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Minister of Justice forms panel to review rental, owners' union laws



Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait issued a decision on Sunday to form a specialized committee tasked with reviewing and updating the legislative system governing rental issues and establishing a new legal framework to regulate property owners' unions. The committee will also study related provisions in the civil and commercial laws, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Al-Sumait explained that the committee's mandate includes developing the rental system to enable its transformation into a fully integrated electronic platform that ensures a balanced relationship

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HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince

HH Amir receives Crown Prince, PM, KNG Chief, 1st Deputy PM

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Al-Seif Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received separately the Chief of the National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah. Similarly on Sunday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Al-Seif Palace His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

We need a courageous stance ... Why are there so many local liquor factories?

FIRST and foremost, I neither like nor consume alcohol ... It has never been part of my life. So when I write about this issue, it is not out of any personal interests, but only because it represents a growing societal problem that needs to be discussed calmly.

Recently, news outlets reported the tragic deaths of 23 individuals and the poisoning of around 160 others after consuming adulterated alcohol.

At the same time, security forces uncovered a makeshift factory where toxic chemicals and pesticides were being used to produce local liquor.

The phenomenon of "local alcohol" and smuggled alcoholic beverages is not new. It has a long and dangerous history, claiming many lives and leaving others with lasting injuries.

In just one week, police arrested several individuals involved in smuggling imported goods or selling locally produced liquor.

This prompts me to reflect on the year 1964, when Article 206 of the Penal Code was passed after extensive debate. I recall that Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem (May Allah have mercy on him) was quoted as asking, "Does this ban encourage drug smuggling, and what are the alternatives?"

That question, along with similar others, has been raised repeatedly over the past six decades. Yet the response has almost always been the same - "Kuwaiti society is conservative," and the conversation ends there.

However, in reality, Kuwait is not the only conservative society. All Gulf societies are conservative by nature. Still, some of their governments have allowed the controlled sale of alcoholic beverages to non-Muslim expatriates, within specific boundaries, offering some level of relief for these people.

Back in the 1960s, before Article 206 was passed, I recall that we launched a press campaign, not to ban alcoholic beverages, but to raise a different question - Why were their distribution monopolized by a foreign company?

This was a common situation in all the Arabian Gulf states at the time. The debate wasn't about banning alcohol outright. Interestingly, the conservative society of that era was, in many ways, more open than it is today.

So, what has come from the ban in Kuwait? It has led to a surge in drug use, increased smuggling and trafficking, and, as the saying goes, "Everything forbidden becomes desirable", we began seeing a rise in the circulation of deadly substances, including makeshift alcohol laced with toxins and produced in illegal "factories."

The statistics are alarming. Around 81,000 addicts seek help through psychiatric hospitals, outpatient clinics, and treatment centers over the span of just eight years, which is over 10,000 cases per year. These numbers paint a disturbing picture.

When 51 percent of users and dealers are citizens, it sends a serious alarm bell, and raises important questions about available alternatives.

So we ask, why isn't there a calm, open discussion that considers all perspectives, including legal, religious, and public health-related, in the interest of society as a whole?

Why do we continue to avoid approaching this issue with objectivity, free from the pressure of extremist voices that have long tried to impose their political ideologies on society? That same pressure has contributed to rising extremism and an alarming increase in drug abuse.

What we truly need now is the courage to confront these issues directly, without finger-pointing.

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Gold holds ground at KD32.875/gram

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): Gold prices in Kuwait showed cautious stability this week, reflecting global uncertainty.

According to a report by Dar Al-Sabaek Company, 24-karat gold was priced at around KD 32.875 (approximately \$107) per gram, while 22-karat gold stood at KD 31.153 (around \$102).

Meanwhile, silver traded at KD 421 per kilogram (roughly \$1,378), as both traders and investors awaited clearer signals from global markets.

On the international front, gold prices recorded a notable drop, closing last week at \$3,336 per ounce, down 3 percent, marking their weakest performance since late June.

The yellow metal had opened trading at \$3,394, but gradually slid to a weekly low of \$3,330, driven primarily by concerns over U.S. tariff policies and shifting expectations surrounding the Federal Reserve's monetary direction.

The report highlighted that a sharp rise in the U.S. Producer Price Index, the highest in three years, prompted markets to reconsider the possibility of interest rate cuts. This, in turn, exerted downward pressure on gold prices. However, mixed U.S. economic data, coupled with rising bond yields, helped limit losses and kept prices above key technical levels.

Adding to market volatility was the U.S. decision to impose tariffs on gold,

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Kuwait Fire Force photo

One of the Kuwait Fire Force's vehicles, equipped for hazardous materials detection, at Al-Shadadiya Hazardous Materials Center. The facility, located in Sabah Al-Salem University City, enhances readiness for chemical, biological, and radiological incidents while supporting specialized training and public safety. — See Page 3

Public Works minister reviews Subhan road works

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan said the Engineering Team visited the road maintenance work site in Sub-

han (Street 101) on Sunday to look into the latest developments in the implementation of the new contracts for radical road maintenance.

Meanwhile, Noura Al-Mutairi, supervisor of Contract 18 in Mubarak

Al-Kabeer Governorate, indicated that the current work includes laying Type Three asphalt. She said this is included in the integrated plan for improving infrastructure and enhancing road efficiency in the governorate.

KPC prioritizes Kuwaitis, upholds oil sector workforce rights

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) is keen on increasing the number of nationals employed in its subsidiaries, while affirming its dedication to protect the benefits and rights of Kuwaitis working in the private oil sector — who currently number around 12,000, say reliable sources.

Sources also revealed that KPC will soon announce the results of admissions for those who completed the Bachelor's degree in Administrative Sciences in the second half of August, especially since

applications for the positions began in January.

Sources added that Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) recently carried out a limited round of promotions that led to some vacancies in the Well Intervention Department and created 35 positions in its Fire Department.

Sources added KOC made promotions in the Field Development Department and renamed several positions -- Senior Petroleum Engineer, Senior Reservoir Engineer and Senior Geologist. They indicated that the Kuwaitization policy at KOC is progressing at rapid pace.

Meanwhile, CEO of KPC Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud

Al-Sabah revealed that the Kuwaitization rate in the oil sector has risen to 91 percent.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the 2025 annual report of KPC, in which Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud Al-Sabah emphasized that the focus has not been limited to appointing Kuwaitis; as it included providing a wide range of training and development programs for new cadres, alongside fostering a motivating work environment that enables high performance and meaningful contributions to the sector's ongoing success.

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'Forced exit risks investor confidence'

Muthanna Complex tenants appeal Finance Ministry's eviction order

Al-Seyassah Exclusive

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Shop owners and tenants at the Muthanna Complex

have expressed deep concern following an eviction order issued by the Ministry of Finance, which plans to re-tender the project through public bidding, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In response, they have urgently appealed to the Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem, calling for justice and reconsideration.

They stressed that they have dedicated years of effort to their businesses despite facing neglect, poor sanitation, and chaos for over 15 years.

Describing the decision as "sudden and



Al-Mukhaizeem

unfair," they highlighted the short 30-day deadline to vacate the premises by August 31, which threatens huge financial losses.

Many of the affected shops operate well-known international brands, and the forced evacuation risks not only disrupting these businesses but also displacing a number of employees and undermining the progress built through years of hard work.

The tenants and shop owners at the complex called for treatment similar to that of Sharq Market, stressing that "it is a project operating under the B.O.T. system, where the operating contract ended without evicting tenants. Instead, commercial activity continued with respect for signed contracts and tenant rights, preserving market stability and investor confidence."

They emphasized that applying the same approach to Al-Muthanna Complex would enhance Kuwait's reputation as an economic hub that honors its commitments and maintains a stable business environment.

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Newswatch

JERUSALEM: Israeli military chief Eyal Zamir said on Sunday that the army will "soon" begin a new offensive to take over Gaza City, the Gaza Strip's largest urban center, despite international warnings about the consequences for the already devastated enclave.

Zamir made the remarks during a field tour in the strip, where he spoke with senior commanders and outlined plans for the next stage of fighting, the military said.

"Soon we will move on to the next phase of Operation Gideon's Charities," he said, referring to Israel's resumption of its offensive in March after ending a ceasefire that had included a phased hostage release. (KUNA)



Weyay Bank organizes three-day youth activation at Al Khiran Mall

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:52	Asr	15:27
Sunrise ..	05:17	Maghrib ..	18:27
Zohr	11:52	Isha	19:49

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.
By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly

Weather			
wind, with speeds of 12-38 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.		Bubyan	36
		Jahra	49
		Salmiyah	40
		Ahmadi	34
		Nuwaisib	43
		Wafra	47
		Salmiya	47
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	44	36	
Kuwait Airport	47	31	
Abdaly	49	29	

Amir offers condolences to Pakistan over flood victims

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to President Asif Ali Zardari of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, expressing his deepest sympathies over the victims of the floods caused by heavy rainfall in northern Pakistan.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir conveyed heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and wished a swift recovery for the injured, as well as success for officials in Pakistan in overcoming the repercussions of this natural disaster.

Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of condolenc-

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From the desert to sea... can we market Kuwait?

‘Ecotourism golden chance to enter green economy arena’

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

tKUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: At a time the Gulf countries are racing to diversify their economies and build a sustainable future, ecotourism emerges as one of the few paths capable of combining environmental protection with increased economic returns.

With Kuwait’s extensive coastline, rich islands and sprawling sand dunes; a vital question is raised: Can the country assert its presence in the regional race toward a green economy?

The newspaper asked a group of experts about the opportunities and challenges in this promising sector:-

Dr. Abdullah Al-Zaidan, an environmental affairs specialist and former Deputy Director for Technical Affairs at the Environment Public Authority (EPA), believes that the absence of a comprehensive vision and government direction to build an integrated system; which considers cultural, social and environmental dimensions hindered the establishment of a genuine and effective ecotourism in Kuwait despite the availability of essential components.

He pointed out that about 11 percent of the total land area is currently designated as nature reserves -- comprising 11 sites, most notably the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Reserve and Jahra Reserve. He said plans are underway to raise this percentage to 15 percent as part of biodiversity protection efforts. He added that 25 percent of marine biodiversity in the country is concentrated around the southern islands, which are home to coral reefs and rare species like sea turtles and migratory birds.

He said fisheries are second only to oil as a source of national income, making marine ecotourism a national priority. “This includes activities; such as bird watching, diving, kayaking and desert camping, while preserving natural resources. Success in this sector depends on raising public awareness and engaging local communities to maintain a balance between economic development and environmental conservation,” he explained.

Municipal Council member Dr. Hassan Kamal affirmed that the environmental, geographical and cultural diversity of the country positions it firmly on the ecotourism map. He said this includes nature reserves that host migratory birds; as well as its unique location at the head of the Arabian Gulf, which can be leveraged for cruises and marine life exploration, particularly through its integration into major projects like Silk City.

Nevertheless, Kamal attributes the slow development of the sector to the absence of a government body specializing in tourism management — one that could draft legislation and coordinate among relevant entities. He also stressed the importance of encouraging private sector involvement and creating an attractive investment environment.

He cited several challenges; including environmental degradation due to neglect and weak oversight, marine pollution, overfishing, and extreme summer temperatures. He underscored the fact that current infrastructure is inadequate and calls for a comprehensive tourism vision tied to quality of life and the national economy; supported by environmental, cultural, media and legislative frameworks to ensure the sustainability of the sector.

Beaches

Dr. Mubarak Al-Hajri, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Society for Earth Sciences, pointed out that despite its small size; Kuwait boasts of beaches, islands and desert areas with environmental and wildlife diversity. He was quick to add though that the lack of an ecotourism authority hindered the effective utilization of these resources.

He highlighted the strategic location of Kuwait as a vital transit route for migratory birds, dolphins and sea turtles; thereby, offering considerable potential for developing ecotourism if marine and terrestrial ecosystems are prioritized.



Dr. Al-Zaidan



Dr. Hassan Kamal



Alia Al Farsi



Dr Jenan Behzad

He argued that the climate is not a major obstacle, thanks to the availability of air-conditioned facilities.

He also linked ecotourism with the New Kuwait Vision 2035, particularly its environmental sustainability pillar.

He revealed that the Society is working with government agencies to promote the Kuwait Geoparks Project under the UNESCO Geoparks initiative, aiming to preserve natural and environmental heritage and harness it for sustainable tourism.

Dr. Mohammad Al-Sayegh, Treasurer of the Union of Specialized Environmental Institutions and Companies and an environmental expert, asserted that the country possesses valuable assets like islands, coastal areas, a distinctive desert ecosystem and important habitats for migratory birds. However, he stressed these have yet to be transformed into a sustainable economic sector; attributing this shortcoming to the weak strategic planning and the previous focus on commercial and recreational tourism.

He cited the lack of public awareness, inadequate infrastructure, and the absence of legislation protecting natural resources as major obstacles. He thinks the geographic position of Kuwait offers unique opportunities to become a hub for diving tourism, marine wildlife excursions and cruise activities; in addition to establishing educational centers for bird watching.

He emphasized that sustainable development must be the foundation, calling for clear regulations on tourism in sensitive areas, the adoption of clean energy, and programs aimed at restoring ecosystems.

Dr. Jenan Behzad, Secretary General of the Kuwait Environment Protection Society, stressed that developing ecotourism is an investment in the future of the country. She said conserving natural resources enhances the quality of life for future generations and strengthens the position of Kuwait as a regional leader in this field.

She added that achieving balance between economic growth and environmental protection is not a distant dream, but an attainable goal.

She stated that Kuwait has the potential to become a leading player in mangrove tourism within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries; where mangroves span roughly 15,813 hectares, predominantly in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with notable sites in Qatar and Oman — such as Jubail Mangrove Park, Al-Dhakira and Muscat coast. “This ecosystem not only stores carbon, protects coastlines, and supports biodiversity; but also holds economic value by creating jobs, supporting local products, and diversifying income sources. It has social and cultural value through the protection of marine heritage and promotion of environmental education. Jahra Nature Reserve is a local example,” she elaborated.

She disclosed that “since 2018, the area has undergone a mangrove planting experiment, position-

ing it as a unique destination for introducing this ecosystem into the ecotourism offerings of Kuwait.”

She concluded by presenting proposals to develop this trail; including the creation of educational paths with signage and smart applications, school trips and expert-led tours, the establishment of a visitor center for environmental education, linking the project to Blue Carbon Market initiatives, and launching an annual environmental festival to promote community participation and environmental volunteering.

Municipal Council Member and Chairperson of the Environmental Affairs Committee at the council Eng. Alia Al-Farsi, stated that Kuwait possesses numerous components suitable for ecotourism, though the sector remains in its early stages. She mentioned submitting a proposal to establish a bicycle park as a qualitative addition to the sector. She also emphasized the importance of the Mubarakia area, with its rich heritage and cultural ties to both the marine and terrestrial environments; making it one of the Gulf and Arab region’s most prominent tourist destinations.

Al-Farsi disclosed that the Kuwait Municipality is currently developing two major projects in support of ecotourism -- the Desert Adventures Project and Jahra Corniche Development Project. The latter includes a bridge specifically designed for observing migratory bird movements in the area.

Maritime

She then emphasized that Kuwait, as a maritime country, should utilize its coasts and improve services to support ecotourism. She also pointed out the ongoing efforts to introduce a formal tour guide role to enhance public awareness of Kuwaiti traditions and the marine-terrestrial heritage. She asserted that the time has come for Kuwait to adopt a comprehensive and advanced ecotourism strategy; mirroring the successful experience of other Gulf countries.

Although Kuwait is not globally recognized for ecotourism, it has vital assets that could generate significant economic returns if supported by serious development strategies. These include:

Jahra Nature Reserve: A major stopover for migratory birds, home to more than 300 species.

Bubiyah, Failaka and Kubbar Islands: Rich in marine biodiversity, including coral reefs and turtles, and home to remnants of the ancient Dilmun civilization, dating back over 2,000 years.

Sand dunes and desert regions: Ideal for sustainable camping and safari development.

