsu-Tang, said in a statement released Wednesday.

“We honor Robert A. Caro and Gustavo Dudamel for their virtuosity in presenting the truth of human voice - Robert A. Caro for his commanding biographies of Robert Moses and Presi-



Caro

dent Lyndon B. Johnson, and his profound analysis of their roles in 20th-century America; and Gustavo Dudamel for his awe-inspiring artistry and for activating the power of music to make social change.” (AP)

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**SARAJEVO:** The 31st edition of the Sarajevo Film Festival (SFF) opened here on Friday night, with 50 films competing for the Heart of Sarajevo awards.

Running through August 22, this year’s festival presents more than 250 films from around 60 countries and regions, with a focus on new productions from Southeast Europe.

This year’s guests include actors Willem Dafoe and Stellan Skarsgard, both set to receive the Honorary Heart of Sarajevo.

Founded in 1995, the Sarajevo Film Festival has grown into one of Southeast Europe’s most significant cultural events. (Xinhua)





Sesame Street's Elmo, (left), performs with Lauren Alaina at the Grand Ole Opry, Thursday, Aug. 14, in Nashville, Tenn. (AP)

Elmo and Abby Cadabby sing and host the show

‘Sesame Street’ stars make Grand Ole Opry debut

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Aug 16, (AP): For a 3 1/2-year-old, Elmo sure has sung a lot on “Sesame Street” with some of the best musicians in the world. But it wasn’t until Thursday that the friendly red monster made his Grand Ole Opry debut, a country music rite of passage. The squeaky voiced singer’s roots in the genre actually run pretty deep. Elmo helped ring in the Grand Ole Opry’s 100th anniversary this year by co-hosting with his “Sesame Street” pal Abby Cadabby. Elmo, in a little blue cowboy hat and matching shirt, teamed up for a duet alongside Lauren Alaina, while Abby Cadabby sang with Tayla Lynn, the daughter of Loretta Lynn, the late country star who had visited “Sesame Street” herself. “We sing all the time on ‘Sesame Street,’ but um, well, being able to sing in the home of country music is amazing!” Abby Cadabby told The Associated Press prior to their performance.

The puppet pair shared the spotlight in Music City during a stop on the “Sesame Street” crew’s Road Trip Across America this summer and fall, when the characters that kids have watched on TV for decades are heading to events such as professional baseball games, state fairs and corn mazes. Cookie Monster even served as the grand marshal at the NASCAR Brickyard 400 in Indiana, making a cookie crumb mess, as expected. Throughout the years, the “Sesame Street” gang has played and sung songs with some of country music’s brightest stars, including Garth Brooks, Lee Ann Womack, Tim McGraw and Faith Hill, Thomas Rhett, Kane Brown, Mickey Guyton, Kacey Musgraves and more. Chris Stapleton stopped by Sesame Street in late July. Johnny Cash made multiple appearances. He won over

Oscar the Grouch with his song, “Nasty Dan,” about a mean guy who never laughed and was rumored to have never taken a bath. “Wow, I’d like him,” Oscar the Grouch mused from his trash can. Loretta Lynn, meanwhile, joined for a math lesson with the Count on the song, “Count on Me.” In their interview with AP, Elmo and Abby Cadabby said the Count always talks about Loretta Lynn. Elmo said Stapleton’s song about the power of music was really great. “Elmo got to wear his hat,” Elmo said of Stapleton. “It was a little big for Elmo, but that’s OK. A really good time.” Both of them were also dreaming big about singing with Dolly Parton. “Elmo would love to do a duet with Miss Dolly Parton,” Elmo said. “Maybe we could do ‘Jolene’ together. Come on Dolly! Call Elmo!”

Music

Pop diva turns orange into green for brands

Swift lifts podcasts to ‘new heights’

LOS ANGELES, Aug 16, (AP): Since nothing Taylor Swift ever does is small, her two-hour conversation with boyfriend Travis Kelce and his brother Jason Kelce on their “New Heights” podcast is a watershed moment for a media format that has already outlived the device it was named for. By Thursday afternoon, Wednesday night’s talk had already been seen more than 11.7 million times on YouTube. But that’s only a fraction of its circulation - clips distributed on Instagram, TikTok, X and elsewhere have received more than 400 million views, and the episode was also available for streaming on audio platforms. Swift, who infrequently gives interviews to journalists, revealed key information about her upcoming album, “The Life of a Showgirl,” and talked about her relationships with Travis Kelce and her family, and her joy of gaining full control of her past work - a yearslong quest. It was a revelation for fans with whom she’s primarily communicated through her music and social media Easter eggs, a treasure hunt of clues about what she’s doing professionally. “We have not heard Taylor speak in like a long-form interview like that in about five years,” Alex Antonides, a superfan from Dallas, told The Associated Press. “She’s never been in that comfortable of a situation, either. It’s always been like more professional, like a professional interviewer asking her questions. And then this is like with her boyfriend and his brother. So that was ... an environment we’ve truly never seen her in before.”

Conversation

Swift cemented a trend that’s been seen in recent years among entertainers, sports figures and politicians who seek to deliver particular messages. A visit to friendly faces for a long-form conversation beats questions from nosy, prying journalists. In this case, Swift and Travis Kelce locked arms and cooed at each other between admiring queries. “My boyfriend says,” Swift said in asides when Kelce laid things on too thick. “The Kelce brothers have become the Barbara Walters of their generation,” said Nick Cicero, founder of Mondo Metrics, which studies the podcast industry. Fans ate it up. “I think it’s really nice and refreshing, especially for a woman whose primary fan base is young women, to see somebody that is so celebratory of their partner and also not self-deprecating in a bad way, but also really admires what they do, and they don’t try to minimize that,” one fan, Britton Copeland, who goes by Britton Rae on TikTok, said in a Zoom interview. Swift interpreters immediately began online discussions about What It All Means. One fan discussed theories about the still-unheard song, “The Fate of Ophelia,” listed as the new album’s first cut. Others pointed out that the album release date of Oct. 3 coincided with National Plaid Day - apparently a Swift obsession - and National Boyfriend’s Day. Such Easter eggs are likely to bring listeners back to the “New Heights” interview again and again, meaning it could eventually stand as the most listened-to podcast episode on YouTube ever. “It’s got a chance,” Cicero said. Podcasts emerged in the 2000s as an audio-only programming format tied to Apple’s now-defunct iPod. The New Oxford American Dictionary called “podcast” its word of the year in 2005, even as many in the industry