Landfill rehabilitation projects: Opportunities to convert them into eco-parks, similar to Singapore’s Pulau Semakau Island experience.

Waterfronts and marine reserves: Promising areas for eco-diving and coral reef protection, awaiting serious investment.

According to the latest reports from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the global ecotourism market is expected to reach around \$219.8 billion by 2024 — accounting for 12–15 percent of the total global tourism sector — with an annual growth rate of about 7.4 percent, surpassing that of traditional tourism. The market is projected to grow to \$270.5 billion in 2025 and exceed \$550 billion by 2035.

In the Arab world, the share remains under five percent of the global market due to inadequate infrastructure and limited investment. Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and Oman are leading the sector; while the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar are at the forefront in the Gulf region. Kuwait, despite its strong potential — including Bubiyah and Failaka Islands, migratory bird habitats, and the proposed ‘Mangrove Hills’ project — has yet to make a significant entrance into the market.

Globally, Costa Rica, Kenya, Ecuador (Galapagos Islands), Iceland, Norway and New Zealand are among the most prominent ecotourism destinations.

In the Gulf, the UAE leads the field, offering a wide variety of natural attractions that draw tourists from around the world. The country features 128 diverse environmental sites and boasts of breathtaking landscapes and varied terrains — from stunning deserts with dunes and oases to mountain ranges, valleys, beaches, mangrove forests and open plains.



File photo: The mosque is located in Kuwait City and was built in 1915. It's situated in the area behind Dickson House.

KD3.5m to clean Farwaniya mosques

Kuwait set to repair heritage mosques, facilitate prayers

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs is currently preparing for the implementation of a tender for the maintenance of heritage mosques throughout the country as it has obtained approval from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), say reliable sources.

Sources said the tender includes periodic and minor maintenance works at various heritage mosque sites and their annexes. They confirmed the commitment of the ministry to maintain these mosques to make sure they are ready for worshippers at full capacity.

Sources pointed out that heritage mosques are considered a living testament to the beauty of Kuwaiti Islamic architecture, indicating the total number of such mosques is about 50. Sources said these mosques are among the most

important architectural landmarks in the country -- valued for their religious significance and spiritual influence.

They added that the ministry previously implemented numerous projects to rehabilitate and restore these mosques, stressing that heritage mosques are an integral part of the historical and cultural identity of Kuwait; and that their preservation is a national responsibility.

They explained that despite getting approval from CAPT, the project must still obtain approval from other relevant regulatory bodies before implementation can begin.

In a related development, the State Audit Bureau (SAB) has approved the tender for cleaning services in mosques and buildings affiliated with Farwaniyah Governorate at a cost of KD3.5 million. This move aims to enhance cleanliness standards and service quality in these mosques and buildings.

KPC aims to raise production from three refineries by 10%

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) intends to increase its external refining production capacity from 400,000 barrels per day to 500,000 barrels per day; citing the transition of Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) from losses to revenue generation over the past two years, say reliable sources.

Sources also revealed that the corporation aims to raise the domestic refining capacity of its three refineries — Zour, Ahmadi, and Mina Abdullah — by 10 percent in 2026. They added that the combined output from both domestic and foreign refineries has reached 1.83 million barrels per day.

They confirmed as well that KPC’s strategic direction under CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah has yielded notable successes in both domestic and international refining operations, emphasizing that these trends are expected to further diversify the revenue streams of the corporation.

In the foreign petrochemical sector, the 2025 report of the corporation disclosed



Sheikh Nawaf

that the Nghi Son Refinery and Petrochemical Complex in Vietnam generated revenues of \$124 million from January to December 2024. The complex also maintained an operating rate of 120 percent above its design capacity, highlighting its high performance. It distributed low-sulfur diesel for the first time under a petroleum products purchase agreement.

The report highlighted that Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) has recorded significant achievements in the manufacturing sector through its strategic foreign projects. In coordination with its partners and the corporation, it succeeded in modifying the unloading unit to process acid crudes. The modification work at the Milazzo Refinery has been completed, equipping the facility to handle acid crudes and enhancing its operational flexibility and capability to refine multiple crude types.

According to the report, the Milazzo Refinery recorded zero accidents over the past four years, as of May 2025. This milestone reflects the competence of the RaM operational team, the robustness of the adopted organizational model, and the strength of the refinery’s safety culture.

As for the Duqm Refinery, which officially began commercial operations in February 2024, it has played a key role in advancing Kuwait’s external refining activities — particularly with its production capacity increasing from 230,000 barrels per day to 255,000 barrels per day — underscoring its status as one of the Gulf region’s important refining projects.

Forgers trio jailed 7 yrs

365 nationalities gotten by dependency revoked

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The Official Gazette, ‘Kuwait Al-Youm’, on Sunday published four decrees and a Cabinet decision revoking the Kuwaiti citizenship of 365 individuals and those who acquired it through dependency.

Decree No. 151/2025 stipulated the revocation of the Kuwaiti citizenship of 345 individuals, Decree No. 152/2025 on three individuals. Decree No. 153/2025 is on one individual and Decree No. 156/2025 on 10 individuals.

This is in addition to a Cabinet decision to revoke the citizenship certificates of six individuals, based on Article 21bis A of the Nationality Law, which pertains to “fraud and false statements.”

In a related development, the Criminal Court on Sunday sentenced a Syrian man, his father and a Kuwaiti citizen to seven years in prison on charges of forging Kuwaiti citizenship.

The court also ordered the Syrian man to pay a fine of KD58,000 for unlawfully receiving salaries from Kuwait Airways, following investigations by the Nationality Investigation Department. This verdict closes one of the oldest ‘forgery’ cases in Kuwait’s citizenship records.

Case files indicate that one of the accused was arrested and he confessed during interrogation. He revealed that in 2002, when he was 11 years old and a middle school student, he and his father — the other accused — met in the Umm Al-Hayman. After a lengthy discussion, his father informed him that his name and date of birth would be changed, instructing him to memorize the new identity and erase all memory of his previous one.

He then repeated his primary school education under the new identity, eventually completing secondary school and enrolling at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET). He continued under this false identity until 2015, when the Ministry of Interior uncovered that his brothers had also obtained forged nationality. The family fled from the country, after the brothers were sentenced to five years in prison. They later returned to Kuwait to serve their prison sentence and he joined them afterward.



Farwaniya Governor and acting Governor of the Capital Governorate Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives two senior police officers in his office.

‘Maintaining security pillar of stability, public welfare’

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Farwaniya Governor and acting Governor of the Capital Governorate Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with Director General of the Farwaniya Governorate Security Directorate Brigadier General Mohammad Eid Al-Ghasab and Assistant Director of the Directorate Brigadier General Yahya Dashti in his office at the Farwaniya Governorate headquarters on Sunday, on the occasion of assuming their new positions.

Sheikh Athbi Nasser welcomed the newly

appointed security officials, wishing them success in shouldering their responsibilities. He stressed that maintaining security is the pillar of societal stability and protecting the well-being of citizens and expatriates.

On the other hand, Al-Ghasab and Dashti expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the Governor for his unwavering support for the security system in the governorate; affirming their commitment to intensify efforts to enhance security and stability and to better serve the citizens and expatriates.

Addressing 'root causes' cuts crime, traffic chaos

"IN a world facing growing security challenges, the role of interior ministers in ensuring safety and stability within civil societies has become more critical than ever," columnist **Ghani Jumaa** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The Minister of Interior in any country is primarily responsible for internal security, including crime prevention, counterterrorism efforts, and immigration regulation.

"As part of this role, the minister began by evaluating the national security situation, analyzing crime patterns and identifying locations of concern.

"Through the activation of various departments in the Ministry of Interior, critical hotspots requiring immediate attention were identified. This enabled the development of targeted strategies to combat crime more effectively.

"One of the most notable achievements of the Minister of Interior and his team was the development and implementation of a comprehensive security plan, along with the ongoing campaigns in all regions, focusing on drug trafficking, smuggling, and the illegal trade of alcohol.

"The introduction of the new traffic law has significantly reduced serious traffic violations and accidents, addressing the high number of fatalities previously caused by laxity in the old traffic laws.

"There is also a clear increase in compliance with seat belt use, supported by the new law's financial penalties for violators. Also, the minister has worked to enhance cooperation among various security agencies, improving the efficient exchange of important information and the management of visas.

"During his tenure, the country witnessed significant participation from Arab compatriots in the 26th Gulf Cup, with the Ministry of Interior playing a major role along with other state agencies in ensuring the event's success.

"In addition, any criminal caught red-handed is photographed and publicly named by the police as a deterrent to others who might seek to undermine security and break the law. This approach has contributed to a notable reduction in crime rates. The Ministry of Interior has also focused on strengthening the role of community policing.

"Awareness campaigns have been organized to educate citizens on how to report crimes and assist in their prevention. Police personnel have been trained to engage more effectively with the community. I have seen officers in the afternoons helping regulate traffic and assisting citizens and residents whose vehicles have broken down, which has helped build trust between the public and the police.

"This cooperation and trust have led to an increase in crime reporting and reduced the fear some people previously had about coming forward. Another achievement of the Ministry of Interior is its improved use of technology in security.

"Modern surveillance systems and biometric fingerprint technology have been integrated into the electronic security infrastructure. Smart cameras installed in police vehicles and worn by security personnel, along with advanced data analysis systems, have improved the accuracy and speed of monitoring criminal activity and traffic violations.

"This technology has not only aided in the apprehension of criminals but also served as a deterrent against crime. The Ministry of Interior's efforts have extended beyond combating crime to addressing its root causes.

"Educational and training programs targeting youth have been launched, with active involvement from colleagues in Public Relations and the Security Media Department to raise awareness. A number of seminars and press conferences have been held to raise security awareness.

"These initiatives have provided positive alternatives for young people, helping to reduce behavioral issues and

curb reckless behavior on the streets.

"Despite the significant challenges facing the ministry and its minister, their efforts have produced tangible results, with a notable decrease in violations and an improved sense of security among citizens.

"International cooperation in combating organized crime, which was strengthened during his tenure, played a crucial role in thwarting several cross-border criminal operations, both maritime and land-based.

"The Minister of Interior and his dedicated team have achieved remarkable success in fighting crime through comprehensive strategies and effective collaboration among various agencies and sectors. These efforts reflect not only their commitment to enhancing security but also their vision for building a safer and more stable society for all.

"Sustaining and expanding these initiatives will have a lasting positive impact on the community in the years to come.

"Thank you, Abu Faisal ... May Allah reward you on our behalf. Thanks also to the dedicated officers of the Ministry of Interior."

Also:

"Great relief and overwhelming happiness were evident on the faces of all lovers of beloved Kuwait following the decision announced by the Director of the Electronic Services Department at the General Directorate of Residency Colonel Abdulaziz Al-Kandari based on the directives of His Highness the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef. The decision aims to provide new, easier, and more flexible facilities for obtaining entry visas to Kuwait," Yemeni writer **Jamal Al-Fadhli** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"This move supports national tourism, stimulates tourism activity, and contributes to the development of this vital sector, ultimately benefiting the national economy and promoting prosperity and growth. The decision eliminates the requirement to use the national carrier for entry visas. Visitors to Kuwait can now arrive freely by land, sea, or air using any airline.

"This is undoubtedly an important step that offers tourists great convenience and multiple options. It allows them the freedom to book at any time and from anywhere, and choose prices that suit their budgets, thanks to the availability of budget flights that cater to a wide range of travelers. We must also commend the launch of the "Kuwait Visa" electronic platform, which enables the issuance of tourist, family, commercial, and government visas through the website and smartphone app, eliminating the need to visit Residency Affairs Departments.

"This provides speed and flexibility, as the visa process is completed by submitting the application and filling out a form with a passport photo, with the visa issued in approximately five minutes. This is a remarkable achievement by all standards and aligns perfectly with the state's drive toward digitization and benefiting from the tremendous technological revolution the world is experiencing.

"What truly deserves praise is the expansion of the invitation and recruitment scope for residents in Kuwait, who can now apply for family visits and bring their families to live with them. This was made possible by abolishing the salary requirement and extending kinship ties to include third-degree and fourth-degree relatives, thus allowing entire families to reunite.

"These facilitations will encourage resident workers to achieve greater stability, dedication, and productivity. Moreover, easing business visits and enabling all commercial institutions and companies in Kuwait to apply through the "Kuwait Visa" platform will stimulate the business sector and benefit the national economy.

"Opening visas to all nationalities, without barring any as long as applicants meet the established requirements, affirms that Kuwait is a country of security, safety, and peace, and will remain open and welcoming to all."

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



Ghani Jumaa



Ali Al-Marzouqi



The decontamination unit.

KUNA photos

'We're all geared up to tackle chem hazards'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): Al-Shadadiya Hazardous Materials Center, affiliated with the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), represents a major step in enhancing preparedness for chemical, biological, and radiological incidents, while reducing associated risks.

Located at Sabah Al-Salem University City, the facility is among Kuwait's first specialized centers for handling hazardous substances. Built to modern safety standards and equipped with advanced systems, it supports rapid local and international response, protects lives and property, and provides specialized training to raise public awareness.

Head of Al-Shadadiya Hazardous Materials Center, Colonel Ali Mohammad Al-Marzouqi, told KUNA that it is equipped with cutting-edge devices and vehicles for detection, analysis, and post-incident decontamination.

dent decontamination.

The center operates 10 specialized vehicles such as fire pump units, hazardous materials units with leak-control gear and decontamination tents, breathing apparatus vehicles, and reconnaissance vehicles for detecting chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats.

The center's decontamination units can process 70 to 100 people per hour, while its reconnaissance vehicle includes a mobile lab, protective suits, a remote-controlled robot, and weather monitoring systems.

Al-Marzouqi stressed that effective hazardous materials response is essential for safety, environmental protection, sustainable development, and national security.

Complex saga of nationality

Revocations keep rising

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The 'hysterical' confession of an individual led to the discovery of a complex citizenship forgery case involving a falsely naturalized Gulf national who used a forged Kuwaiti identity card to defraud his own brothers, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The Nationality Investigation Department received a report from a man who arrived at a police station in a highly agitated, hysterical state. Overcome with distress, he declared that his nationality was forged, saying: "I am a forger... I am not my father's son."

The department handled the matter with utmost seriousness and in full compliance with established procedures. A DNA sample was taken from the complainant and compared with a preserved sample of his deceased father. The test confirmed that his claims were false, as the DNA fingerprints matched; proving he is indeed his father's biological son.

Sources told the daily that the incident prompted investigators to re-examine the entire file. It was discovered that as far back as 2011, the department prepared a report on a Kuwaiti citizen who registered a son under his file who was not biologically his. That son was in possession of Gulf identification documents, and the report included copies of the documents he used to enter and exit Kuwait.

According to the sources, further inquiry into that son revealed a court ruling issued

against him in 2011. Records showed that the case involved four Gulf brothers who shared an inheritance in their home country. One brother persuaded the other three to entrust their inheritance to a Kuwaiti merchant, who would invest it through a company that would generate a monthly income. The brothers transferred their money to the company's account; but when months passed without any returns, they filed a lawsuit against the company.

During the lawsuit, it was discovered that the company's legal representative was none other than their fourth brother — under the identity of a Kuwaiti citizen. The brothers were stunned to learn that he fraudulently obtained Kuwaiti citizenship and used it to deceive them and seize their money.

After filing the complaint under his false Kuwaiti identity, the fourth brother managed to obtain a Gulf death certificate claiming that the 'Kuwaiti citizen' (himself) died in an accident abroad. With the court accepting the death certificate, the case was dismissed due to the defendant's 'death', and he subsequently repaid his brothers.

The sources confirmed that Kuwaiti nationality authorities later contacted their Gulf counterparts to verify the authenticity of the death certificate. The shocking reply was that the certificate was forged, and that the doctor whose name appeared on it had left the Gulf country years earlier.

The case is currently under review by the Supreme Committee, which is preparing to revoke his forged Kuwaiti citizenship, along with that of his 34 dependents.

14 female beggars held in massive crackdown

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The General Department of Residency Investigations' Department for Follow-up of Violators arrested 14 female beggars during security campaigns conducted in all governorates, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that these campaigns were carried out in line with the directives of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, and under the direct supervision of the Head of the Nationality and Residency Sector.

The efforts are part of ongoing intensive security operations aimed at apprehending violators of residency and labor laws and addressing negative behaviors in society.

Legal action has been taken against those arrested, including deportation of violators and their sponsors under Article 22 (Family Visa). Violators under Article 18 (Private Sector) will also be deported. In addition, legal proceedings are being initiated against employers, both sponsors and companies, in coordination with the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM).

The General Department of Residency Investigations affirmed that it will take a strict stance in enforcing the residency and labor laws.

It stressed that begging, in all its forms, is a violation of the law and a disgraceful act that undermines the values of society.

9-year-old kid drowns in Kabad 'stable' pool

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: A nine-year-old child drowned in a swimming pool at a stable in Kabad -- a tragic incident that shook the locals.

According to a security source, the Operations Unit in the Interior Ministry received information about the incident. Security and emergency medical personnel rushed the site, where it was discovered that the child drowned in the pool. He was quickly taken from the pool and transported to the hospital, but he died despite rescue efforts.

The source stated that the competent authorities opened an investigation to determine the circumstances leading to the incident, amid calls to tighten safety measures at such locations to protect children and prevent the recurrence of such tragedies.

50pc tinting of car glass gets minister go ahead

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The official gazette "Kuwait Alyoum" has published Resolution No. 1398/2025, issued by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, for amending certain provisions of the executive regulations of the traffic law issued by Ministerial Resolution No. 76/1981, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The amendment replaces Article 46-bis, which now states: "It is permissible to install tinted glass in accordance with factory specifications for all types of vehicles. Colored foils may also be installed, provided the tint does not exceed 50 percent. All windows may be tinted except the front windshield facing the driver, which must remain a safe, transparent type in accordance with Gulf standard specifications. The use of reflective glass or foils is strictly prohibited."

According to Article 2 of the resolution, the acting undersecretary of the ministry is tasked with implementing the resolution, which will take effect immediately upon publication in the official gazette.

No truth in removal of canopies: Municipality

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The Kuwait Municipality has denied rumors circulating on social media that canopies in model and private housing areas are being removed without notice, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

In an official statement, the Municipality confirmed that removal stickers are always placed in advance and actual removal happens only once the grace period ends.

The Municipality explained that it is coordinating with the Ministry of Public Works to carry out comprehensive maintenance of main, secondary and internal roads in private housing areas.

It clarified that any canopy removal in front of schools or homes is directly linked to road maintenance operations, which include repairing asphalt and tiles, as well as other civil works. These projects are part of the Ministry of Public Works' new maintenance contracts being implemented in the governorates.

The Municipality urged citizens to cooperate and facilitate maintenance efforts in residential areas, especially where canopies obstruct the work of service ministries.

E-arbitration, AI use on cards

Legal ties boost with Lebanon eyed

BEIRUT, Aug 17, (KUNA): The visiting Secretary of Kuwait Bar Association Khaled Al-Suwaifan on Saturday affirmed that the first Kuwaiti-Lebanese Law Day and the Second Regional Arbitration Conference constituted a key platform for expertise swap and boosting cooperation in the legal sector between Kuwait and Lebanon.

Al-Suwaifan was speaking to KUNA after conclusion of these activities, held between August 13 and 16. The events involved more than 300 lawyers, the Beirut Bar Association, the Tripoli Bar Association and the Lebanese University's Faculty of Law.



Al-Suwaifan

Conferees recommended overhaul of the legal legislations to stay abreast of electronic arbitration, set criteria for using artificial intelligence (AI), establishing joint Arab platforms for electronic arbitration and holding special courses for arbitrators and attorneys.

He added that the holding of these activities reflected depth of the brotherly relations between the two countries, underscoring role of the Kuwait and Lebanese legal associations for enhancing dialogue and upgrading the "legislative environment for serving the career and boosting justice."

The Kuwaiti Bar Association, he has added, will continue to back up such activities, boost pan-Arab, and international partnerships for serving justice and establishing a developed legal environment, balancing digital development with the basics of the profession.

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Crown Prince, PM extend wishes

Amir congratulates Gabon on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, sent a congratulatory cable on Sunday to the President of the Republic of Gabon, Brice Oligui Nguema, on the occasion of his country's Independence Day. He conveyed his best wishes for the Gabonese President's health and wellbeing, and for Gabon's continued success and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, also sent a congratulatory cable on Sunday to President Nguema, expressing similar wishes for his health and for Gabon's growth and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, sent a congratulatory cable on the same occasion, extending his best wishes to the Gabonese President.

CAPT bans nine firms

Violations of tender rules cited

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: In line with the principle of accountability and as part of efforts to address shortcomings and negligence in development projects, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has banned nine companies from participating in future tenders, in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 49/2016, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The penalties, approved by CAPT's Board of Directors under Article 85 of the law, varied in severity. They included deletion from the contractor registry and bans from participation for periods of one, two, or three years. Some companies were also barred from entering any future tenders until disputes related to previous tenders are resolved, whether due to non-performance or failure to meet required standards.

In more serious cases, the penalties extended to permanent deletion and ban from participation, in line with Clause c of the same article.

The penalties outlined in Article 85 of the Public Tenders Law include actions taken by the council against contractors, suppliers, or service providers, such as warnings, category reductions, removal from the register, deprivation of participation for up to five years, or permanent removal from the register.

The article also emphasizes that these penalties do not affect the contractual rights of the concerned parties as per the contract terms. Also, the procedures include summoning the contractor, supplier, or service provider by registered letter, based on a decision from the authority or a request from the relevant party.

The penalty is imposed only after summoning the contractor, supplier, or service provider, hearing their statements, and investigating their defense. If the individual refuses to appear before the council after being summoned by registered letter, the council may issue its decision in absentia.

The tenderer who is subject to a penalty decision has the right to appeal within thirty days from the date of issuance, before the Grievances Committee, based on the procedures outlined in the regulations.



Participants at the workshop.



A trainer lectures in his workshop at the camp.



During the participants' break.

KUNA photos

Two new Assistant Undersecretaries appointed at MoE



Muhammad Ghaleb Al-Khalidi



Hamad Abdullah Hamad Al-Hamad

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Decree No. 154/2025, published in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-youth" on Sunday, announced the appointment of two new assistant undersecretaries at the Ministry of Education, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the decree, Muhammad Ghaleb Al-Khalidi and Hamad Abdullah Hamad Al-Hamad have been officially appointed to the rank of Assistant Undersecretary in the ministry.

Youth train in coding, design and e-music

Kuwait launches e-gaming workshop

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): The intensified programs camp for electronic games got underway on Saturday luring innovators of the games and peoples interested in learning how to develop them.

Umaima Al-Saad, the founder and director of the electronic games industry at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, said in remarks to KUNA during the inauguration at Kuwait National Library building that the camp would proceed for eight days.

It will include a variety of intensified training on programming, innovating games, composing e-music, she said, noting that the workshop is helpful for creating new job opportunities in a very growing realm globally.

The program is supervised by elite specialists.

Abdullah Al-Mutairi, a designer and developer, said in a statement during the inauguration that the camp is an opportunity to sharpen skills of the talented young citizens.

This industry is useful for the Kuwaiti youth to demonstrate their qualifications and promote them abroad, he said.

Where knowledge meets opportunity

KFAS empowers researchers and shapes Kuwait's future economy

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Since its establishment in 1976, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) has been fulfilling its mission to promote scientific and technological progress by supporting scientific research, developing human capital, and spreading scientific culture throughout society.

KFAS believes that Science and knowledge are the cornerstones of the prosperity of a nation. It has established itself as one of the most prestigious and important institutions specialized in supporting scientific fields at the local and regional levels. It also gained a distinguished international reputation; thanks to its unwavering commitment to the highest standards of integrity, transparency and impartiality in all its programs and initiatives, particularly the awards it grants to researchers and scientists from Kuwait and the Arab world.

In 1988, KFAS launched the Jaber Al-Ahmad Award for Young Researchers to honor creative national minds who contributed research or innovations with an impact in the fields of Science, Technology and Humanities. The award aims to motivate young national talent to excel, and encourage them to pursue research and development, which will positively impact sustainable national development.

Over the course of its history, the award has contributed to highlighting distinguished research talent, many of whom became academic and scientific leaders in Kuwait and abroad. It has also opened doors for international collaboration and provided a platform for recognition of their efforts at the local and regional levels. This award is a model of the commitment of KFAS to support scientific creativity and empowering the new generation of researchers who will lead the future.

The award fields are as follows:

- Natural Sciences and Mathematics
- Engineering and Technological Sciences
- Medical and Life Sciences
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Environmental and Agricultural Sciences

Nomination requirements:

- The researcher must be Kuwaiti
- Not older than 45 years of age at the time of nomination
- Holds a doctorate degree or medical fellowship
- Has original research published in peer-reviewed scientific journals or made influential practical contributions

Evaluation criteria:

- Originality and creativity in research work
- Scientific and applied value of the research or innovation
- Impact on society or the scientific sector
- Adherence to scientific methodology and academic standards
- Relevance of work to development priorities in Kuwait or the region
- Scientific achievements must be documented and not have previously received similar awards

Nominations are subject to review by specialized arbitration committees before being submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. The winners are announced in an official statement and at an annual honoring ceremony attended by prominent scientific and academic figures.

Beyond the awards, KFAS supports research and innovation by providing individual and institutional grants, implementing joint research and development projects, establishing laboratory infrastructure, and providing advanced training programs in co-operation with international universities, as well as providing scholarships and international summer training programs.

It also spreads scientific culture through festivals and exhibitions and produce translated scientific content; in addition to empowering youths through various initiatives, such as the Generation of Science program, Science competitions, and summer camps that develop skills and encourage innovation, enhancing the role of youths as future leaders.

The 2025-2029 strategy focuses on six main axes:

- Environmental protection
- Health promotion
- Supporting STEM education
- Energy development
- Enabling future economies
- Ensuring food and water security

For more than half a century, KFAS has proven its ability to serve as a bridge between national energies and opportunities for scientific development; combining support for research and innovation with capacity building and youth empowerment.

With its new strategy, KFAS is making confident strides toward strengthening Kuwait's scientific standing regionally and internationally and establishing a knowledge-based economy; thus, remaining a scientific beacon that opens horizons for future generations.

News in Brief

PUC opens scholarship appeals: The General Secretariat of the Private Universities Council has announced the opening of the grievance submission period for students who were not accepted into the internal scholarship program, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Grievances can be submitted online from August 17 to August 23, exclusively via email at appeal@puc.edu.kw.

The secretariat emphasized the importance of including all essential student information along with a valid contact number when submitting the grievance.

□ □ □

Record water treated in July: In an achievement considered a manifesta-

tion of the efficiency of water treatment plants and their expanding applications; the Ministry of Public Works announced that the total volume of treated water in July exceeded 12,416,000 cubic meters, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to official statistics, quaternary treated water ranked first with a total of 11,639,330 cubic meters; while tertiary treated water reached 777,377 cubic meters.

Sources told the daily that these figures reflect the continuous efforts of the ministry to improve the performance of the water system and its commitment to sustainable reuse solutions in various sectors; thereby, conserving resources and supporting national development plans.



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Crown Prince, PM extend wishes

Kuwait Amir congratulates Indonesia on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Sunday a congratulatory cable to the President of Indonesia Prabowo Subianto on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir conveyed his best wishes for

the Indonesian President's health and wellbeing, along with hopes for Indonesia's continued success and prosperity. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Sunday a congratulatory cable to the President of Indonesia Prabowo Subianto on his country's National Day.

Travel arrangements underway for Hayat Al-Fahad's treatment abroad

By Faleh Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Doctors were closely monitoring the condition of veteran actress Hayat Al-Fahad, who is currently hospitalized in a government facility after suffering a stroke. While her health has stabilized, her family, working in coordination with the Ministry of Health, has begun expediting procedures for her to travel to Europe to complete her treatment.

Her grandson, Khaled Al-Obaid, confirmed that the medical team has



Al-Fahad

reported stability in her condition and urged her fans to continue praying for her recovery.

Al-Fahad, affectionately known as "Umm Suzan," suffered a stroke a few days ago following complications from a catheterization procedure she underwent weeks earlier.

Ministry appoints new PADA Director General

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah issued a ministerial decision appointing Dr. Dalal Al-Othman as Director General of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA).

This decision is in line with the commitment of the ministry to develop national competencies to occupy leadership positions and support the progress of PADA in order to achieve its goals of serving this group, empowering them to exercise their rights, and providing them with the best services and care.

MoE approves bonuses for top-performing employees

Regulations ensure clear criteria for eligibility

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The Ministry of Education announced the approval of regulations for granting financial rewards to outstanding employees in institutes, schools and kindergartens for the 2024/2025 academic year.

This is in line with the relevant regulatory decisions and in an effort to ensure justice and transparency among all workers in the educational field, including teachers and administrators.

The ministry disclosed in a press statement that the decision stipulates

the bonus will be granted to employees covered by Civil Service Council Resolution No. 5/1980 regarding periodic leave; provided the following conditions are met:

- Employed for two years in the ministry or any other government agency if transferred or seconded, for those appointed on or before Sept 18, 2023

- Job performance rating of 'excellent' for the year of eligibility (2024/2025)

- No disciplinary sanctions imposed on the employee during the same year, unless these sanctions were erased in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Law and Regulations, or a final court ruling is issued to cancel them.

- Actual working days must not be less than the percentage specified in Civil Service Council Resolution No. 43/2006, equivalent to 70 percent -- not less than 129 days for employees in kindergarten and 132 days for employees in primary, intermediate and

secondary levels. This excludes periods of absence, suspension from work, secondment and all kinds of full-time work; in addition to missions and all types of vacations, official holidays, Fridays and rest days, with the exception of sick leave during hospitalization.

- Those reappointed or contracted are treated as new employees when calculating the period of entitlement.

- The eligibility of those referred to legal affairs will be decided upon immediately after the investigation is completed and its outcome is known.

The ministry confirmed that the Financial Department will put the bonus amounts in trust accounts for a period of two months for grievances, and six months for those referred to investigation, to ensure the employees' rights are protected.

It added the decision gives an employee, who is not entitled to the bo-

nus, the right to file a grievance within 60 days from the date of its disbursement, exclusively through the Ministry of Education's website; stressing that no grievances will be received except electronically and within the specified period.

It pointed out that this bonus cannot be combined with any other financial reward for excellent services issued by various regulatory decisions, in order to preserve organizational unity and justice among all employees. It explained that the adoption of these regulations comes within the framework of its keenness to honor diligent and distinguished members of the teaching and administrative staff, and to motivate educational cadres to continue contributing to achieve the desired quality of the educational process, calling on all employees to review the details of the decision through its official channels.

Governor hosts new Co-op Union Chair

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Governor of Farwaniya and acting Capital Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah welcomed Maryam Al-Awadhi in his office at the Farwaniya Governorate headquarters on Sunday, congratulating her on her new position as Chairperson of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies.

The Governor wished for the success of Al-Awadhi in performing her duties in her new post. He emphasized the vital role that the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies plays in ensuring food security and serving citizens and expatriates.

Meanwhile, Al-Awadhi expressed gratitude and appreciation for Governor for his congratulations and support. She stressed that she is keen on developing cooperative work and improving the services of the Union to meet the aspirations of citizens and expatriates.



Farwaniya Governorate photos
Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah welcomes Maryam Al-Awadhi in his office at the Farwaniya Governorate headquarters.

Ministry of Finance penalizes 9 firms for late tax payments

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The Ministry of Finance has imposed fines on nine companies for late payment of income tax and sent letters urging them to quickly settle the outstanding amounts, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The ministry indicated the amounts owed by each company for delays in paying income tax from previous years; revealing that fines ranged from six to 12 percent, and in some cases up to 18 percent. It emphasized the need for payment within 30 days, warning that legal action will be taken against those who fail to comply.