Taylor Swift performs at the Paris Le Defense Arena during her Eras Tour concert in Paris, on May 9, 2024. (AP)

sought an alternative name almost as soon as it was coined. The well-regarded “Serial” podcasts helped bring the format into the mainstream a decade ago. Particularly since the pandemic, and with the explosive growth of YouTube and personalities like Joe Rogan, video podcasts have become far more popular. Like most interview podcasts, “New Heights” can also be enjoyed in an audio format - and it’s background noise even for many who air it on YouTube - but being able to see Swift and the Kelces interact has its benefits. Rogan’s interview with President Donald Trump was a key moment in the 2024 presidential campaign, and has been seen 59 million times on YouTube in nine months. Certainly Swifties - and possibly Trump himself - will be eager to see if the “New Heights” interview exceeds that number. Swift is among the celebrities who has drawn the president’s ire. It has further to go to be a record-setter, though. The most-watched podcast episode ever on YouTube, and likely the most-consumed podcast ever, is Abdulrahman Abu Maleh’s interview with relationship coach Yasser Hazimi for “Secrets to Thriving Relationships” from the Saudi Arabian company Thmanyah. It has racked up 144 million views in two years. Swift’s and the Kelces’ teams were

was particularly skillful in creating a huge demand for the interview with how its spread clips across various social media platforms, said Tom Webster, founder of Sounds Profitable, a firm that analyzes the podcast industry. By Thursday morning, Instagram highlights alone from the interview were viewed more than 350 million times, Cicero said. Swift’s upcoming album release and her love of all things orange isn’t lost on her fans - or brands that are seeking a ride on what has become an enormous economic tailwind. Marketing On Wednesday after Swift went on the “New Heights” podcast co-hosted by her boyfriend and NFL football star Travis Kelce to announce the imminent release of her 12th studio album “The Life of a Showgirl,” major companies went into marketing overdrive. The reason? Swift’s ability to generate buzz and draw dollars. Swift’s tour appearances have become economic events. The singer’s Eras Tour two years ago was the first such tour to cross the billion-dollar mark, according to Pollstar’s 2023 year-end charts. Cities and their surrounding areas registered a sizeable economic boost after Swift appeared, with thousands of fans making the pilgrimage and spending money at hotels,

restaurants and elsewhere. Companies are no longer waiting to capitalize on Swift’s gravitational pull and orange-themed memes from big brands began rolling out almost immediately. That is because Swift appeared onstage wearing orange numerous times towards the end of her Eras Tour and she discussed her feelings about the color on the Wednesday podcast. Numerous corporations, from United Airlines to Olive Garden, began posting orange hued memes on their own social media accounts soon after the new album was announced. Shake Shack, FedEx, Buffalo Wild Wings, Cinnabon, Walmart and Netflix did, too. More than a dozen NHL teams followed with posts on social media acknowledging Swift’s new album, both north and south of the border. Even X got in on the action, declaring that it had a new profile pic: a glittery orange X. The post has garnered 5.5 million views so far. Google is using its search engine to celebrate the October release of Swift’s “The Life of a Showgirl.” Users search for “Taylor Swift,” are greeted with a stream of orange digital confetti, along with a flaming orange heart and the phrase, “And, baby, that’s show business for you.” Many, it seemed, saw value in tying their brand to Swift.

Lady Gaga rules nominations

LL Cool J takes the mic solo at the 2025 MTV VMAs

LOS ANGELES, Aug 16, (AP): LL Cool J has snagged wins, co-hosted and performed atop the MTV Video Music Awards stage. Now, the Grammy-winning rapper-actor-author is going solo to host the 2025 awards ceremony. He’s retaking the stage, this time without Nicki Minaj and Jack Harlow, with whom he co-hosted in 2022, the VMAs announced Thursday. He’s also up for the best hip hop award for his single “Murdergram Deux” featuring Eminem. The single is part of his most recent album, “THE FORCE,” which released in September and was his first album in 11 years. LL Cool J is a longtime champion of the VMAs, having won his first Moon Person in 1991. He became the first rapper to receive the Video Vanguard Award, in 1997. He also performed in an all-star tribute to hip-hop’s 50th anniversary in 2023 and a celebration for Def Jam Records’ 40th anniversary last year. Here’s everything you need to know about this

year’s MTV VMAs, so far. The 2025 VMAs will air on Sept. 7 at 8 p.m. Eastern, live from the UBS Arena on New York’s Long Island. Yes, the show will be broadcast by CBS for the first time, and also simulcast on MTV and available for streaming on Paramount+ in the United States. Lady Gaga is leading this year’s awards with 12 nominations, including artist of the year. The “Mayhem” singer was nearly tied with Bruno Mars, who has 11 nods. The pair’s duet, “Die with a Smile,” is up for four awards, including song of the year. Gaga’s plethora of nominations dethrones Taylor Swift, who held the top spot for two years. This time around, Swift received one artist of the year nomination. The two are accompanied by Bad Bunny, Beyoncé, Kendrick Lamar, Morgan Wallen and The Weeknd in that category. Gaga and Mars are followed by Kendrick Lamar

with 10 nominations, ROSÉ and Sabrina Carpenter with eight each, Ariana Grande and The Weeknd with seven each and Billie Eilish with six. Charli XCX also received love with five nominations for her “Brat” Summer success “Guess,” featuring Eilish. Bad Bunny, Doechii, Ed Sheeran, Jelly Roll, Miley Cyrus and Tate McRae have four nominations each. Fan voting across the 19 categories is live now on the VMAs website. Voting closes on Sept. 5 at 6 p.m. Eastern, except for the best new artist category, which will accept votes into the live show. The public can vote up to 10 times a day until voting closes. Performers, presenters, special guests and the recipient of the Video Vanguard Award have not been announced yet. The Video Vanguard Award was given to Katy Perry last year. Previous recipients include Shakira, Beyoncé, Nicki Minaj and Madonna.



LL Cool J presents the award for video of the year during the MTV Video Music Awards, Sept. 12, 2023, at the Prudential Center in Newark, N.J. (AP)

Gaming



The gaming platform Roblox is displayed on a tablet, Oct. 30, 2021, in New York. (AP)

Profits over kids’ safety

Roblox sued for failing to safeguard children

BATON ROUGE, La., Aug 16, (AP): Louisiana sued the online gaming platform Roblox on Thursday, alleging the wildly popular site has perpetuated an environment where sexual predators “thrive, unite, hunt and victimize kids.” The lawsuit, filed in state court by Louisiana Attorney General Liz Murrill, alleges that Roblox has failed to implement effective safety measures to protect child users from adult predators. “Due to Roblox’s lack of safety protocols, it endangers the safety of the children of Louisiana,” Murrill said in a news release. “Roblox is overrun with harmful content and child predators because it prioritizes user growth, revenue, and profits over child safety.” The company has faced lawsuits and backlash for not doing enough to protect kids on its gaming services. Last month, a lawsuit was filed in Iowa after a 13-year-old girl was allegedly introduced to an adult predator on the platform, then kidnapped and trafficked across multiple states and raped. In Louisiana, Livingston Parish Sheriff Jason Ard said his office has had multiple cases involving Roblox. In one, police allege a man used voice-altering technology to pose as a girl on the platform. Ard said there have yet to be any arrests made related to the gaming site.

Disputes

Ultimately, Murrill said she believes Roblox should be shut down. Roblox said it disputes the allegations. “The assertion that Roblox would intentionally put our users at risk of exploitation is categorically untrue,” the company said in a statement. “While no system is perfect, Roblox has implemented rigorous safeguards - such as restrictions on sharing personal information, links, and user-to-user image sharing - to help protect our community,” the company added. “Unfortunately, bad actors will try to circumvent our systems to try to direct users off the platform, where safety standards and moderation practices may differ. We continuously work to block those efforts and to en-

hance our moderation approaches to promote a safe and enjoyable environment for all users.” The free online gaming platform has more than 111 million monthly users. Its website describes Roblox as “the ultimate virtual universe that lets you create, share experiences with friends, and be anything you can imagine.” Roblox doesn’t allow users to share videos or images in chats and tries to block any personal information, such as phone numbers. However, as with other gaming platforms and social media sites with similar policies, people find ways around such safeguards. Permission Roblox, which according to its website has “a zero-tolerance policy for the exploitation of minors,” doesn’t allow children under 13 to chat with other users outside of games unless they have explicit parental permission. Because the platform does not encrypt private chat conversations, the company can monitor and moderate them. However, Murrill said there is no age minimum or substantial age verification process once a user signs up. As a result, young children, teens and adults posing as children can sign up, she said. The company says on its website that age verification “is a new feature that is currently in testing on Roblox.” Last month, it launched a feature that requires teenagers aged 13 to 17 to send a video selfie to verify their ages if they want to chat freely with people they know, called “trusted connections.” Amid mounting criticism in recent months, the company has implemented additional measures that it says will keep their young users safe. In August, Roblox told AP that it was rolling out an artificial intelligence system to help detect early signs of possible child endangerment, such as sexually exploitive language. Roblox said the system led it to submit 1,200 reports of potential attempts at child exploitation to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in the first half of 2025.