In a related development, the ministry sent letters to two companies regarding the assessment of 'zakat' and the shareholding companies' contributions to the State for the previous years.

It explained that this step was taken after reviewing the financial statements and attached documents for the relevant fiscal years, in line with Law No. 46/2006 on 'zakat' and the contribution of Kuwaiti public and closed shareholding companies to the State budget, as well as Executive Regulations No. 58/2007 and related administrative decisions governing assessment and collection procedures.

It stressed the importance of settling the amounts within one month from the date of notification. It added that the final results of the assessments were presented to the concerned companies; clarifying that under Executive Rule No. 10, objections must be filed within 60 days of notification. Otherwise, the amounts will become final and payable to the ministry.

Foreign Ministry stresses diplomacy for peace

Kuwait supports Alaska summit efforts to resolve Ukraine crisis

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait has welcomed the summit held Friday between US President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Alaska to discuss bringing the conflict in Ukraine to a halt.

This summit was a positive and important step toward resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict through dialogue and diplomacy, Kuwait's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

The Ministry also renewed Kuwait's firm support to adopt constructive dialogue for resolving all conflicts and promoting just peace in a way that enhances regional and international peace.

The United Arab Emirates on Saturday applauded the US-Russian summit held in Alaska and expressed appreciation of the US President Donlad Trump's efforts for finding a peaceful solution to the Ukraine crisis.

The UAE foreign ministry said in a statement that the summit was a crucial step for boosting international security and stability and "the atmosphere of confidence in the European continent."

It said in the statement broadcast by the UAE news agency, WAM, constructive dialogue is the best av-

enue for narrowing the gulf (among warring parties) and settling conflicts.

The joint efforts by the US President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to end the Ukraine crisis constitutes a source of hope for reinforcing global peace and stability, it concluded.

The Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Al-Budaiwi, welcomed the meeting between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin last Friday in Alaska.

In a press statement, Al-Budaiwi praised the positive atmosphere that accompanied the Alaska summit, which emphasized that resolving disputes and crises comes through cooperation, constructive dialogue, and peaceful solutions.

He affirmed the GCC countries' steadfast position, based on supporting peaceful dialogue to resolve regional and international issues, and strengthening and supporting all international efforts aimed at resolving the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, as the best way to enhance international peace and security.



KUNA photo

US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin

Continued from Page 1

We need

The discovery of counterfeit alcohol factories, the growing number of victims, and the high rate of drug use all call for addressing this issue with calm, clarity, and without preconceived notions.

I remember, several decades ago, when a Gulf ruler allowed alcohol in his country under strict regulations, someone questioned him, "Our society is conservative, so how can you permit this?"

He responded by saying, "A true believer doesn't need a deterrent."

Toxic tippie

The Interior Ministry indicated that based on the intensive security campaigns carried out by the security forces in all governorates, 67 individuals involved in the manufacture and distribution of local alcoholic beverages were apprehended. Six factories for alcohol production, along with four operational factories located in residential and industrial areas, were raided.

Moreover, 34 individuals wanted by law for involvement in various cases were arrested as well during these campaigns.

The Interior Ministry affirmed that the confiscated substances pose an extreme danger to public health and can lead to immediate death. It stressed that it does not tolerate anyone attempting to compromise national security or endanger the lives of individuals.

It will continue to pursue and apprehend anyone involved in trading narcotics, intoxicants or any substances that threaten public health.

Meanwhile, security sources told the newspaper that the Ministry of Interior, through all of its field sectors, is continuing its security campaigns against dealers, promoters and users of drugs and intoxicants. They indicated that these security campaigns will cover all areas, particularly those densely populated by expatriates. They explained that the security sectors are targeting drug and alcohol dealers, in accordance with strict instructions to cleanse the country of all forms of such toxins.

Sources added the DCGD recently raided several large local liquor factories operating in residential areas.

258 nabbed

Head Brigadier General Fawaz Al-Roumi. It is part of ongoing security efforts to apprehend violators of the Residency and Labor laws.

The ministry affirmed its continuous security efforts to apprehend and hold accountable all violators of the Residency and Labor laws, monitor illegal workers and address any negative phenomena; thus, contributing to ensuring public security and order. It emphasized that accountability will include both workers and employers without leniency, in accordance with the provisions of the Residency and Labor laws of the country.

KPC prioritizes

In a related development, sources indicated that the total number of Kuwaiti employees in the corporation and its subsidiaries reached 20,336 in the first quarter of 2025 -- down from 20,812 during the same period last year due to retirements.

Meanwhile, the total number of Kuwaiti nationals appointed by the end of March 2025 reached 365; indicating the biggest number was recorded last year -- 1,087 citizens by the end of 2024.

Sources denied rumors about the large-scale recruitment of expatriates at the expense of national talent, clarifying that only 31 expatriates were hired until March 2025 -- and only in essential and specialized roles.

Sources added Kuwait National Petroleum Corporation (KNPC) remains focused on its strategy to achieve operational excellence and to invest in national talent, which it views as the country's most valuable resource.

With ongoing expansion projects in the oil sector, the corporation is equally committed to maintaining a healthy and supportive work environment for its national workforce, sources concluded.

Gold holds

which disrupted physical trading and widened the pricing gap between spot and futures contracts to over \$100. The gap later narrowed to \$60

following a presidential decision by President Donald Trump to exempt gold from those tariffs. This fluctuation led financial institutions and banks to tread carefully in executing deals.

Investors are now closely watching Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, who is expected to speak at the Jackson Hole Symposium this week. His remarks are expected to offer guidance on the monetary policy direction, especially in light of upcoming U.S. economic data, including indicators related to manufacturing, housing, unemployment, and home sales.

While Wall Street analysts remain neutral on gold's short-term trajectory, the Dar Al-Sabaek report noted that any unexpected political or monetary developments could trigger sharp price swings. Notably, 63 percent of retail investors are optimistic, predicting a rise in gold prices in the coming week.

Minister of

between landlords and tenants.

The committee will also focus on creating a modern legislative framework for regulating owners' unions to promote governance and transparency in the management of jointly owned properties, while ensuring legal consistency and integration in relevant laws.

The committee is composed of a distinguished group of judges and experts, chaired by Court of Appeal Judge Mohammed Al-Sanea, with Judge Khaled Al-Asousi serving as

Vice President. Other members include Judge Abdullah Al-Kandari, Judge Mohammed Al-Rabiah, and Judge Yousef Al-Kandari. Sultan Al-Shujai has been appointed as the committee's rapporteur.

Minister Al-Sumait stressed that the committee will carry out its work through a consultative approach, involving relevant state bodies and those involved in the real estate and housing sectors in order to benefit from their expertise and input. This aims to ensure the drafting of comprehensive, practical legislation that reflects real-world needs and keeps pace with best practices.

Muthanna Complex

This is especially important as Kuwait aims, under New Kuwait 2035 vision, to strengthen its position as a regional financial and commercial center and attract foreign investment.

While many tenants and shop owners expressed shock at the 30-day eviction notice, they stressed that this measure violates legal and humanitarian standards and breaches their established rights.

They highlighted that their commercial activities include major investments and global brands built over decades, as well as rare collectibles and specialized showrooms.

They viewed the eviction order as a violation of the law, which clearly states that "if ownership of the property is transferred to another party through any legal transaction, the

lease does not expire but remains valid, and all rights and obligations transfer to the new owner, even if the lease had no fixed end date prior to the ownership transfer. All that is required is that the tenant is in possession of the leased property."

The tenants stressed that this sudden move not only harms them but also undermines Kuwait's business environment and harms the local market's reputation as a safe and stable destination for investment.

They noted that while Kuwait is making great efforts to position itself as a regional economic hub through new reforms, such decisions raise concerns among current and potential investors and create legal and commercial uncertainty.

They also emphasized their legal right to continue operations until the end of their contractual agreements, in accordance with established legal frameworks, stressing that any change in ownership or management of the complex must honor existing contracts and vested rights, reflecting Kuwait's commitments to the business community and investors.

In reviewing the decision, they highlighted that preserving the stability of existing commercial activities is essential to any successful economic vision, and that harming local investors runs counter to the goals of economic diversification and attracting investment.

They urged the relevant authorities to reconsider the decision to uphold the law, protect the business environment, and maintain investor confidence in the Kuwaiti market.

Trump exercising even tighter control over the city

Three Republican-led states to send hundreds of National Guard troops to Washington

WASHINGTON, Aug 17, (AP): Three Republican-led states said Saturday that they were deploying hundreds of National Guard members to the nation’s capital to bolster the Trump administration’s effort to overhaul policing in Washington through a federal crackdown on crime and homelessness.

West Virginia said it was deploying 300 to 400 Guard troops, while South Carolina pledged 200 and Ohio says it will send 150 in the coming days, marking a significant escalation of the federal intervention.

The moves came as protesters pushed back on federal law enforcement and National Guard troops fanning out in the heavily Democratic city following US President Donald Trump’s executive order federalizing local police forces and activating about 800 District of Columbia National Guard members.

By adding outside troops to the existing DC Guard deployment and federal law enforcement presence, Trump is exercising even tighter control over the city. It’s a power play

that the president has justified as an emergency response to crime and homelessness, even though city officials have noted that violent crime is lower than it was during Trump’s first term in office.

National Guard members have played a limited role in the federal intervention so far, and it’s unclear why additional troops are needed. They have been patrolling at landmarks like the National Mall and Union Station and assisting law enforcement with tasks including crowd control.

The Republican governors of the three states said they were sending hundreds of troops at the request of the Trump administration.

West Virginia Gov Patrick Morrisey said he directed 300 to 400 Guard troops to head to Washington, adding that the state “is proud to stand with President Trump in his effort to restore pride and beauty to our nation’s capital.”

South Carolina Gov Henry McMaster said he authorized the deployment of 200 of his state’s National Guardsmen to help law enforcement in



Members of the District of Columbia National Guard patrol along the National Mall on Aug 16, in Washington. (AP)

Washington at the Pentagon’s request. He noted that if a hurricane or other natural disaster strikes, they would be recalled.

Ohio Gov Mike DeWine said he

would send 150 military police from the Guard to “carry out presence patrols and serve as added security” and that they were expected to arrive in the coming days. His statement said Army

Secretary Dan Driscoll requested the troops.

The activations suggest the Trump administration sees the need for additional manpower after the president personally played down the need for Washington to hire more police officers.

A protest against Trump’s intervention drew scores to Dupont Circle on Saturday before a march to the White House, about 1.5 miles away. Demonstrators assembled behind a banner that said, “No fascist takeover of DC,” and some in the crowd held signs saying, “No military occupation.”

Morgan Taylor, one of the protest organizers, said they were hoping to spark enough backlash to Trump’s actions that the administration would be forced to pull back on its crime and immigration agenda.

“It’s hot, but I’m glad to be here. It’s good to see all these people out here,” she said. “I can’t believe that this is happening in this country at this time.”

Fueling the protests were concerns about Trump overreaching and that he had used crime as a pretext to impose

his will on Washington.

John Finnigan, 55, was taking a bike ride when he ran into the protest in downtown Washington. The real estate construction manager who has lived in the capital for 27 years said Trump’s moves were “ridiculous” because crime is down.

“Hopefully, some of the mayors and some of the residents will get out in front of it and try and make it harder for it to happen in other cities,” Finnigan said.

Jamie Dickstein, a 24-year-old teacher, said she was “very uncomfortable and worried” for the safety or her students given the “unmarked officers of all types” now roaming Washington and detaining people.

Dickstein said she turned out to the protest with friends and relatives to “prevent a continuous domino effect going forward with other cities.”

Federal agents have appeared in some of the city’s most highly trafficked neighborhoods, garnering a mix of praise, pushback and alarm from local residents and leaders across the country.

America

3 killed, eight injured in New York shooting: Three people are dead and eight others wounded after a shooting in a crowded New York City club early Sunday morning.

Investigators believe a shooter or shooters opened fire with multiple weapons at Taste of the City Lounge in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Crown Heights after “a dispute” just before 3:30 a.m., killing three men, New York Police Department Commissioner **Jessica Tisch** told reporters.

“It’s a terrible shooting that occurred in the city of New York,” Tisch said at a news briefing. She said officers are investigating at least 36 shell casings from the lounge, as well as a firearm that was discovered in a nearby street.

Those wounded in the shooting - eight men and three women - are being treated at hospitals for non-life-threatening injuries, she said. The ages the victims range from 27 to 61.

The shooting comes amid a record low year for gun violence in New York City



Tisch

“I mean, we have the lowest numbers of shooting incidents and shooting victims seven months into the year that we’ve seen on record in the city of New York,” she said. “Something like this is, of course, thank God an anomaly and it’s a terrible thing that happened this morning, but we’re going to investigate and get to the bottom of what went down.” (AP)

New Orleans mayor indicted: New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell was indicted Friday in what prosecutors called a yearslong scheme to hide a romantic relationship with her bodyguard, who is accused of being paid as if he was working even when they met alone in apartments.

Cantrell faces charges of conspiracy, fraud and obstruction, less than five months before she leaves office due to term limits. The first female mayor in New Orleans’ 300-year history was elected twice but now becomes the city’s

first mayor to be charged while in office.

“Public corruption has crippled us for years and years,” Acting US Attorney Michael Simpson said, referring to Louisiana’s notorious history. “And this is extremely significant.”

Cantrell’s bodyguard, Jeffrey Vappie, was already facing charges of wire fraud and making false statements. He has pleaded not guilty. A grand jury returned an 18-count indictment Friday that added Cantrell to the case.

They are accused of exchanging encrypted messages through WhatsApp to avoid detection and then deleting the conversations. The mayor and Vappie have said their relationship was strictly professional, but the indictment portrayed it as “personal and intimate.”

The City of New Orleans said in a statement that it was aware of the indictment and that the mayor’s attorney is reviewing it.

“Until his review is complete, the City will not comment further on this matter,” the statement said.

Cantrell hasn’t sent out a message on her official social media feed on X since July 15, when she said the city was experiencing historic declines in crime.

In a WhatsApp exchange, the indictment says, Vappie reminisced about accompanying Cantrell to Scotland in October 2021, saying that was “where it all started.” (AP)

Off-duty NYPD officer fatally shoots man: An off-duty New York Police Department officer fatally shot a man pointing a fake gun at the officer on Friday night on Staten Island, according to law enforcement.

At about 8 p.m., a 911 call came in about a man with a gun at the back of a diner, Assistant Chief Melissa Eger, of the NYPD Patrol Borough of Staten Island, said during a news conference.

An off-duty officer then spotted the same man with what appeared to be a firearm and told another off-duty officer, said Eger.

They told the man to put the firearm down but instead he pointed it at the officers, said Eger, who added that surveillance video captured the events. One officer then fired at the man.

The officers “performed life-saving measures” and then the man was taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead, she said. (AP)

Judge denies WH request to end policy protecting immigrant children in custody

McALLEN, Texas, Aug 17, (AP): A federal judge ruled Friday to deny the Trump administration’s request to end a policy in place for nearly three decades that is meant to protect immigrant children in federal custody.

US District Judge Dolly Gee in Los Angeles issued her ruling a week after holding a hearing with the federal government and legal advocates representing immigrant children in custody.

Gee called last week’s hearing “déjà vu” after reminding the court of the federal government’s attempt to terminate the Flores Settlement Agreement in 2019 under the first Trump administration. She repeated the sentiment in Friday’s order.

“There is nothing new under the sun regarding the facts or the law. The Court therefore could deny Defendants’ motion on that basis alone,” Gee wrote, referring to the government’s appeal to a law they believed kept the court from enforcing the agreement.

In the most recent attempt, the government argued they made substantial changes since the agreement was formalized in 1997, creating standards and policies governing the custody of immigrant children that conform to legis-



Immigrants play soccer at a new US government holding center for migrant children in Carrizo Springs, Texas, July 9, 2019. (AP)

lation and the agreement.

Gee acknowledged that the government made some improved conditions of confinement, but wrote, “These improvements are direct evidence that the FSA is serving its intended purpose, but to suggest that the agreement should be abandoned because some progress has

been made is nonsensical.”

Attorneys representing the federal government told the court the agreement gets in the way of their efforts to expand detention space for families, even though Trump’s tax and spending bill provided billions to build new immigration facilities.

Europe

Pope celebrates Mass for homeless people: Pope Leo XIV spent the last Sunday of his summer vacation with several dozen homeless and poor people and the church volunteers who help them, celebrating a special Mass for them and inviting them into the Vatican’s lakeside estate for a lunch.

Leo celebrated Mass in the St Mary sanctuary of Albano, near the papal summer retreat in Castel Gandolfo where he is vacationing. The Mass was attended by around 110 people cared for by the local Caritas church charity, and the volunteers who run the diocese’s shelters, clinics and social service offices.

In his homily, Leo celebrated the “fire of charity” that had brought them together.

“And I encourage you not to distinguish between those who assist and those who are assisted, between those who seem to give and those who seem to receive, between those who appear poor and those who feel they have something to offer in terms of time, skills, and help,” he said.

In the church, he said, everyone is poor and precious, and all share the same dignity.

Leo, the former Robert Prevost, spent most of his adult life working with the poor people of Peru, first as an Augustinian missionary and then as bishop. Former parishioners and church workers say he greatly reinforced the work of the local Caritas charity, opening soup kitchens and shelters for migrants and rallying funds to build oxygen plants during the COVID-19 pandemic. (AP)



Pope Leo XIV

6 dead in Portugal nursing home fire: A fire broke out early Saturday at a nursing home in northern Portugal’s

Mirandela, leaving six people dead, five seriously injured, and 20 others with minor injuries, local authorities said.

The incident, which happened around 5 a.m. local time (0400 GMT), was confirmed by Luis Carlos Soares, commander of the Mirandela fire department, in a statement sent to local broadcaster RTP.

Aderito Gomes, one of the board members of the institution, said the blaze is believed to have started in connection with an anti-bedsores mattress in a room with three residents, all of whom died. Three other elderly persons died due to smoke inhalation and respiratory complications.

The nursing home hosted about 90 elderly people. After the incident, some of them were transferred to hospitals in Mirandela, Macedo de Cavaleiros and Braganca, while the rest are being relocated to other facilities.

Authorities stressed that the fire was not connected to the ongoing wave of wildfires affecting several parts of the country. (Xinhua)

3 injured in Czech chemical plant blast: An explosion at the Synthetia chemical plant in the Czech city of Pardubice injured three individuals on Friday afternoon, with two of them in life-threatening condition.

The two critically injured were airlifted to burn centers, while the man with moderately severe burns was transported by land to the emergency department of Pardubice Hospital, the Czech News Agency reported, citing an ambulance service spokesman.

Synthetia said on its website that the operational accident occurred shortly after 2 p.m. and was “resolved immediately.” The company added that there was no further risk to the surrounding area and that an investigation into the cause is underway in cooperation with the Czech Police.

According to its website, Synthetia is a major European specialty chemicals manufacturer, operating four strategic business units: pigments and dyes, organic chemistry, nitro-cellulose, and power engineering. (Xinhua)

Putin agreed to let US, Europe offer NATO-style security protections for Ukraine: Trump envoy

NEW YORK, Aug 17, (AP): Special US envoy Steve Witkoff said Sunday that Russian leader Vladimir Putin agreed at his summit with US President Donald Trump to allow the US and European allies to offer Ukraine a security guarantee resembling NATO’s collective defense mandate as part of an eventual deal to end the 3 1/2-year war.

“We were able to win the following concession: That the United States could offer Article 5-like protection, which is one of the real reasons why Ukraine wants to be in NATO,” he said on CNN’s “State of the Union.” He added that it “was the first time we had ever heard the Russians agree to that.”

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, speaking at a news conference in Brussels with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said that “we welcome President Trump’s willingness to contribute to Article 5-like security guarantees for Ukraine and the ‘Coalition of the willing’ -- including the European Union -- is ready to do its share.”

Witkoff, offering some of the first details of what was discussed at Friday’s summit in Alaska, said the two sides agreeing to “robust security guarantees that I would describe as game-changing.” He added that Russia said that it would make a legislative commitment not to go after any additional territory in Ukraine.

Zelenskyy thanked the United States for recent signals that Washington is willing to support security guarantees for Ukraine, but said the details re-



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, (second left), and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, (second right), attend a video meeting of European leaders with US President Donald Trump on the Ukraine war in Berlin, Germany on Aug 13, ahead of the summit between the US and Russian leaders. (AP)

mained unclear.

“It is important that America agrees to work with Europe to provide security guarantees for Ukraine,” he said, “But there are no details how it will work, and what America’s role will be, Europe’s role will be and what the EU can do, and this is our main task, we need security to work in practice like Article 5 of NATO, and we consider EU accession to be part of the security guarantees.”

Witkoff defended Trump’s decision to abandon his push for Russia to agree to an immediate ceasefire, saying the president had pivoted toward a peace deal be-

cause so much progress was made.

“We covered almost all the other issues necessary for a peace deal,” Witkoff said, without elaborating.

“We began to see some moderation in the way they’re thinking about getting to a final peace deal,” he said.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio insisted there would be “additional consequences” as Trump warned before meeting with Putin, if they failed to reach a ceasefire. But Rubio noted that there wasn’t going to be any sort of deal on a truce reached when Ukraine wasn’t at the talks.

Tensions soar in Serbia as protesters clash with police, set fire to party offices

BELGRADE, Serbia, Aug 17, (AP): Angry protesters clashed with police in a town in western Serbia and in the capital Belgrade on Saturday as tensions soared further in the Balkan nation following days of violent demonstrations.

Wearing scarves over their faces and chanting slogans against President Aleksandar Vucic, a group of young men threw flares at his Serbian Progressive Party offices in Valjevo, some 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the capital Belgrade. They set fire to the party’s offices before clashing with riot police in a downtown area.

Police threw multiple rounds of tear gas and charged at the demonstrators who hurled bottles, rocks and flares at them.

Similar clashes also erupted on Saturday evening in the northern city of Novi Sad and in Belgrade, with police directing tear gas at protesters while battling the protesters who set garbage containers on fire.

The protesters in Valjevo turned out to the streets to protest what they allege is police brutality.

Interior Minister Ivica Dacic said at least one policeman was injured in Valjevo and 18 people detained so far.

“There will be more detentions. All those who have broken the law will be arrested,” Dacic said.

He said that the seat of the Valjevo court, prosecutor’s office and the municipal building also have been demolished.



Serbian gendarmerie officers patrol in truck after clearing people blocking a street during an anti-government protest in Belgrade, Serbia on Aug 16. (AP)

Serbia has been gripped by protests since November, when a train station canopy collapse killed 16 people. Many blamed the tragedy on poor renovation work resulting from widespread corruption in infrastructure projects.

The student-led protests had been largely peaceful for months but turned violent this week. The situation has put pressure on Serbia’s increasingly autocratic president Vucic, who has refused the protesters’ demand to call an early parliamentary election.

Vucic has accused the protesters of

following orders from abroad to “destroy Serbia,” and promised a crackdown on the nationwide movement led by university students.

The protest in Valjevo drew several thousand people after a video on social media showed a young man from the town being severely beaten by police who kicked him and bashed him with batons during a protest earlier this week.

The gathering was peaceful until groups of protesters threw flares at the SNS offices which sparked the fire inside.

Asia

Earthquake hits Indonesia's Central Sulawesi: A 6.0-magnitude earthquake struck Poso Regency in Central Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, early Sunday, injuring at least 29 people, the country's National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) said in a statement.

The Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency reported that the quake occurred at 5:38 a.m. Jakarta time (2238 GMT), with the epicenter located on land at a depth of 10 km, 18 km northwest of Poso Regency.

Strong tremors were felt in Poso Pesisir District, including the villages of Masani, Tokorondo, Towu, Pinedapa, Tangkura, and Lape, lasting for about 15 seconds and prompting many residents to rush outdoors for safety.

The Poso Regional Disaster Management Agency immediately carried out field monitoring and coordination with local authorities. Preliminary data showed 29 people were injured.

In neighboring Sigi Regency, residents felt moderate shaking for about seven seconds, though no casualties or damage have been reported.

BNPB Chief Suharyanto has instructed his teams to take immediate action and strengthen coordination with regional authorities. Emergency response measures include medical assistance, provision of tents, and continued data collection. (Xinhua)

Flash flood in north China leaves 8 dead, 4 missing: A flash flood swept through a wild camping site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region late Saturday, killing eight people and leaving four others missing, local authorities reported on Sunday.

The disaster struck around 10 p.m. Saturday in the upstream area of a river in Urad Rear Banner in Bayannur City, leaving 13 campers unaccounted for, according to the banner's publicity department.

By 10 a.m. Sunday, one person had been rescued, eight were confirmed dead, and four remained missing.

Search and rescue operations are currently underway. (Xinhua)



This photo taken with a mobile phone provided by Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) Central Sulawesi shows officers inspecting a damaged building after an earthquake in Poso Regency, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, on Aug 17. (Xinhua)

China renews blue alert for rainstorms: China's national observatory renewed a blue alert for rainstorms on Sunday, warning of downpours in multiple regions of the country.

From 8:00 am Sunday to 8:00 am Monday, heavy rain and rainstorms are forecast to hit parts of Inner Mongolia, Shanxi, Hebei, Shandong, Qinghai, Guangxi and Guangdong, the National Meteorological Center said.

Some areas may experience brief but intense precipitation with hourly rainfall potentially exceeding 70 millimeters, accompanied by thunderstorms and strong winds, the center said.

Cambodian, Thai military region chiefs vow to avoid clashes after ceasefire

PHNOM PENH, Aug 17, (Xinhua): The chiefs of Cambodian and Thai regional military regions on Saturday vowed to avoid clashes after a ceasefire agreement reached by both countries recently, said a press release issued by the Cambodian side.

Their commitment was made during an extraordinary Regional Border Committee meeting held in Thailand's Trat province.

It said both sides agreed in principle to establish a coordinating group to enhance communication at all levels.

"As border demarcation is currently underway, demining can be considered in areas that are demarcated or in non-disputed areas, as agreed upon by the Joint Boundary Commissions of the two countries," the press release said.

Armed clashes between Thai and Cambodian forces erupted on July 24 along their border and lasted for five days. The two ASEAN member states agreed to a ceasefire on the afternoon of July 28, which took effect at midnight on the same day.

During a tea gathering hosted by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi with Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn and Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sanguansri on Thursday in Anning, southwest China's Yunnan Province, the three parties reached the consensus that Cambodia and Thailand will accelerate the resumption of normal exchanges, according to the Chinese foreign ministry on Friday.

Cambodia and Thailand will strive to strengthen contacts and exchanges, resume normal exchanges at an early date, and rebuild and enhance mutual trust.

China supports Cambodia and Thailand in earnestly implementing the consensus reached at the recent Cambodian-Thai leaders' meeting and the extraordinary session of the General Border Committee, promptly restoring peace and tranquility in border regions and realizing a lasting ceasefire.

China supports the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in continuing to play an active role in maintaining the overall unity of ASEAN.

It is hoped that Cambodia and Thailand will continue to foster favorable conditions and work toward restoring normalcy in the border areas as soon as possible, and meeting the expectations of border residents on both sides.

China stands ready to continue playing a constructive role in line with the wishes of both Cambodia and Thailand, including providing support and assistance for mutually agreed activities such as demining in designated border areas.

Also:

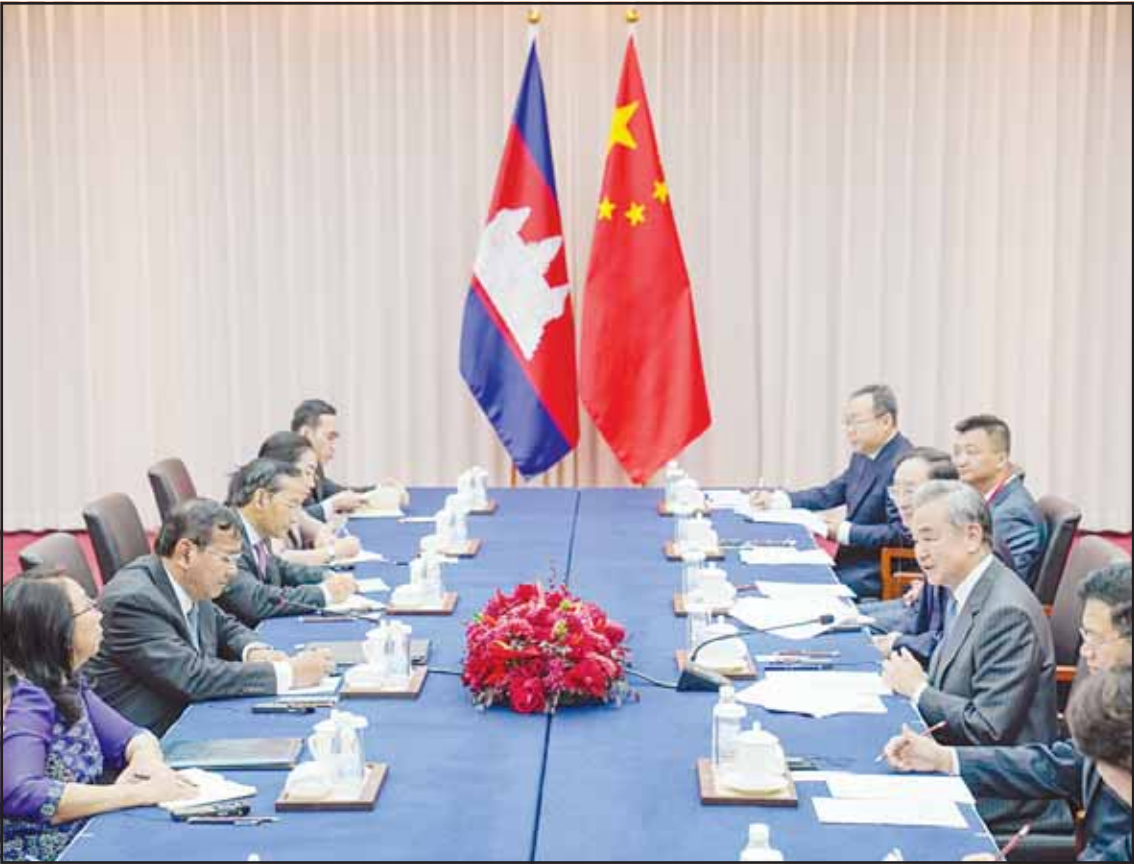
PHNOM PENH: The number of road fatalities in Cambodia declined to 694 people in the first half of 2025, a drop of 12 percent from 793 over the same period last year, said a National Road Safety Committee's report.

Besides the death toll, the road accidents injured 1,476 others during the January-June period this year, down 30 percent from 2,116 in the same period last year, the report said.

The Southeast Asian country recorded 1,066 cases of road crashes during the above-mentioned period, also down 30.5 percent from 1,534 cases, it added.

Phan Rim, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, said road crashes kill about four people per day.

"The major causes of road accidents included speeding, failing to adhere to traffic rules, not respecting the right of way, careless turning, reckless overtaking, driving under the influence of alcohol, and drowsy driving," he told Xinhua.



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, meets with Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn, who is in China to attend the tenth Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Foreign Ministers' Meeting, in Anning, southwest China's Yunnan Province on Aug 14. (Xinhua)

Pakistan will not restrict mountaineering expeditions despite deaths of climbers

PESHAWAR, Pakistan, Aug 17, (AP): Pakistan has issued no warnings or restrictions for mountaineering expeditions in the north, an official said Sunday, despite the recent deaths of climbers.