Health, environment hazard

With plastic treaty talks dead, focus back to 3Rs

GENEVA, Aug 16, (AP): Talks aimed at a global treaty to cut plastic pollution fizzled in Geneva this week, with no agreement to meaningfully reduce the harms to human health and the environment that come with the millions of tons of plastic water bottles, food containers and packaging produced today.

Though as many as 100 countries sought caps on production, powerful oil-producing nations like Saudi Arabia and the United States stood against them. They argued the caps were unnecessary and a threat to their economies and industries.

That means any progress continues to depend on efforts to improve recycling, reuse and reduce (3Rs) - the very things that powerful nations argued were sufficient to address the problem without resorting to production cuts.

Here's what to know about how successful those efforts have been.

The world makes more than 400 million tons of new plastic each year, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development estimates that could increase by about 70% by 2040 without meaningful change. A great deal of that ends up in landfills or, worse, the environment.

**Pollution**

Pollution isn't the only problem. Plastics, made almost entirely from fossil fuels, are a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Plastics generated 3.4% - or 1.8 billion tons - of planet-warming emissions across the globe in 2019, the United Nations says.

Not very.

It's notoriously difficult to recycle plastics; only 6% of what's made gets recycled, according to the OECD. That's largely because different kinds of plastic cannot be recycled together. They have different chemical compositions, making it costly and time-consuming, and requiring a lot of manual sorting.

"There are many different colors of plastics, many different types of plastics called polymers, and 16,000 to 17,000 different chemicals used to make plastics, so by design, plastics are not easily recyclable," said Judith Enck, president of Beyond Plastics, an organization that works to cut plastic pollution.

Experts say plastic is different from materials like paper, cardboard, metal and glass, which all get reused at much higher rates. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates glass recycling at about 31%, and things like steel cans at about 71%. As much as 64% of paper and 74% of cardboard get recycled, according to the American Forest & Paper Association.



A female worker sorts through empty bottles at a plastic recycling factory in Lahore, Pakistan, Thursday, Aug. 7. (AP)

But "If you just think of your own home or apartment, you might have a bright orange hard plastic detergent container on top of your washing machine, and then you might have a plastic bag," Enck said. "Those two things cannot get recycled together."

The plastics industry says innovations in material science are helping to incorporate more recycled plastics into products and enable more plastic products to be recyclable. Ross Eisenberg, president of America's Plastic Makers, noted the need for an "all-of-the-above approach."

He said this also includes upgrading recycling infrastructure or improving sorting to capture more used plastics. This also means making recycling more accessible and helping consumers know what can and can't go in the recycling bin.

But there are a lot of limitations to this.

Depending on consumers for accurate pre-sorting is a lot to ask. And cities may hesitate to make costly infrastructure improvements to their recycling programs if there is little financial incentive or market for the recycled material.

"Local recycling facilities, or markets for the recycled material, don't always exist. Where the collection and processing infrastructure does exist, the recycling plants are essentially plastic production facilities, with the same air, water, and soil pollution problems that are harmful to local residents," said Holly Kaufman, director of The Plastics & Climate Project and senior fellow at World Resources Institute.

Chemicals

Further, mechanical recycling mixes used plastic with new plastic, and the addition of more chemicals. It also requires other steps that shed much smaller plastic particles into the environment.

Plastics recycling also usually requires plastic that's never been recycled before - called virgin plastic - as used plastic is weak, Kaufman said. "It does not make much of a dent."

California is currently suing oil and gas giant Exxon Mobil, alleging deception about the possibilities of plastic recycling.

Because of this, Kaufman says, "The aim should be to significantly reduce plastic production, use, and waste, not recycle more."

"Reuse means creating packaging or products designed to be used multiple times, like refillable containers, or more durable zippered bags that can be washed and refilled many times, extending their lifespan and reducing waste," Eisenberg, of America's Plastic Makers, said.

10,300 treated weekly for waterborne illness: UN

Gaza families forced to drink sickening water

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip, Aug 16, (AP): After waking early to stand in line for an hour under the August heat, Rana Odeh returns to her tent with her jug of murky water. She wipes the sweat from her brow and strategizes how much to portion out to her two small children. From its color alone, she knows full well it's likely contaminated.

Thirst supersedes the fear of illness. She fills small bottles for her son and daughter and pours a sip into a tea-cup for herself. What's left she adds to a jerrycan for later.

"We are forced to give it to our children because we have no alternative," Odeh, who was driven from her home in Khan Younis, said of the water. "It causes diseases for us and our children."

Such scenes have become the grim routine in Muwasi, a sprawling displacement camp in central Gaza where hundreds of thousands endure scorching summer heat. Sweat-soaked and dust-covered, parents and children chase down water trucks that come every two or three days, filling bottles, canisters and buckets and then hauling them home, sometimes on donkey-drawn carts.

Each drop is rationed for drinking, cooking, cleaning or washing. Some reuse what they can and save a couple of cloudy inches in their jerrycans for whatever tomorrow brings - or doesn't.

When water fails to arrive, Odeh said, she and her son fill bottles from the sea.

Over the 22 months since Israel launched its offensive, Gaza's water access has been progressively strained. Limits on fuel imports and electricity have hampered the operation of desalination plants while infrastructure bottlenecks and pipeline damage choked delivery to a dribble. Gaza's aquifers



A Palestinian girl drinks water from a jerrycan after collecting it from a water distribution point during a hot summer day with temperatures reaching 36 °C (97 °F) in Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip, Wednesday, Aug. 13. (AP)

became polluted by sewage and the wreckage of bombed buildings. Wells are mostly inaccessible or destroyed, aid groups and the local utility say.

Meanwhile, the water crisis has helped fuel the rampant spread of disease, on top of Gaza's rising starvation. UNRWA - the UN agency for Palestinian refugees - said Thursday that its health centers now see an average 10,300 patients a week with infectious diseases, mostly diarrhea from contaminated water.

Efforts to ease the water shortage are in motion, but for many the prospect is still overshadowed by the risk of what may unfold before new supply comes.

And the thirst is only growing as a heat wave bears down, with humidity and temperatures in Gaza soaring on Friday to 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit).

Mahmoud al-Dibs, a father displaced from Gaza City to Muwasi, dumped water over his head from a flimsy plastic bag - one of the vessels used to carry water in the camps.

"Outside the tents it is hot and inside the tents it is hot, so we are forced to drink this water wherever we go," he said.

Al-Dibs was among many who told The Associated Press they knowingly drink non-potable water.

The few people still possessing rooftop tanks can't muster enough water to clean them, so what flows from their taps is yellow and unsafe, said Bushra Khalidi, an official with Oxfam, an aid group working in Gaza.

Before the war, the coastal enclave's

more than 2 million residents got their water from a patchwork of sources. Some was piped in by Mekorot, Israel's national water utility. Some came from desalination plants. Some was pulled from high-saline wells, and some imported in bottles.

Every source has been jeopardized. Palestinians are relying more heavily on groundwater, which today makes up more than half of Gaza's supply. The well water has historically been brackish, but still serviceable for cleaning, bathing, or farming, according to Palestinian water officials and aid groups.

Now people have to drink it.

The effects of drinking unclean water don't always appear right away, said Mark Zeitoun, director general of the Geneva Water Hub, a policy institute.

"Untreated sewage mixes with drinking water, and you drink that or wash your food with it, then you're drinking microbes and can get dysentery," Zeitoun said. "If you're forced to drink salty, brackish water, it just does your kidneys in, and then you're on dialysis for decades."

Deliveries average less than three liters (12.5 cups) per person per day - a fraction of the 15-liter (3.3-gallon) minimum humanitarian groups say is needed for drinking, cooking and basic hygiene. In February, acute watery diarrhea accounted for less than 20% of reported illnesses in Gaza. By July, it had surged to 44%, raising the risk of severe dehydration, according to UNICEF, the U.N. children's agency.

Early in the war, residents said deliveries from Israel's water company Mekorot were curtailed - a claim that Israel has denied. Airstrikes destroyed some of the transmission pipelines as well as one of Gaza's three desalination plants.

Strategy focuses on studies, not action

Bad diets, too many meds, no exercise: A look inside the latest 'MAHA' report

WASHINGTON, Aug 16, (AP): A report that US Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has promised will improve the health of America's children does not call on the government to make significant changes to its food or farming policies, according to a draft document obtained by The Associated Press.

The "Make America Healthy Again" strategy report is supposed to be one of Kennedy's signature achievements as the nation's health secretary, giving the government a roadmap to help its citizens lose weight, reduce chronic diseases and exercise more. Before coming to Washington, Kennedy had spent much of his career decrying the harms of chemicals sprayed on crops, prescription drugs, ultra-processed foods, and vaccines.

His coalition, then, has expected him to take bold action as the nation's top health leader. But a draft of the so-called "MAHA" report, first reported by The New York Times Thursday night, mostly calls on the government to further study chronic diseases, bad air quality, Americans' diets and prescription drug use.

The report lays out four problem areas - poor diet, chemical exposure, lack of physical activity and overuse of medications -- that are to blame for chronic diseases in the US.

The White House has held off on publicly releasing the report, which was submitted to President Donald Trump on Tuesday. The latest report is the policy companion to a "MAHA" report released in May, which was found to have several errors in it.

White House spokesman Kush Desai refused to confirm whether the copy obtained by the Associated Press was a final version, though HHS officials



Savannah Knott hangs up her backpack for the day on the first day in her second grade classroom at Mary Carrico Catholic School, Tuesday, Aug. 12, in Knottsville, Ky. (AP)

have insisted the report has been finalized since Tuesday.

"President Trump pledged to Make America Healthy Again, and the Administration is committed to delivering on that pledge with Gold Standard Science," Desai said. "Until officially released by the White House and MAHA Commission, however, any documents purporting to be the second MAHA Report should be considered as nothing more than speculative literature."

Some in the agricultural industry had warily anticipated the report, fearing it would call for bans or investigations into the use of pesticides and herbicides that farmers in the US regularly spray on crops to control weeds and enhance yields. Other farmers were concerned about how the report may

target the use of corn syrup, a common sweetener, in American foods. Both products have been a central talking point in Kennedy's "MAHA" movement, which has attracted a diverse coalition of suburban and rural moms, Trump supporters and liberals concerned about the nation's food supply.

Instead, the report calls for an "awareness" campaign to raise confidence in pesticides.

Concerns from the agricultural industry waned as the report hit the president's desk, with one of Kennedy's closest advisers, Calley Means, calling for MAHA supporters to work with major farm companies on Tuesday.

Means also acknowledged that the "pace of political change" can be frustrating.

Bat cabins raise rabies concern

NEW YORK, Aug 16, (AP): Health officials are working to alert hundreds of people in dozens of states and several countries who may have been exposed to rabies in bat-infested cabins in Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park over the past few months.

As of Friday, none of the bats found in some of the eight linked cabins at Jackson Lake Lodge had tested positive for rabies.

But the handful of dead bats found and sent to the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory in Laramie for testing were probably only a small sample of the likely dozens that colonized the attic above the row of cabins, Wyoming State Health Officer Dr. Alexia Harrist said.

Other bats weren't killed but got shoosed out through cabin doors and windows. Meanwhile, the vast majority never flapped down from the attic into living spaces.

Health officials thus deemed it better safe than sorry to alert everybody who has stayed in the cabins recently that they might have been exposed by being bitten or scratched. Especially when people are sleeping, a bat bite or scratch can go unseen and unnoticed.

"What we're really concerned about is people who saw bats in their rooms and people who might have had direct contact with a bat," Harrist said Friday.

The cabins have been unoccupied, with no plans to reopen, since concessionaire Grand Teton Lodge Company discovered the bat problem July 27.

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'The biggest game in Indian club football history'

FC Goa relishes 'once-in-a-lifetime' match against Ronaldo's Al-Nassr

NEW DELHI, Aug 16, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo will travel to India to face FC Goa in an Asian Champions League Two match being hailed as "historic" in the country.

Al-Nassr of Saudi Arabia and its superstars were drawn against the Indian Super League (ISL) club in Group D of Asia's second-tier club competition, along with Istiklol of Tajikistan and Iraq's Al-Zawraa. The top two from each of the eight groups advance to the second round.

"This is truly a once-in-a-lifetime moment for FC Goa," club CEO Ravi Puskur told The Associated Press. "To host Al-Nassr and Cristiano Ronaldo is arguably the biggest game in Indian club football history."

Ronaldo, 40, has yet to win a major trophy since signing for the Riyadh club in 2022 and the team is expected to be at full strength

when the action starts in September

Al-Nassr, which finished third in the Saudi Pro League last season, also boasts famous names such as former Liverpool star Sadio Mane and Joao Felix, the Portuguese forward who signed from Chelsea in July.

"For Indian football, this is historic," Puskur added. "We are here on merit, and a match like this gives us the chance to show that we can compete on the continental stage, becoming part of the sport's biggest narratives."

Puskur is confident that the excitement will be felt all over the country to give the local game a much-needed boost.

"It's a unique opportunity to bring global attention to Indian football and, most importantly, a chance to spark a greater interest in Indian football among fans across the country, giving the game the

spotlight it has long needed," he said.

The draw comes with Indian domestic soccer in crisis. The 2025-26 ISL season was due to start in September, but has been suspended due to uncertainty over the renewal of an organizing agreement between the Indian federation and its commercial partner, the Football Sports Development Ltd., pending a Supreme Court order.

Bengaluru FC, Odisha FC and Chennaiyin FC have either suspended salaries or ceased soccer operations until a solution is found.

"While the financial boost is important, the bigger picture is the opportunity this creates for long-term growth," said Puskur. "The global attention, sponsorship interest, and fan engagement from a moment like this help strengthen the club's foundations, allowing us to invest in the future."