Climbers were well aware of the harsh weather and all the other risks and challenges, said Faizullah Faraz, a spokesman for the government of Gilgit-Baltistan, the northern region home to some of the world's highest mountains. "Despite that, they willingly accept these challenges and come here to attempt these summits."

Chinese climber Guan Jing, 37, was the latest person to perish on one of Pakistan's mountains. She died last Tuesday after being hit by falling rocks on K2, the world's second-highest peak known for its treacherous slopes and extreme weather conditions. Rescue teams recovered her body on Saturday.

Her body was still in the mortuary of the Combined Military Hospital in Skardu on Sunday. Contact has been made with Chinese authorities in Islamabad, and "now it is up to them to make further decisions in this regard," said Faraz.

Jing's death occurred several weeks after German mountaineer and Olympic gold medalist Laura Dahlmeier died while attempting Laila Peak in the Karakoram mountain range.

Bodies of foreign climbers who die attempting to summit mountains in Pakistan are typically recovered at the request of their families. But if the family declines a rescue, the remains are left at the spot where the climber died.

Faraz said authorities were trying to provide climbers with better infrastructure, rescue facilities, security and a friendly environment. Mountaineering expeditions are the backbone of the local economy, bringing in millions of dollars in direct revenue.

A large number of people work on these expeditions from May to September, feeding their families for the whole year with these earnings, he added.

Hundreds of climbers try to scale mountains in northern Pakistan every year.

Accidents are common because of avalanches and sudden weather changes. Last August, two Russians spent six days stranded on a remote peak before they were rescued.

Gilgit-Baltistan, in Kashmir, has



Shahbaz Khan, station manager of a Pakistani tour operator 'Imagine Club Pakistan' shows passport copy and other documents of Chinese climber Guan Jing, who was killed on K2, the world's second-highest peak, at his office in Skardu, in northern Pakistan on Aug 16. (AP)

been battered by higher-than-normal monsoon rains this year, triggering flash floods and landslides.

Also:

BUNER, Pakistan: Pakistani authorities on Sunday defended their response to flash floods that killed more than 200 people in a single northwestern district last week.

Residents in Buner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, accused officials of failing to warn them to evacuate after torrential rain and cloudbursts triggered deadly flooding and landslides. There was no warning broadcast from mosque loudspeakers, a traditional method in remote areas.

Bolivia heads to polls as its right-wing opposition eyes first victory in decades

LA PAZ, Bolivia, Aug 17, (AP): Polls in Bolivia opened on Sunday for presidential and congressional elections that could spell the end of the Andean nation's long-dominant leftist party and see a right-wing government elected for the first time in over two decades.

The election is one of the most consequential for Bolivia in recent times - and one of the most unpredictable.

Even at this late stage, a remarkable 30% or so of voters remain undecided. Polls show the two leading right-wing candidates, multi-millionaire business owner Samuel Doria Medina and former President Jorge Fernando "Tuto" Quiroga, locked in a virtual dead heat.

But a right-wing victory isn't assured. Many longtime voters for the governing Movement Toward Socialism, or MAS, party, now shattered by infighting, live in rural areas and tend to be undercounted in polling.

With the nation's worst economic crisis in four decades leaving Bolivians waiting for hours in fuel lines, struggling to find subsidized bread and squeezed by double-digit inflation, the opposition candidates are billing the race as a chance to alter the country's destiny.

"I have rarely, if ever, seen a situational tinderbox with as many sparks ready to ignite," Daniel Lansberg-Rodriguez, founding partner of Aurora Macro Strategies, a New York-based advisory firm, writes in a memo. Breaking the MAS party's monopoly on political power, he adds, pushes "the country into uncharted political waters amid rising polarization, severe economic fragility and a widening rural-urban divide."

The outcome will determine whether Bolivia - a nation of about 12 million people with the largest lithium reserves on Earth and crucial deposits of rare earth minerals - follows a growing trend in Latin America, where right-wing leaders like Argentina's libertarian Javier Milei, Ecuador's strongman Daniel Noboa and El Salvador's conservative populist Nayib Bukele have surged in popularity.

A right-wing government in Bolivia could trigger a major geopolitical realignment for a country now allied with Venezuela's socialist-inspired government and world powers such as China, Russia and Iran.



An electoral official displays a ballot listing presidential candidates during general elections in La Paz, Bolivia on Aug 17. (AP)

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Paramilitary group shells famine-stricken camp in Darfur, killing 31 and injuring 13

CAIRO, Aug 17, (AP): A paramilitary fighting against Sudan's military shelled a famine-stricken displacement camp in the western region of Dafur Saturday, killing at least 31 people, including seven children and a pregnant woman, a medical group said, in a second attack on the camp in less than a week.

The Rapid Support Forces artillery shelling of the Abu Shouk camp outside el-Fasher, the provincial capital of North Darfur province, also wounded 13 others, the Sudan Doctors Network said in a statement.

The Resistance Committees in el-Fasher, a grassroots group tracking the war, said RSF launched an hours-long "extensive artillery shelling" on the camp early Morning. It said in a Facebook post that the attack also resulted in severe damage to private properties and the camp's infrastructure.

The RSF didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

The RSF attacked Abu Shouk last week and killed more than 40 people, as the paramilitaries have tried to seize el-Fasher, the military's last stronghold in Darfur.



Soldiers arrive to the Allafah market, in an area recently recaptured by Sudan's army from the Rapid Support Forces paramilitary group, in the Al Kalalah district, south of Khartoum, Sudan on Match 27. (AP)

Subcontinent

Building fire in India's Bengaluru kills 5: At least five people, including four of a family, were killed Saturday in a devastating fire inside a four-story residential-cum-factory building in the southern Indian city of Bengaluru, the police said.

According to the police, the fire started during the early hours on the first floor, which housed a plastic manufacturing unit and storage, and quickly spread throughout the premises and engulfed the third and fourth floors, where families lived.

"So far, five deaths have been confirmed. The deceased were identified as a couple and their two minor sons. The fifth person has been identified as a 36-year-old man, living in the same building," a police official said.

Officials said around 14 people managed to escape the fire by jumping to the adjacent building. (Xinhua)

Police foil firearms smuggling in Afghanistan: Police thwarted attempts to smuggle firearms and discovered 17 pieces of pistols in Afghanistan's eastern Paktia province, said a statement of the provincial police office on Saturday.

Acting on a tip-off, police launched an operation and confiscated 17 pistols that were being smuggled into Dad-e-Patan district, the statement added.

Without providing more details, the statement noted that the smugglers escaped, and the police have been trying to arrest them and bring them to justice. (Xinhua)

Africa

Suspected Islamist rebels kill 30 in Congo: Suspected Islamist rebels have killed at least 30 people in a series of attacks in Congo's North Kivu province in recent days, a Congolese military official said Saturday.

The killings took place in Bapere province between Wednesday and Friday, according to Col. Alain Kiwawa, the military administrator of Lubero territory where the village is located.

"We have more than 30 people dead, and at least a hundred who are being held hostage," Kiwawa told The Associated Press.

A civil society leader, Samuel Kaheni, the president of the Bapere civil society organization, added that several houses were burned and victims were mostly killed with knives. (AP)

Libya holds 2nd phase of municipal elections: Libya began its second phase of municipal council elections on Saturday, with polling stations across the country opening from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. local time.

The elections covered 26 of the 63 municipalities initially slated for this phase, the Libyan High National Elections Commission (HNEC) said. Voting in other municipalities has been suspended due to "irregularities" and security concerns following recent attacks on HNEC offices.

The commission said the assaults are "part of a larger agenda pursued by forces of darkness and instability" seeking to exclude Libyans from decision-making. (Xinhua)

US dollar steady at KD 0.305

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): The exchange rate of the US Dollar against the Kuwaiti Dinar stood at KD 0.305, while the Euro was at KD 0.357 compared to last Thursday, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) on Sunday.

The CBK, in its daily bulletin, said that the Pound Sterling exchanged at KD 0.413, down by 0.14 percent, adding that the Swiss Franc and Japanese Yen exchanged at KD 0.378 and KD 0.002 each.

Business

In a Marina FM interview, Gulf Bank reinforced its commitment to the ‘Diraya’ campaign

Gulf Bank warns of rising fraud attempts during summer and travel seasons

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Gulf Bank is reinforcing its commitment to raising awareness about electronic fraud through the “Diraya” campaign, an initiative by the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association in collaboration with local banks.

Speaking in an interview with Marina FM, Mr. Mahdi Sulaiman, Senior Manager in Gulf Bank’s Marketing Department, stressed that banks never ask customers to

disclose personal or banking information over phone calls, text messages, or emails. He further warned against the fraudulent techniques used by scammers to steal sensitive information and gain access to customer accounts.

He encouraged customers to follow the official accounts of banks and the “Diraya” campaign on social media to stay updated with awareness messages, fraud-prevention tips, and guidance on



Diraya logo

the proper steps to take if faced with a fraud attempt.

He highlighted the campaign’s objectives, noting that “Diraya is a nationwide financial literacy initiative designed to strengthen community awareness, protect customers’ banking rights, and provide clear guidance on recognizing and preventing fraudulent activities.”

He also noted the increasing attempts of fraud during the summer and travel

seasons, where fraudsters create fake websites for booking travel tickets or impersonate hotels to send false payment links. Mr. Sulaiman advised customers to always verify the authenticity of any website before making payments.

He also advised customers to disregard any messages or calls asking for personal or banking information, regardless of the source, and to never share such details with anyone – even if the re-

quest seems official – whether by phone or through social media.

Mr. Sulaiman concluded: “When in public places such as airports or shopping malls, avoid using unsecured public Wi-Fi networks, as they may be exploited by fraudsters to steal your data. If you suspect any unknown payment transaction, immediately block your card through Gulf Bank’s mobile application or by contacting the Bank’s call center.”

In its latest real estate report about Kuwait, KSA and UAE

Markaz sees robust activity in GCC real estate, expects continued sector growth in H2 of 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz” has released its latest real estate market outlook, offering a comprehensive review of market performance across Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE for H1 2025, along with forward-looking insights for H2 2025. The report underlines the resilience of the GCC real estate sector, supported by sales activity, rising property values, and investor demand across residential, commercial, and hospitality segments.

With macroeconomic indicators showing signs of continued recovery, Markaz expects real estate markets in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE to maintain upward momentum through the second half of 2025. Lower interest rates, fiscal support, and sustained government investment in economic diversification are anticipated to drive growth and market confidence. Despite fiscal pressures in certain markets, the overall outlook for the GCC real estate sector remains positive, presenting ongoing opportunities for investors, developers, and stakeholders across the region.

Kuwait: Stable Recovery Amid Expanding Economic Activity

Kuwait’s real estate market continued its recovery in Q1 2025, supported by rising land prices and rental values in the investment and commercial segments. Land prices in both sectors saw annual growth across all areas, while rental rates for three-bedroom and apartments of 60sq.m. apartments in the Istithmari segment posted significant year-on-year increases. The office segment in the commercial sector remained flat overall, though select areas registered moderate growth in Q4 2024.

Transaction activity also reflected a positive trend. Real estate sales rose by 45.0% y/y to KD 896 million in Q1 2025, driven by gains across all segments. Sales in the residential and commercial sectors increased by 38.5% and 22.9% y/y respectively, while the investment segment surged by 49.0%. The number of transactions also grew by 20.9% y/y, with residential and commercial transactions climbing by 11.7% and 163.6% respectively. The investment segment recorded a 29.7% y/y increase in transactions, supported by a stable rise in the expatriate

population.

Markaz expects Kuwait’s real GDP to grow by 1.9% in 2025, a recovery from the 2.8% contraction in 2024. This growth, fueled by the rebound in oil GDP and stable non-oil performance driven by project activity, stable consumer spending, and legislative reforms, is anticipated to bolster demand in the commercial and industrial real estate sectors. The Markaz Real Estate Macro Index for Kuwait stands at 3.25 out of 5.0, signaling stable market conditions with room for further gains in H2 2025.

Saudi Arabia: Momentum Builds as Diversification Drive Continues

Saudi Arabia’s real estate sector maintained solid performance in Q1 2025, underpinned by a 4.3% y/y rise in the real estate price index and a 37% y/y increase in real estate sales. Growth in residential and commercial property prices contributed to this trend, with the residential segment recording a 5.1% y/y increase and the commercial segment rising by 2.5% y/y. Demand for commercial properties remains robust, supported by non-oil economic growth and sectoral diversification.

Saudi Arabia’s fiscal deficit is expected to widen to 4.9% of GDP in 2025, from 2.8% of GDP in 2024, largely due to lower oil prices. While reduced revenues may impact government spending and project awards, the Kingdom has indicated plans to maintain its current level of investment in economic diversification.

Based on macroeconomic indicators and real estate trends, Markaz believes that Saudi Arabia’s real estate market remains in the accelerating phase in H1 2025 and is expected to sustain this momentum through H2 2025.

UAE: Remarkable Transaction Growth and Global Investor Appeal

The UAE real estate market posted remarkable results in Q1 2025, with transaction values reaching AED 239 billion (USD 65 billion). Dubai remained the standout performer, with total transaction value for 2024 rising by 20% y/y to AED 761 billion (USD 207.2 billion). The Emirate recorded 226,000 transactions in 2024 - up 36% y/y - and welcomed over 110,000 new real estate investors, a 55% y/y increase. In Q1 2025, Dubai alone ac-

counted for AED 142 billion in sales from 45,077 transactions, a 30% y/y increase.

Residential, office, and hospitality segments are expected to maintain a positive outlook in H2 2025, supported by robust demand, interest rate cuts, growing tourist inflows, and constrained supply in prime areas. Dubai and Abu Dhabi continue to outperform other global markets in rental yield, with Dubai reaching 7.6% as of May 2025, well above yields in New York (5.3%), Singapore (3.2%), and London (3.1%). With new supply expected, rental rates in Dubai may begin to stabilize, giving tenants more options.

Markaz forecasts that the UAE’s real estate sector will continue its upward trajectory in H2 2025, marked by steady appreciation in land prices and rental rates in both Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Despite evolving macroeconomic dynamics, the outlook for the GCC real estate sector remains positive, with solid investor interest, government-backed initiatives, and sectoral diversification continuing to support long-term growth. Markaz believes that real estate will remain a key contributor to the region’s economic development through the second half of 2025 and beyond.

About Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz”

Established in 1974, Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C “Markaz” is one of the leading asset management and investment banking institutions in the MENA region with total assets under management of over KD 1.56 billion (USD 5.11 billion) as of 30 June 2025. Markaz was listed on the Boursa Kuwait in 1997. Over the years, Markaz has pioneered innovation through the creation of new investment channels. These channels enjoy unique characteristics and help Markaz widen investors’ horizons. Examples include Mumtaz (the first domestic mutual fund), MRpodEF (the first real estate investment fund in Kuwait), Forsa Financial Fund (the first options market maker in the GCC since 2005), and the GCC Momentum Fund (the first passive fund of its kind in Kuwait and across GCC that follows the momentum methodology), all conceptualized, established, and managed by Markaz.

All Share Index edges lower

Boursa Kuwait ends mixed

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): Kuwait’s stock market closed Sunday on a mixed note, as the All Share Index slipped slightly by 1.80 points, or 0.02 percent, ending the day at 8,695.55 points.

Trading activity remained robust, with more than 516 million shares exchanged across 22,693 transactions, for a total value of about KD 96.8 million (USD 295.2 million).

The Main Market Index recorded gains, climbing 28.99 points, or 0.37 percent, to close at 7,781.84 points. This came on the back of 376.3 million shares traded through 16,084 deals, with a turnover of KD 51.8 million

(USD 157.9 million).

In contrast, the Premier Market Index edged downward, losing 9.57 points, or 0.10 percent, to settle at 9,353.17 points. A total of 139.6 million shares were traded in 6,609 transactions, valued at KD 45 million (USD 137.2 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index posted the strongest performance of the day, advancing 82.43 points, or 1.06 percent, to reach 7,868.61 points. Turnover stood at KD 43.2 million (USD 131.7 million), with 304.4 million shares changing hands through 10,554 transactions.