In this file photo, Al Nassr's Cristiano Ronaldo, left, and Al Hilal's Al Bulayhi challenge for the ball during Riyadh Season Cup 2024 final match at the Kingdom Arena Stadium in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

Sparks withstand Wings' late run, Bueckers misses potential winner

Zandalasini scores career-high 20, Valkyries beat Sky for 4th straight win

ARLINGTON, Texas, Aug 16, (AP): Kelsey Plum scored 28 points, Dearica Hamby had 20 points and 10 rebounds, and the Los Angeles Sparks held on to beat the Dallas Wings 97-96 after Paige Bueckers missed a potential winning 3-pointer.

Plum gave Los Angeles a 95-82 lead with 4:25 remaining in the fourth quarter before Dallas closed on a 14-2 run.

Plum made the Sparks' next basket at the 1:03 mark for a 97-91 lead. Bueckers answered with a quick layup to pull within four and the Sparks turned it over at the other end.

JJ Quinerly sank a 3-pointer from the corner with 15 seconds left for a one-point deficit. Plum missed two free throws and Dallas took over possession after a jump ball.

Bueckers raced up the floor for a contested 3-pointer that rolled off the rim as time expired.

**Valkyries 90, Sky 59**

In Chicago, Cecilia Zandalasini scored a career-high 20 points on 7-of-12 shooting, and expansion Golden State beat Chicago for its franchise-record fourth consecutive win.

Golden State (18-15) set the WNBA record for wins by an expansion team, breaking the mark of 17 set by the 1998 Detroit Shock in a 30-game season.

The Sky have lost four in a row and 12 of their last 13.

Janelle Salaün had 15 points, and Iliana Rupert hit 4 of 4 from 3-point range and finished with 14 for the Valkyries. Tiffany Hayes scored 13 and Veronica Burton added 11.

Rachel Banham led Chicago (8-25) with 15 points, Kamilla Cardoso scored 14 and Elizabeth Williams 10.

**Mystics 88, Fever 84**

In Indianapolis, Sonia Citron scored 21 points, Kiki Iriafen had 18 points and 12 rebounds, and Washington beat Indiana.



Atlanta Dream's Naz Hillmon (00) and Seattle Storm's Brittney Sykes (20) fight for a rebound during the second half of an WNBA basketball game in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

Citron gave Washington an 80-71 lead with 3:39 remaining with her third 3-pointer. But the Mystics did not make another field goal until Sug Sutton's basket with 59.8 seconds left for an 85-80 advantage.

Trailing 85-82 with 22.6 seconds left, Indiana guard Kelsey Mitchell got into the lane for a layup that came up short. Washington guard Jade Melbourne was fouled and went hit a free throw for a four-point lead.

Aliyah Boston made a quick layup at the other end to get Indiana within two with 5.9 seconds left. But Melbourne was fouled again and made both free throws to seal it.

**Storm 80, Dream 78**

In Vancouver, British Columbia (AP) - Skylar Diggins had 21 points and 11 as-

sists and Seattle hung on to beat Atlanta to end a six-game skid at Rogers Arena in the first WNBA regular-season game outside of the United States.

Nneka Ogwumike scored 15 points, Brittney Sykes added 13 and Dominique Malonga had 12 points and eight rebounds as the Storm (17-17) squandered a 15-point lead before snapping Atlanta's six-game win streak.

Rhyné Howard scored 21 points and Brianna Jones had 18 points and 10 rebounds for Atlanta (21-12).

**Aces 86, Mercury 83**

In Phoenix, A'ja Wilson had 30 points and 16 rebounds, Chelsea Gray scored 10 of her 16 points in the fourth quarter and Las Vegas beat Phoenix for their sixth straight victory.

Gray made a jumper from the free

throw line with 1:14 remaining for an 84-79 lead. Phoenix scored the next four points to get within one on Alyssa Thomas' layup with 30 seconds left.

Wilson was short on a long jumper with the shot clock winding down and Phoenix called a timeout with 3.6 seconds left. Gray stole Phoenix's poor inbounds pass and she made two free throws with 0.8 seconds left.

Gray also blocked Satou Sabally's 3-point attempt at the buzzer to seal it.

Jackie Young had 17 points, seven rebounds and five assists for Las Vegas (20-14). Gray also had a season-high nine assists.

Sabally led Phoenix (19-13) with 26 points. Thomas had 15 points, nine assists and six rebounds, and Kahleah Copper also scored 15 points. DeWanna Bonner added 12 off the bench.

Last-gasp Cote d'Ivoire sinks Cape Verde

Tunisia suffers 2nd straight loss

NAIROBI, Aug 16, (Xinhua): Tunisia's hope for a three-peat at AfroBasket dived on Friday, as the defending champion suffered a second straight loss, this time at the hands of 2015 title winner Nigeria.

On the fourth day of the 31st AfroBasket tournament, Pavilhao Multiusos de Luanda in Angola saw ferocious D'Tigers storm to a 10-0 lead in under three minutes, prompting Tunisia to call an early timeout.



Okogie

The pause had little impact on Nigeria, as the sixth-ranked team in Africa continued to outpace Tunisia in nearly every major statistical category, including three-pointers, rebounds, and assists. The only exception was a four-point deficit in points scored in the paint.

NBA Houston Rockets player Josh Okogie added a game-high 33 points to the scoreboard, along with six defensive rebounds, a performance that the 1.93-meter guard attributed to the support of his Nigerian teammates.

"If they don't set those screens, if they don't run the plays right, if they don't pass me the ball ... they are the ones who helped me to get

to where I got today," said Okogie.

As the lone NBA representative on Nigeria's roster, he also mentioned having to adapt to the different rules between competitions.

"Like, the three-second rule in the paint - the spacing or the line is a little shorter. Games are a lot more physical, and the refs let a lot more go. I just adjusted to that," Okogie added.

In another Group B matchup, Madagascar found the rhythm from beyond the arc in the second half, while also forcing it opponent into frequent fouls.

Cameroon trailed 70-75 in the final quarter, but Jeremiah Hill stepped up at crunch time, powering his team to seal an 80-77 triumph.

In Group A, the Democratic Republic of Congo built a 37-24 lead in the first half. Despite tactical adjustments and increased aggression, Rwanda couldn't close the gap, falling 58-65.

Last edition's runner-up Cote d'Ivoire edged Cape Verde 82-81 with a buzzer-beater.

Cape Verde surged in the third quarter, outscoring their opponents by 15 points to take a 65-56 lead. But frequent fouls in the final quarter allowed Cote d'Ivoire to capitalize on free throws.

The match saw back and forth until Assemian Moulare's jump shot at the buzzer secured Cote d'Ivoire's second consecutive victory in the group stage.

Best of the Rest

**Ramos joins Botafogo on loan:** Botafogo has signed Spanish forward Chris Ramos on loan from Cadiz FC, the reigning Brazilian and South American champions said. The 28-year-old, whose contract with the Spanish side runs until June 2028, arrives on a 12-month deal with an option to buy.

"The Spaniard is already in Brazil, where he underwent exams and signed a contract," read a statement on Botafogo's official website.

Ramos has made 92 appearances and scored 17 goals for Cadiz since joining the Spanish club from Lugo in January 2023. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

**Calvert-Lewin joins Leeds:** England striker Dominic Calvert-Lewin joined newly promoted Premier League team Leeds.

Calvert-Lewin's contract at Everton expired at the end of last season, so he is moving to Elland Road on a free transfer.

Leeds confirmed that the 28-year-old striker signed a three-year contract.

"I feel like a kid again that is just starting somewhere new and just can't wait to play and represent the football club," Calvert-Lewin told Leeds' media. (AP)

Former Australian captain and coach Simpson dies at age 89

SYDNEY, Aug 16, (AP): Bob Simpson, a former player, captain and coach and one of the most influential figures in Australian cricket, has died at the age of 89.

Cricket Australia on Saturday confirmed the death of Simpson, who represented Australia in 62 tests and two one-day internationals between 1957 and 1978.

Simpson scored 4,869 test runs, including 10 centuries and 27 half-centuries, and took 71 wickets, while captaining Australia in 39 tests.

Born in the inner-city Sydney suburb of Marrickville, the third son of immigrant parents from Scot-

land, Simpson was just 16 when he made his first-class debut for New South Wales state against Victoria.

"I was a naturally ambitious person anyway and never had any doubts I could go further," Simpson said. "It sounds cocky but I always believed in my own talents."

He coached Australia from 1986 to 1996 and under his firm and steady guidance, Australia won the 1987 World Cup, four Ashes campaigns and in 1995 the Frank Worrell Trophy, ending a 17-year drought against the West Indies.

On Saturday night, the Australian team paid tribute to Simpson with a moment's silence before its Twenty20 match against South Africa at Cairns in northern Australia. The Australians wore black armbands, as well.

Simpson made his test debut against South Africa in Johannesburg in 1957, and his first century came in an Ashes test at Old Trafford in Manchester in 1964, when Simpson went on to score 311. He is one of only seven Australians to make a triple-century.

He was also one of the greatest slip-fielders, taking

110 catches.

Australia Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was among the first to pay tribute to Simpson.

"Bob Simpson's extraordinary service to Australian cricket spanned generations. As a player, captain and then era-defining coach, he set the highest standards for himself and the champions he led," Albanese wrote on X. "He will be long remembered by the game he loved. May he rest in peace."

Simpson was inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame in 2013.

"As a brilliant opening batter, incredible slips fielder and handy spin bowler, Bob was a mainstay of a very strong Australian team in the 1960s, and he became a leader across the game as Australian and New South Wales captain and as a coach," Cricket Australia chairman Mike Baird said in a statement.

"Bob's decision to come out of retirement to successfully lead the Australian team during the advent of World Series cricket in 1977 was a wonderful service to the game, and his coaching set the foundation for a golden era for Australian cricket."

Bielefeld upsets Bremen

Ten Hag makes successful debut with Leverkusen

BERLIN, Aug 16, (AP): Erik ten Hag made a winning start as Bayer Leverkusen coach with a 4-0 result at fourth-tier team Sonnenhof Großaspach in the first round of the German Cup.

Patrik Schick, Brazilian wing back Arthur, debutant Christian Kofane and Alex Grimaldo all scored, but they assumed control only after Großaspach captain Volkan Celikwas was sent off in the 66th with two bookings in as many minutes.

Leverkusen was forced to defend for long periods after Schick's 32nd-minute opener. The Czech forward also needed to clear the ball off the line.

Arthur scored the second shortly after Celikwas' sending off and the other goals followed Mert Tasdelen's late sending off for a bad challenge on Leverkusen defender Axel Tape.

Ten Hag, the former Manchester United manager, took over from the Real Madrid-bound Xabi Alonso and has had little time to work with a squad undergoing huge changes. Key players like Florian Wirtz, Jerome Frimpong and Granit Xhaka have left while Kofane, Tape, Ernest Poku, Ibrahim Maza,

Jarell Quansah and goalkeeper Mark Flekken all made their debuts.

"Of course it needs time, you could see not every action worked out," Leverkusen sporting director Simon Rolfes said of the changes. "But we saw today that we've got interesting young players. Ibrahim Maza did well and showed his qualities between the lines. And that's why it will take a little time, but we still have a good team."

The match was interrupted in the first half by a summer storm featuring hailstones. Referee Michael Bacher led the teams off the field. It resumed after a 40-minute break.

American forward Isaiah Young struck in the final minutes to fire last season's beaten finalist Arminia Bielefeld into the second round with a 1-0 win over Werder Bremen.

The Bundesliga side's Leonardo Bittencourt was sent off in the 54th and Bielefeld pushed hard for the winner. Young made his entrance in the 79th and sent the home fans wild when he tucked the ball inside the left post in the third minute of stoppage time.

Bielefeld, then playing in the



Gütersloh's Björn Rother, left, and Berlin's Ilyas Anshar in action during the DFB Cup first round between Gütersloh and 1. FC Union Berlin in Gütersloh, Germany. (AP)

third division, knocked out a host of Bundesliga clubs - including Bremen - on its way to the final in May, when Stuttgart proved too strong.

Stuttgart's title defense won't start till later this month as it's

playing Bayern Munich in the German Supercup on Saturday.

Also Union Berlin routed fourth-tier side Gütersloh 5-0 away, and second-division Magdeburg enjoyed a 3-1 win at third-division Saarbrücken.

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Kuwait Club defeats Mlada Boleslav in friendly

Qadsia awaits Elhouni’s decision as Al-Arabi, Al-Salmiya continue pre-season preparations

By Hassan Mosa  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

PRAGUE, Aug 16: Kuwait Club defeated Czech side Mlada Boleslav 4-2 in its second friendly of the Prague training camp. Goals came from Mohamed Marhoon, Amr Abdel Fattah, Ahmed Alaa, and Mohamed Daham. The team continues its preparations for additional friendlies ahead of the camp’s conclusion on August 28. Qadsia has set its remaining pre-season friendlies in Turkey:

Tuesday: Al-Wehda (Saudi Arabia)  
Saturday: Sitra (Bahrain) — also a Group A opponent in the Gulf Club Champions Cup starting September 30  
August 28: Al-Orouba (Saudi Arabia)  
The future of Libyan international Hamdou Elhouni remains uncertain. Qadsia sources say he signed a preliminary contract and will join soon, while Al-Ahly Tripoli claims he renewed his deal. Elhouni re-

cently won the Libyan league title, though reports suggest he could face sanctions due to the overlapping contracts.  
Meanwhile, Qadsia continues its search for a new foreign striker to replace Moroccan Ismail Khafi, who mutually terminated his contract last week.  
Al-Arabi will conclude training today before departing for Dubai to continue its pre-season preparations, which include two friendlies, ahead of returning in early September.



Players run for the ball during a friendly match between Kuwait Club and Mlada Boleslav.

Kazma and Burgan begin overseas camps



Players intensify training for the new season.

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Kazma and Burgan handball teams have launched their overseas training camps in preparation for the new season. Kazma will compete in the Arab Club Championship, hosted by Kuwait Club from September 12–22 alongside Al-Sulaibikhat, while Burgan is set to participate in the Asian Club Championship, with dates to be announced, in addition to domestic competitions.  
Kazma’s camp in Izmit, Turkey, runs until August 28. The delegation is led by team director Salem Abdul Salam and includes Serbian coach Bozo, technical analyst Waleed Al-Anzi, fitness coach Abdullah Maseer, goalkeeper coach Omar Al-Malih, physiotherapist Nader Qasim, and a full squad of 19 players. Burgan’s camp is taking place in Bosnia until August 26. Both teams are focusing on physical conditioning, tactical drills, and friendly matches.  
Meanwhile, Kuwait’s U-18 handball team finished 26th at the 11th Junior World Championship in Cairo. In its final match, the “Blue” lost 26–29 to South Korea in the 25th–26th place playoff. A total of 32 national teams participated in the tournament.