Non-oil sector hits \$1.51 trillion

GCC GDP decrease 2.7% in 2023 to \$2.143 trillion



GCC Statistical Center.

MUSCAT, Aug 17, (KUNA): The gross domestic product (GDP) of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries at current prices reached USD 2.143 trillion in 2023, down 2.7 percent from USD 2.202 trillion at the end of 2022.

Data released by the GCC Statistical Center on Sunday showed that the value of disposable GDP (for consumption and savings after deducting taxes and other transfers) amounted to USD 1.198 trillion, compared to USD 2.515 trillion in 2022, a decrease of three percent.

The total non-oil sector value-added amounted to approximately USD 1.513 trillion, while the value added of the oil sector amounted to USD 603.5 billion.

Data indicates that non-oil sector contributions to the Gulf’s GDP at current prices rose to 71.5 percent by the end of 2023, compared to 65 percent by the end of 2022, with an annual growth rate of 6.4 percent.

Mining and quarrying activities contributed the most to the GCC economy over the past five years, averaging 28.3 percent, while manufacturing activities contributed the most to GDP within the nonoil sector, averaging 11.7 percent.

Most economic activities witnessed positive growth rates in 2023, with finance and insurance activities recording the highest growth at 11.7

percent, followed by transportation and storage at 11.6 percent, real estate activities at 8.1 percent, public administration and defense at 7.9 percent, wholesale and retail trade at 7.6 percent, and education at 5.5 percent.

Meanwhile, mining and quarrying activities, in addition to the manufacturing industry, witnessed a decline of 18.8 percent and 0.7 percent, respectively.

Regarding the spending components, data from Gulf-Stat indicates that the value of exports of goods and services reached approximately USD 1.258 trillion by the end of 2023, representing a contribution of 59.5 percent to the GDP at current prices, a decline of 7.1 percent.

Final consumption expenditure (the total amount spent by households, non-profit organizations, and the government on purchasing goods and services to directly satisfy their needs and wants, without using them to produce other goods or services) reached USD 1.245 trillion, with an annual growth rate of 7.5 percent.

Gross capital formation (total fixed capital formation and assets) reached USD 601.8 billion, with an annual growth rate of 5.5 percent.

GCC-Stat with its headquarters in Oman, is the main center for data and statistics for the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

Trade volume edges up 0.48%

Iran’s non-oil trade drops 10%

TEHRAN, Aug 17, (Xinhua): Iran’s non-oil trade value fell 10 percent to 34.17 billion U.S. dollars year-on-year between March 21 and July 22, the state-run IRIB news agency reported on Friday.

Meanwhile, the trade volume stood

at 61 million tons, up 0.48 percent, seeing exports of 48 million tons of products worth around 16.5 billion dollars and imports of 12.2 million tons valued at about 17.6 billion dollars, said the report.

Project to boost data speed

Egypt and Jordan lay first subsea cable in 25 years

CAIRO, Aug 17, (KUNA): The Red Sea city of Taba witnessed on Saturday the lowering of a section of the first topic fiber cable, to be stretched to the Jordanian coastal city of Aqaba, in the first such venture between the two Arab countries in 25 years.

The Egyptian Ministry of Communications said in a press statement that the subsea cable would stretch for 15 kilometers, to be linked with the opposite Jordanian coastal region, adding that the project aims at setting up links among destinations in Asia, Africa and Europe, boost speed of data transfer and lower the costs amid the mounting demand for AI applications.

A similar operation is scheduled in the next days in Aqaba, thus linking up the two parts of the cable, it indicated.

Egyptian Minister of Communications and Information Dr. Amro Talaat said in a statement that up to 90 percent of cross-countries communications pass through Egypt, via 15 sub-sea cables.

For his part, Jordanian Minister of the Digital Economy Sami Al-Smairat affirmed that the project, named Coral Bridge, would contribute to rendering the two countries a regional-international hub for data transfer.

The deal to erect the cable was signed in January 2024.

By National Bank of Kuwait

This week saw increased global market activity amidst key economic data releases, central bank signals, trade developments, and geopolitical events. In the United States, July data highlighted mixed macroeconomic trends as retail sales rose 0.5% MoM following an upwardly revised 0.9% gain in June, with nine of 13 categories posting gains, whilst unemployment claims came in at 224K. Inflation remained elevated, with core CPI at 3.1% YoY and headline CPI at 2.7% YoY, whilst the Producer Price Index jumped 0.9% MoM (+3.3% YoY), led by services and goods prices. The Dollar Index was last seen at 97.839. Markets focused on the September FOMC meeting, with a 25bps cut expected in swaps data. In Europe and the United Kingdom, geopolitical developments dominated as the Alaska summit concluded without a ceasefire pact. UK GDP rose 0.3% in Q2, unemployment held at 4.7%, and earnings growth remained at 5%, whilst German ZEW sentiment fell sharply to 34.7 and Eurozone sentiment declined to 25.1; EUR/USD and GBP/USD both edged up on the week. In Asia-Pacific, China’s growth softened with industrial output at 5.7% YoY, retail sales at 3.7%, and new yuan loans contracting for the first time in two decades, as USD/CNY reached 7.1845, whilst Japan’s Q2 GDP expanded 1% annualised on robust business investment and moderated PPI at 2.6% YoY. The Reserve Bank of Australia cut the cash rate by 25bps to 3.6%, with unemployment at 4.2% and wage growth at 3.4%; AUD/USD ended the week at 0.6507. Equity markets were mixed, Treasury yields experienced volatility amid inflation numbers, and Brent and WTI crude fell modestly ahead of the Trump-Putin Alaska summit and weaker Chinese data. Spot gold closed the week at USD 3,336.19 per ounce, easing after President Trump stated that gold imports would be excluded from US tariffs.

United States and Canada

Trump Narrows Fed Chair Shortlist; Market Focus on September Rate Decision

President Donald Trump confirmed his shortlist for the next Federal Reserve chair has narrowed to “three or four” candidates, with Kevin Hassett, Kevin Warsh, and Christopher Waller emerging as frontrunners. The US Treasury will interview 11 individuals, including long-shot candidates such as David Zervos, Larry Lindsey, and Rick Rieder. Trump has criticised current Chair Jerome Powell, whose term ends in May 2026, for resisting deeper rate cuts, reiterating his preference to lower the federal funds rate from 4.25%-4.50% to 1%. Market focus has shifted to the September meeting, with swaps data now assigning an 85%

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week’s Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1641	1.1590	1.1730	1.1706	1.1630	1.1830	1.1770
GBP	1.3452	1.3400	1.3595	1.3554	1.3460	1.3700	1.3561
JPY	147.74	146.21	148.52	147.18	146.40	148.00	145.74
CHF	0.8083	0.8022	0.8132	0.8067	0.8020	0.8130	0.7978

probability of a 25 bps cut following softer jobs and inflation data, whilst some officials advocate a 50 bps move. DXY was last seen at 97.839.

Alaska Summit Spurs Shift in US-Ukraine Peace Push Ahead of Zelenskyy Oval Office Visit

Following the US-Russia summit in Alaska, President Donald Trump is re-directing his diplomatic focus toward Ukraine, with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy set for an Oval Office meeting on Monday. The Alaska talks, held in secrecy with President Vladimir Putin, did not yield an immediate ceasefire, with Moscow insisting Kyiv cede the Donbas region. Trump signalled Zelenskyy should consider broader peace negotiations, increasing political pressure on Ukraine amidst ongoing European calls for territorial integrity. European officials emphasised that international borders cannot be altered by force and reiterated the need for a trilateral discussion involving Trump, Putin, and Zelenskyy. The Alaska summit outcome is seen as advancing Russia’s diplomatic leverage, whilst Zelenskyy’s forthcoming engagement in Washington will test Ukraine’s willingness to negotiate under intensified US pressure.

US Core CPI at 3.1% YoY, Headline CPI at 2.7% YoY; PPI at 0.9% MoM as Bessent Urges Easing; UoM Sentiment at 58.6

US inflation strengthened in July, with Core CPI rising 0.3% MoM (+3.1% YoY) and headline CPI up 0.2% MoM (+2.7% YoY), driven by the largest services cost increase since early 2024. Preliminary UoM consumer sentiment eased to 58.6, whilst one-year inflation expectations rose to 4.9%. Producer prices rose 0.9% MoM (+3.3% YoY), the strongest in three years, led by a 1.1% jump in services and 0.7% rise in goods. Labour market indicators showed initial jobless claims at 224K and continuing claims at 1.95M, remaining near their highest since 2021, signalling softer hiring and slower re-employment. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has called for cumulative Fed easing of 150-175bps, citing labour market revisions and moderating growth. The Federal Reserve, holding rates at 4.25%-4.50%, faces balancing persistent price pressures with growing calls for accelerated policy accommodation.

Europe and the United Kingdom

UK GDP Rises 0.3% in Q2 as Unem-

ployment Holds at 4.7%, Labour Market Shows Resilience

The UK economy expanded 0.3% in Q2, exceeding the 0.1% forecast from both private-sector economists and the Bank of England, with June output up 0.4% following minor contractions in prior months. Payrolls fell by just 8,353 in July - the smallest monthly decline since January - bringing total employment losses since October to 165K, notably below earlier estimates. The unemployment rate held steady at 4.7%, whilst total earning growth excluding bonuses remained at 5%, well above levels compatible with BOE’s 2% inflation target. Labour market inactivity fell by 156K to 21%. These trends complicate the BOE’s decision on further rate cuts from 4%, with markets now pricing a 3.5% terminal rate for 2026, reflecting a moderate but resilient economic environment. GBP/USD was last seen at 1.3554.

German ZEW Economic Sentiment Falls Sharply to 34.7 in August, Missing Expectations

The German ZEW Economic Sentiment Index declined sharply to 34.7 in August 2025, down from 52.7 in July and below market expectations of 40. The Current Situation Index also deteriorated, falling to -68.6 from -59.5, against an anticipated -65. In the Eurozone, sentiment weakened to 25.1 from 36.1, missing forecasts of 28.1, whilst the Current Situation Index dropped to -31.2 from -24.2. According to the ZEW, the decline reflects disappointment over the recently announced EU-US trade deal, coupled with weaker Q2 performance in Germany. Outlooks for the chemical, pharmaceutical, mechanical engineering, metals, and automotive sectors have worsened. The data signals a broad cooling in investor sentiment, with downward revisions in growth expectations extending beyond Germany to the wider monetary union. EUR/USD was last seen at 1.1706.

Asia-Pacific

China’s Industrial Output Slows to 5.7%, Retail Sales Gain 3.7%, as New Loans Contract for First Time Since 2005

China’s economy lost momentum in July, with broad-based weakness across production, consumption, and investment. Industrial output grew 5.7% YoY, down from June’s 6.8% and the slowest pace since November 2023, whilst retail sales rose 3.7%, the weakest this year and

Kuwait

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30520.

Net profit increases 1% to \$101 mln

Egypt Kuwait Holding revenues surges 32% during 1H 2025 to \$397 mln

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Egypt Kuwait Holding Company (EKH) one of the MENA region's leading investment companies, today announced its consolidated financial results for the period ended 30 June 2025. EKH reported consolidated revenues of USD 397 million in 1H25, up 32% y-o-y, supported by broad-based growth across its portfolio, reflecting strong operational momentum. Profitability remained solid, with gross profit and EBITDA margins of 43% and 42%, respectively, underpinned by robust performance across core segments.

Net profit increased 1% y-o-y to USD 101 million, with a net profit margin of 26%. The y-o-y comparison is impacted by a one-off FX gain of USD 49 million recorded in 1H24. Excluding this, net profit would have more than doubled y-o-y. Net profit attributable to equity holders of the parent stabilized at USD 90 million.

On a quarterly basis, revenues rose 75% y-o-y and 18% q-o-q to USD 215 million in 2Q25, translating into net profit more than doubling y-o-y and rising 57% q-o-q to USD 62 million, supported by solid operational performance and portfolio optimization efforts

Commenting on the Group's Performance, Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi, Chairman of Egypt Kuwait Holding (EKH), expressed his satisfaction with the progress achieved in executing the Group's strategy, which focuses on diversifying its portfolio across sectors and geographies, while rebalancing its asset base to simplify the balance sheet, unlock value, and ensure resilience and sustainable growth.

He highlighted that the Group launched commercial operations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, supplying natural gas to industrial clients in Dammam Industrial City 3, a rapidly developing hub. This achievement represents a milestone in the Group's journey, positioning EKH as a contributor to the Kingdom's Vision 2030 industrial development agenda.

Al-Kharafi further noted that the Group continues to advance its new clean energy project in the United Kingdom, which represents a compelling investment opportunity that will generate foreign currency revenues while enhancing the Group's ability to scale its investment activities into new global markets over the long term.



He also emphasized the significant progress made in implementing the Group's exit strategy from Delta Insurance, where the process is progressing as planned and is expected to close in 2H25, pending the necessary regulatory approvals.

Al-Kharafi also noted that the Group continues to advance its corporate identity transformation, with the Board having resolved to call for a General Assembly to vote on changing the company's name to "Valmore Holding". This new identity builds on EKH's legacy of success while aligning the Group's positioning with its future growth strategy and international expansion plans, reflecting its ambition to transform into a global investment company.

He concluded by affirming that EKH will continue to strengthen its portfolio, ensure sustainable value creation, maximize shareholder returns, and unlock long-term growth opportunities across its platform

Commenting on the Group's Performance, Jon Rokk, CEO of Egypt Kuwait Holding (EKH), expressed his pride in the strong results achieved by the Group in the first half of 2025, supported by exceptional operational performance, notable growth across key subsidiaries, and tangible progress in implementing strategic objectives.

Rokk confirmed that despite the operational challenges faced by AlexFert, which included a temporary suspension of feedstock supplies during 2Q and its impact on utilization rates, the company succeeded in growing both revenues and net profit to surpass last year's levels. Sprea Misr also delivered a notable performance, with revenues increasing 21% in USD terms during y-o-y 1H25, in line with management's strategy to expand market share. At the same time, Nilewood produced its first MDF board in June, with final commissioning works nearing completion in preparation for the full commercial launch in 4Q25.

He added that NatEnergy continued to expand gas connection services within its concession areas,



Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi



Jon Rokk

Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi

- The launch of our commercial operations in Saudi Arabia marks a significant milestone in the Group's history, while our project in the United Kingdom represents a compelling investment opportunity.
- We will continue to strengthen our portfolio to deliver sustainable value creation, maximize shareholder returns, and unlock new avenues for growth.
- Our proposed identity transformation to Valmore Holding reflects our ambition to transform from a leading regional investment platform into a world-class global investment company.

Jon Rokk

- We are proud of the Group's strong first half results and the tangible progress achieved in executing our strategic objectives.
- Our portfolio optimization plans have seen meaningful progress with several successful divestments across different markets.

achieving sustained growth and underscoring management's focus on margin-accretive activities. Meanwhile, ONS recorded revenue growth of 9% y-o-y in 1H25, supported by higher production from the two newly commissioned wells.

Rokk highlighted the clear progress made in portfolio optimization plans. The signing of the agreement to manage the divestment of Delta Insurance, followed by the subsequent offer submitted by Wafa Assurance, represented important milestones in the program. In addition, the Group successfully divested Shield Gas in the UAE during 1Q25, along with other investment exits in 2Q25, generating proceeds of USD 35 million during 1H25. He reaffirmed the Group's continued

commitment to executing its strategy, strengthening its investment portfolio and balance sheet, and creating sustainable value:

Fertilizers | AlexFert

AlexFert recorded revenues of USD 118 million in 1H25, up 11% y-o-y, driven by the increase in global urea prices, which averaged USD 396/ton vs. USD 333/ton in 1H24, reflecting a 19% y-o-y increase. Gross profit and EBITDA margins expanded by 2pp y-o-y in 1H25 to 40% and 47%, respectively. Net profit came in at USD 40 million, with net profit margin expanding by 2pp y-o-y to reach 34% in 1H25.