Kuwaitis qualify for finals of Tetrathlon Worlds

CAIRO, Aug 16, (KUNA): Four athletes representing the Kuwait Modern Pentathlon Federation (KMPF) have secured spots in the finals of the UIPM 2025 Tetrathlon U15 World Championships.  
Mohammad Al-Suhaibi, Namr Abdarra’e, Badr Al-Suhaibi, and Abdullah Al-Habashii are among 26 competitors from various countries who will compete for medals in both individual and team events tomorrow.  
KMPF Chairman Nasser Al-Waleed praised the Kuwaiti athletes’ strong performances in the preliminary rounds, noting that their success reflects rigorous training and the robust support of the Kuwait Olympic Committee.  
The championship, organized by Egypt in partnership with the International Modern Pentathlon Federation (UIPM), opened in Alexandria on Wednesday, featuring 350 athletes from 26 nations.  
Tetrathlon, a variant of the Modern Pentathlon that excludes fencing, consists of four disciplines: shooting, swimming, running, and riding.



KUNA photo  
Kuwaitis in action during the UIPM 2025 Tetrathlon U15 World Championships.

Germany underlines dominance in canoe polo at Chengdu World Games



Gold medalists Deng Lijuan (3rd left)/Zhou Yafei (3rd right) of team China 1, silver medalists Qin Yumei (1st left)/Zhang Shaoqin (2nd left) of team China 2 and bronze medalists Jeong Jimin (2nd right)/Sung Hanareum of team South Korea 1 pose during the victory ceremony for the Sport Climbing Women’s Speed Relay event at The World Games 2025 in Chengdu, southwest China’s Sichuan Province. (Xinhua)

China sweeps speed climbing relay titles

CHENGDU, Aug 16, (Xinhua): Germany underlined its dominance in canoe polo by securing both gold medals at the Chengdu World Games.  
Germany faced a strong defensive effort from New Zealand early in the women’s final. With patience, Germany broke the deadlock to take a 1-0 lead.  
After halftime, Germany maintained control, adding three more goals to seal a 4-0 victory.  
In the men’s final, Germany capitalized on two fast-break opportunities in the opening period to establish a 2-0 lead. The early cushion proved decisive, as they went on to defeat Italy 3-1 to claim the other gold medal.  
China’s men’s and women’s teams both finished eighth in the tournament.  
at Chengdu World Games Host China capped the climbing competition by sweeping the men’s and women’s speed relay finals, finishing the event with five of the six gold medals on offer.  
The relay, a new format making its



Eduardo Portillo Torres competes during the Racquetball Men’s Singles Bronze Medal Match between Eduardo Portillo Torres of Mexico and Edwin Aroldo Galicia Lutin of Guatemala at The World Games 2025 in Chengdu, southwest China’s Sichuan Province (Xinhua)  
debut at a major international event, pairs two athletes on a team. The second climber starts only after the first hits the timing pad at the top, and the combined time determines the final result. The competition in Chengdu also produced the first men’s and women’s world records in the discipline.  
The men’s field featured some of the sport’s biggest names. American Samuel Watson, the individual world record holder, and teammate Zachary Hammer faced China’s Chu Shouhong and Long Jianguo - both fresh off individual golds - in the semifinals. Watson, still nursing a shoulder injury, delivered a clean run, but Hammer slipped, sending the Chinese duo to the final.  
There the Chinese duo met another

U.S. pair, 18-year-old Michael Hom and 17-year-old Logan Schlecht. Both teams went error-free, but Chu and Long prevailed in 10.26 seconds, each claiming a second gold medal of the Games.  
“It was a tough day. We’ve been competing for two days already, so I was very tired. Today’s win was part strength, part luck,” Chu said. Long added that he entered the final more relaxed thanks to another Chinese team’s strong showing in qualifying. “This is a team victory,” he said. “This medal feels heavier than our individual ones.” Watson and Hammer recovered to beat Indonesia’s Veddriq Leonardo and Alfian Muhammad Fajri to bronze, setting a world record of 10.06 seconds.  
“My shoulder is still affecting me specifically in some of the top moves, the very last move with the left shoulder pull,” admitted Watson. “But I’m generally confident that I’ll be back in form. The injury is pretty manageable,” he added.  
After the Paris Olympics, men’s speed climbing has increasingly become a duel between China and the United States. But Saturday’s medalists all expressed respect for their rivals.

Palestinian striker Abu Ali starts new chapter with Columbus Crew

WASHINGTON, Aug 16: Palestinian striker Wissam Abu Ali made his first appearance in training with Major League Soccer side Columbus Crew after completing his move from Egypt’s Al-Ahly.  
Abu Ali participated in group sessions as the team ramps up preparations for the upcoming stages of the MLS season.  
The striker’s debut in training comes just days after the club confirmed the permanent transfer, following the issuance of his visa and work permit.  
Abu Ali expressed his excitement at starting a new chapter in his professional career with the Leagues Cup champions and is expected to be available for selection in upcoming matches after being officially registered on the squad list.



Abu Ali trains with Columbus Crew.

Best of the Rest

**Davide wins his first Copa match:** Ancelotti, the son of Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti, has won his first Copa Libertadores match as the new manager of defending champion Botafogo.  
The 35-year-old Ancelotti joined the Brazilian club in July for his first experience as a full-time coach.  
Botafogo beat Ecuador’s Liga de Quito 1-0 at Nilton Santos Stadium in the first leg of a round-of-16 tie late Thursday. Striker Artur scored after 14 seconds.  
For official purposes, assistant Cláudio Cacapa signed the match-related documents as Botafogo’s coach. Ancelotti did not have full authorization from CONMEBOL to fill that role for a bureaucratic reason, according to Botafogo.  
Last month, Ancelotti was contracted through 2026 after Botafogo owner John Textor fired Renato Paiva following the team’s round-of-16 elimination at the Club World Cup.  
The Italian has worked for more than a decade alongside his father in different roles at Bayern Munich, Napoli, Everton, and Real Madrid. He is also part of Ancelotti’s staff at Brazil.  
Botafogo is the Brazilian and Copa Libertadores titles holder. (AP)  
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**AC Milan signs Athekame:** AC Milan signed defender Zachary Athekame, adding another Swiss player this month as the seven-time European champion tries to return to the Champions League.  
Milan said the 20-year-old Athekame signed a five-year contract. The transfer fee for the former Young Boys right-back is reportedly 10 million euros (\$11.7 million).  
The Switzerland Under-21 international arrives in Milan days after former Lucerne playmaker Ardon Jashari joined from Club Brugge for a reported 36 million euros (\$42 million).  
Milan placed eighth in Serie A last season and failed to qualify for any European competition. (AP)

Four Chinese dancers reach breakdancing quarterfinals

CHENGDU, Aug 16, (Xinhua): China underlined its growing strength in breakdancing at The 2025 World Games on Saturday, as four of its six representatives advanced from the group stage into the quarterfinals.  
The women’s competition produced an unusual scenario, with all three Chinese B-Girls drawn into the same group. Rising star Guo Pu (B-Girl Royal) swept the round-robin battle with three straight victories, followed by Olympic bronze medalist Liu Qingyi (B-Girl 671) on two wins.  
South Korea’s Kwon Seong-hui (B-Girl Starry) placed third, while Zeng Yingying (B-Girl Yingzi), who was battling a heavy cold, failed to find her rhythm and conceded three defeats to rank at the bottom.  
“It was exciting and also a bit nervous for us to be in the same group, but at least it guaranteed a Chinese spot,” said Royal, who emphasized that respect and focus mattered more than results.  
The 16-year-old has quickly risen to prominence as one of China’s hottest breaking prospects, claim-

ing the Asian Championships title earlier this year.  
671 admitted she needed time to find her rhythm: “At the beginning I couldn’t quickly get into the music, but having more Chinese in the last eight is already a breakthrough.” In the men’s draw, Qi Xianguyu (B-Boy Lithe-ing) dominated Group B with three convincing wins to top the standings, while China’s team captain Shang Xiaoyu (B-Boy X-rain) secured second place in Group A with a 2-1 record. Wang Ruimiao (B-Boy MonkeyZ) finished third in Group C and missed out on qualification.

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NEWS





Lecce's Nikola Krstovic, left, and Juve Stabia's Marco Bellich, right, battle for the ball during an Italian Cup soccer match between US Lecce and SS Juve Stabia at the Via del Mare Stadium in Lecce, Italy. (AP)

# Sports



The players pose for a group photo before their departure.

## Kuwait U-17 women's team departs for Cairo training camp

Kuwait's U-17 women's national football team has left for Cairo to hold a training camp as part of their preparations for the AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup qualifiers.

Before the team's departure, Kuwait Football Association President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef met with the players, along with the coaching and administrative staff, to extend his support and encouragement.

Sheikh Al-Yousef affirmed the Board of Directors' commitment to backing all women's national teams and ensuring their participation in international competitions, with the goal of achieving strong results in the near future.

# Premier League starts with 'drama' as Liverpool survives Bournemouth scare

Newcastle draws at Villa after leaving out Isak



Bournemouth's Antoine Semenyo, right, and Liverpool's Milos Kerkez in action during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Bournemouth at Anfield, Liverpool, England. (AP)

**LIVERPOOL, Aug 16, (AP):** Defending champion Liverpool launched the Premier League with a dramatic 4-2 win over Bournemouth at Anfield in an emotionally charged match featuring tributes to Diogo Jota and a player reporting racial abuse.

Federico Chiesa scored in the 88th minute, and Mohamed Salah added another goal in stoppage time as Liverpool recovered after throwing away a two-goal lead.

In between goals by Hugo Ekitike and Cody Gakpo that put Liverpool 2-0 ahead, the game was briefly paused in the 28th minute after Bournemouth forward Antoine Semenyo reported to referee Anthony Taylor that he was targeted with racist language by a spectator.

Bournemouth manager Andoni Iraola said the person who abused Semenyo was identified.

Semenyo, a 25-year-old Ghana international, needed to be consoled by teammates after the alleged incident but played on for the whole match and scored in the 64th and 76th to draw Bournemouth

level. His second was a brilliant individual goal starting deep inside his own half.

"I don't know how Ant's played on, to be honest, and come up with those goals," said Bournemouth captain Adam Smith, who added that Semenyo was "a little bit down."

Liverpool manager Arne Slot said the incident "takes the shine off" his

team's victory.

It was the first competitive match at Anfield since Jota - a popular player for Liverpool for the past five years - and his brother, Andre Silva, were killed in a car crash in Spain on July 3.

Ahead of kickoff, fans held up placards to spell out "DJ20" and "AS30" in two of the stands during a period of silence in honor of the



Aston Villa's Ollie Watkins, front right, and Newcastle United's Dan Burnt, front left, challenge for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Aston Villa and Newcastle United in Birmingham, England. (AP)

Portuguese players.

Players from the Liverpool team stood arm-in-arm around the center circle, and staff and players from both clubs wore black armbands.

After the final whistle, Salah was reduced to tears as he stood in front of the storied Kop stand and kept going a song about Jota that was being chanted by the home supporters.

Salah also repeated Jota's two-armed celebration after his goal, while Ekitike and Gakpo also dedicated their goals to Jota.

"Normally at 2-2, everyone knows which player I look to at that moment in time. I would have loved to bring in Diogo Jota, but I could not, for terrible reasons," Slot said.

"But tonight, the fans and the players did what he did for us many times in the past."

Newcastle lacked a cutting edge without star striker Alexander Isak and drew 0-0 at Aston Villa.

Isak was left out as he tries to push for a move to defending champion Liverpool. New signing Anthony Elanga looked dangerous the right of Newcastle's attack, but the visitors could not make the most of their possession.

Villa coped well after defender Ezri Konsa was sent off in the 66th minute for pulling back Anthony Gordon as he raced through on goal.

## Sousa 'vows' full commitment to Kuwait national team project

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 16: Hélio Sousa, the Portuguese coach newly appointed to lead Kuwait's national soccer team, expressed his delight at taking charge of Al-Azraq following the signing of a two-year contract last Thursday.

Sousa affirmed his determination to give his best, stating that his experience and expertise will be dedicated to developing the team. He emphasized that progress can only be achieved through the combined efforts of the players, fans, clubs, and the Kuwait Football Association.

"We must all work tirelessly to move forward and accomplish our goals in the future," Sousa said.



The signing ceremony in progress.

## Wrexham falls to West Brom at home for back-to-back losses

WREXHAM, Wales, Aug 16, (AP): Wrexham is still searching for its first points in the Championship after a 3-2 loss to West Brom on Saturday.

Celebrity co-owners Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney were on hand at the Racecourse ground for Wrexham's first home game in the second tier in 43 years.

After three straight promotions, Wrexham is one level below the Premier League but the Championship is renowned as one of the toughest divisions in soccer.

Isaac Price scored twice for West Brom. Jed Wallace made it 2-1 for the visitors in the 74th after Lewis O'Brien had equalized for Wrexham before halftime. Price's second strike gave West Brom a two-goal cushion in the 81st before Sam Smith made it 3-2 moments before the final whistle.

New winger Nathan Broadhead - Wrexham's club-record signing in midweek - came on to replace the injured Josh Windass. Broadhead joined from Ipswich in a deal that could reportedly reach 10 million pounds (\$13.50 million).

Wrexham began its season last



West Bromwich Albion's Karlan Grant, left, and Wrexham's Ryan Barnett in action during the Championship soccer match between AFC Wrexham and West Bromwich Albion in Wrexham, Wales. (AP)

weekend with a 2-1 loss at Southampton after conceding two late goals.

On Tuesday, Wrexham advanced in the English League Cup by beating Hull in a shootout victory.

## Coman joins Al-Nassr from Bayern

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Aug 16, (AP): Kingsley Coman is leaving Bayern Munich after a trophy-filled decade to join up with Cristiano Ronaldo at Saudi Arabian club Al-Nassr.

Bayern announced the transfer.

The French winger, a Champions League winner with Bayern in 2020, will be part of a star-studded forward lineup with Ronaldo, fellow new signing João Félix and Coman's former Bayern teammate Sadio Mané.

Al-Nassr is looking to improve after finishing third in the Saudi Pro League last season and signed Ronaldo to a two-year contract extension in June.

Coman's departure from Bayern

comes two weeks after the German champion signed Luis Díaz from Liverpool, intensifying Coman's competition for places. He got a fond farewell from Bayern coach Vincent Kompany after they won the Bundesliga together last season.

"When a player as successful as him leaves the club, it's always a bit emotional," Kompany said earlier Friday.

"You have to have understanding for his position in this situation and what he'd like. For me, what's important now is that we look forward and that we show a lot of respect for Kingsley Coman, for what he's done for this club."