AlexFert is expected to deliver a solid operational trajectory, with management demonstrating agil-

ity in addressing feedstock supply challenges. The financial outlook remains positive, supported by a favorable pricing environment, with export urea prices surpassing USD 400/ton in June and further rising to USD 476/ton in July.

Petrochemicals | Sprea Misr

Sprea Misr reported revenues of USD 90 million in 1H25, up 21% y-o-y, driven by higher sales volumes in line with management's strategy to grow market share. Gross profit margin landed at 21%. While EBITDA margins stood at 20%. Net profit came in at USD 18 million, with a net profit margin of 20%.

Sprea's medium-term outlook remains favorable, supported by stable local prices at current levels, as well as increasing demand from the recovery in construction activity. In addition, management continues to expand the company's footprint in both local and international markets, with export sales rising to 21% of total sales in 2Q25, compared to 17% in 1Q25.

Utilities & Related Activities | NatEnergy

NatEnergy revenues rose 15% y-o-y in USD terms and 43% y-o-y in EGP terms in 1H25, reaching USD 34 million, driven by strong growth in natural gas connections. The company maintained healthy profitability, with gross profit and EBITDA margins rising to 30% and 29%, respectively. Net profit came in at USD 11 million in 1H25, with a net profit margin of 32%.

NatEnergy's outlook remains positive, supported by expectations of potential increases in connection prices, revisions to government-set commission fees, and continued expansion of its household customer base in high-potential areas. This is further complemented by management's ongoing execution of a revenue diversification strategy and continued cost optimization initiatives.

Utilities & Related Activities | Kahraba

Kahraba's revenues recorded notable growth in 1H25, supported by strong momentum in its electricity distribution business, with distribution volumes rising 40% y-o-y. Gross profit and EBITDA margins came in at 17% and 19%, respectively. Net profit reached USD 3 million in 1H25, reflecting a net profit margin of 11%.

Kahraba is moving forward with its expansion plans, including in-

vestment in a second substation within its 10th of Ramadan concession area to meet rising electricity demand driven by accelerating industrial activity. In addition, management continues to explore potential strategic concession acquisitions in 10th of Ramadan and other high-potential areas.

Oil & Gas | ONS

The North Sinai Offshore Concession recorded revenues of USD 31 million in 1H25, up 9% y-o-y, while maintaining strong profitability with gross profit and EBITDA margins of 54% and 82%, respectively. Net profit came in at USD 15 million in 1H25, reflecting a healthy net profit margin of 49%.

The outlook for ONS remains positive in 2025, supported by stable production volumes from recently commissioned wells and ongoing efforts to enhance operational efficiency. In addition, the company will continue to benefit from the 10-year extension of its Concession Agreement, as well as the awarding of the strategically located Fayrouz Onshore Concession, which offers low tie-in costs, rapid monetization potential, and supports long-term operational sustainability and profitability.

Non-Banking Financial Services & Other Diversified Sectors

The diversified segment reported revenues of USD 97 million in 1H25, supported by a number of factors, including the divestment of Shield Gas and other investment exits as part of management's ongoing portfolio optimization efforts aimed at simplifying the balance sheet.

Mohandes Insurance delivered net profit growth of 21% y-o-y, reflecting the promising fundamentals of Egypt's insurance sector. Meanwhile, Bedayti posted net profit attributable to equity holders of EGP 42 million in 1H25, up 42% y-o-y, demonstrating sustained growth within this fast-expanding sector despite elevated interest rates.

Egypt Kuwait Holding (EKH), established in 1997 with an issued and paid-in capital of USD 296 million, is dual-listed on both Boursa Kuwait and the Egyptian Exchange. The company is one of the Middle East's leading and fastest-growing investment entities, with a diversified investment portfolio spanning five key sectors: fertilizers and petrochemicals, gas distribution, power generation and distribution, insurance, and non-banking financial services.

Promotes circular economy & environmental awareness

MRC, Nespresso renew partnership for aluminum capsules recycling in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Metal Recycling Company (MRC) a leading provider of waste management and industrial sustainability solutions has renewed its partnership with Nasco Trading Company, the exclusive distributor of Nespresso in Kuwait, to continue operation of Kuwait's first aluminum coffee capsule recycling program, marking a significant step forward in local sustainability efforts and responsible waste management.

Since 2019, Nasco Trading Company has entrusted MRC with the processing of used coffee capsules in Kuwait. MRC's advanced recycling facilities support Nespresso's goals of waste reduction and carbon neutrality by utilizing a custom-designed machine, developed by Nespresso, that separates the aluminum from residual coffee grounds. These machines are capable of processing approximately 8,000 capsules per hour, ensuring high aluminum recovery efficiency. Meanwhile, the recovered coffee grounds are converted into natural fertilizers distributed to local farms in Kuwait, fostering an integrated model that reflects the synergy between industrial and agricultural recycling solutions with-

in a circular economy framework.

Tarek Al-Mousa, Vice Chairman and CEO of MRC, said: "We are pleased to renew our collaboration with Nasco Trading Company and Nespresso and greatly value their continued trust in our facilities and expertise in delivering advanced waste management solutions tailored to the sustainability goals of our partners. Since the beginning of this partnership in 2019, we have remained committed to providing recycling services that meet the highest operational standards. This is made possible through our state-of-the-art infrastructure and flexible operational capacity, which allow us to effectively respond to the evolving needs of our partners across various sectors, while supporting their environmental objectives, particularly in reducing waste and achieving carbon neutrality."

Hady Hanna, General Manager of Nasco Trading Company, said: "We are pleased to renew our partnership with MRC to continue the coffee capsule recycling program in Kuwait. This initiative reinforces our commitment to ensuring that every cup of Nespresso coffee contributes to a positive impact that extends

to both the community and the environment. Through this partnership, we not only help to reduce waste but also actively engage our customers in sustainable practices, fostering greater environmental awareness and responsibility within the community."

Aluminum is one of the most recyclable materials, requiring less than 5% of the energy needed to produce aluminum from raw materials. Additionally, the reuse of spent coffee grounds supports agricultural activities, further enhancing the environmental value of this program within a comprehensive and sustainable ecosystem.

Since 1987, MRC has provided waste management, recycling solutions, and industrial services to Kuwait's private and public sectors. A leader in industrial sustainability and listed on Boursa Kuwait, it is the region's largest provider of medical waste treatment services, safely disposing of over 40 tons of medical waste daily, equivalent to approximately 14,600 tons annually. The company also recycles up to 60,000 tons of scrap metal each year and with the resumption of its plastic recycling operations, the plant now has a production capacity of 25 tons per day.

MRC adheres to the highest international operations and environmental sustainability standards and holds industry-leading quality certifications from global bodies, including ISO and OHSAS. Through its subsidiaries, the company offers cost-effective, innovative solutions for industrial waste and hazardous waste treatment, in addition to facility management and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.

As part of its efforts to promote environmentally friendly industrial development in line with the New Kuwait 2035 Vision's economic and environmental goals, MRC continuously works to strengthen impactful community partnerships with government bodies, research centers, academic institutions, and manufacturers in order to contribute to building a sustainable future for Kuwait through enhanced collaboration and partnership.



Part of the factory operations.





Photos during the event.

App showcases smart savings, budgeting & tracking tools

Weyay Bank organizes three-day youth activation at Al Khiran Mall

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: From August 14 to 16, Weyay Bank was at Al Khiran Mall for a three-day activation designed to connect with youth and families, while showcasing the ease and benefits of digital banking. Weyay Bank places a strong focus on the youth segment, believing in the importance of enhancing financial literacy. Through the Weyay app, young people can learn how to manage personal expenses and use saving tools such as Budgeting & Tracking and Smart Savings. They also enjoy exclusive offers through the SELECT card, designed specifically for them. SELECT customers benefit from up to 40% monthly cashback, instant discounts from favorite stores and

brands in categories like coffee, fitness clubs, telecommunications, and dining. Plus, the stc digital store within the Weyay app offers exclusive packages and special deals at competitive prices, making the banking experience even more rewarding. Visitors experienced Weyay’s latest app features firsthand — from smart savings tools and rewards to special offers and a sleek, user-friendly interface. The Weyay team was on-site to guide visitors through the experience, answer questions, and highlight how Weyay makes managing money simple, smart, and fun.

Focus on joint ventures, auxiliary vessels

US seeks shipbuilding expertise from South Korea & Japan to counter China

WASHINGTON, Aug 17, (AP): American lawmakers are using a trip to South Korea and Japan to explore how the United States can tap those allies’ shipbuilding expertise and capacity to help boost its own capabilities, which are dwarfed by those of China. Sens. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., and Andy Kim, D-N.J., who are scheduled to land in Seoul on Sunday before traveling to Japan, plan to meet top shipbuilders from the world’s second- and third-largest shipbuilding countries. The senators want to examine the possibilities of forming joint ventures to construct and repair noncombatant vessels for the U.S. Navy in the Indo-Pacific and bring investments to American shipyards. “We already have fewer capacity now than we did during Operation Iraqi Freedom” in 2003, Duckworth told The Associated Press. “We have to rebuild the capacity. At the same time, what capacity we have is aging and breaking down and taking longer and more expensive to fix.” Their trip comes as President Donald Trump demands a plan to revive U.S. shipyards and engage foreign partners. The Pentagon is seeking \$47 billion for shipbuilding in its annual budget. The urgency stems from the fact that Washington severely lags behind China in building naval ships, a situation raising alarms

among policymakers who worry the maritime balance of power could shift to China, now the world’s No. 1 shipbuilder. Duckworth, who serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said she hopes the trip could lead to joint ventures among the U.S. military, American companies and foreign partners to build auxiliary vessels for the Navy and small boats for the Army. Another possibility is repairing U.S. ships in the Indo-Pacific region. “If we have to bring ships all the way back to the United States ... to wait two years to be fixed, that doesn’t help the situation,” Duckworth said. The discussions, she said, will focus on auxiliary vessels, which are noncombatant ships such as fueling and cargo vessels that support naval and military operations. The Navy’s auxiliary fleet is aging and insufficient in numbers, she said. The U.S. commercial shipbuilding accounted for 0.1% of global capacity in 2024, while China produced 53%, followed by South Korea and Japan, according to a report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies. A Navy review from April 2024 found that many of its major shipbuilding programs were one year to three years behind schedule. During the trip, the senators are expected to meet representatives from

major shipbuilders in the region. South Korea and the U.S. are already making progress on shipbuilding cooperation. In March, Hanwha Ocean completed maintenance work for a 41,000-ton U.S. Navy dry cargo and ammunition ship in South Korea. The overhaul of USNS Wally Schirra was the Korean company’s first project after it secured a repair agreement with the U.S. Navy in July 2024. Hanwha Group last year acquired Philly Shipyard in Philadelphia, which builds large merchant mariners, part of the reserve auxiliary fleet. Earlier this month, South Korea proposed to invest \$150 billion in the U.S. shipbuilding industry to support Trump’s “Make American Shipbuilding Great Again” initiative as part of its tariffs talk with the White House. Duckworth said she had earlier conversations with Hyundai Heavy Industries “about them actually buying into U.S. shipyards on U.S. soil.” This month, China formed the world’s biggest shipbuilding company by merging two state-owned shipbuilders. The combined entity China State Shipbuilding Corporation produces Chinese navy’s combat vessels from aircraft carriers to nuclear submarines. It commands 21.5% of global shipbuilding market.

About 25% of adults use AI for shopping decisions

US tariff fears push parents to shop early for back-to-school

NEW YORK, Aug 17, (AP): Feeling nostalgic for the days when going back to school meant picking out fresh notebooks, pencils and colored markers at a local drugstore or stationary shop? The annual ritual is both easier and more complicated for today’s students. Big retail chains generate online lists of school supplies for customers who type in their zip codes, then choose a school and a grade level. One click and they are ready to check out. Some schools also offer busy parents a one-stop shop by partnering with vendors that sell premade kits with binders, index cards, pens and other needed items. Yet for all the time-saving options, many families begin their back-to-school shopping months before Labor Day, searching around for the best deals and making purchases tied to summer sales. This year, the possibility of price increases from new U.S. tariffs on imports motivated more shoppers to get a jump start on replacing and refilling school backpacks, according to retail analysts. Retail and technology consulting company Coresight Research estimates that back-to-school spending from June through August will reach \$33.3 billion in the U.S., a 3.3% increase from the same three-month period a year ago. The company predicted families would complete about 60% of their shopping before August to avoid extra costs from tariffs. “Consumers are of the mindset where they’re being very strategic and conscientious around price fluctuations, so for back to school, it prompts them to shop even earlier,” said Vivek Pandya, lead analyst at Adobe Digital Insights, the research division of software company Adobe Inc. Miami resident Jacqueline Agudelo, 39, was one of the early birds who started shopping for school supplies in June because she wanted to get ahead of possible price increases from new U.S. tariffs on imported products. The teacher’s supply list for her 5-year-old son, who started kindergarten earlier this month, mandated specific classroom items in big quantities. Agudelo said her shopping list included 15 boxes of Crayola crayons, Lysol wipes and five boxes of Ticonderoga brand pencils, all sharpened. Agudelo said she spent \$160 after finding plenty of bargains online and in stores, including the crayons at half off, but found the experience stressful. “I am overwhelmed by the need to stay on top of where the deals are as shopping has become more expensive over the years,” she said. A lot of the backpacks, lined paper, glue sticks - and Ticonderoga pencils - sold in the U.S. are made in China, whose products were subjected to a 145% tariff in the spring. Under the latest agreement between the countries, general merchandise from China is taxed at a 30% rate when it enters the U.S. Many companies accelerated shipments from China early in the year, stockpiling inventory at pre-tariff prices. Some predicted consumers would encounter higher prices just in time for back-to-school shopping. Although government data showed consumer prices rose 2.7% last month from a year



Information on a school list assist and a QR code is displayed above pencils for sale in the back-to-school supplies section of a Target in Sherwood, Ore., Friday, Aug. 8, 2025. (AP)

earlier, strategic discounting by major retailers may have muted any sticker shock for customers seeking school supplies. Backpacks and lunchboxes, for example, had discounts as deep as 12.1% during Amazon’s Prime Day sales and competing online sales at Target and Walmart in early July, Adobe Insights said. Throughout the summer, some of the biggest chains have advertised selective price freezes to hold onto customers. Walmart is promoting a back-to-school deal that includes 14 supplies plus a backpack for \$16, the lowest price in six years, company spokesperson Leigh Stidham said. Target said in June that it would maintain its 2024 prices on 20 key back-to-school items that together cost less than \$20. An analysis consumer data provider Numerator prepared for The Associated Press showed the retail cost of 48 products a family with two school age children might need - two lunchboxes, two scientific calculators, a pair of boy’s shoes - averaged \$272 in July, or \$3 less than the same month last year. Numerator, which tracks U.S. retail prices through sales receipts, online account activity and other information from 200,000 shoppers, reported last year that households were buying fewer notebooks, book covers, writing instruments and other familiar staples as students did more of their work on computers. The transition does not mean students no longer have to stock up on plastic folders, highlighters and erasers, or that parents are spending less to equip their children for class. Accounting and consulting firm Deloitte estimates that traditional school supplies will account for more than \$7 billion of the \$31 billion it expects U.S. parents to put toward back-to-school shopping. Shopping habits also are evolving. TeacherLists, an online platform where individual schools and teachers can upload their recommended supply lists and parents can search for them, was launched in 2012 to reduce the need for paper lists. It now has more than 2 million lists from 70,000 schools. Users have the option of clicking on an icon that populates an online shop-

ping cart at participating retail chains. Some retailers also license the data for use on their websites and in their stores, said Dyanne Griffin, the architect and vice president of TeacherLists. The typical number of items teacher request has remained fairly steady at around 17 since the end of the coronavirus pandemic, Griffin said. “The new items that had come on the list, you know, in the last four or five years are more the tech side. Everybody needs headphones or earbuds, that type of thing, maybe a mouse,” she said. She’s also noticed a lot of schools requiring clear backpacks and pencil pouches so the gear can’t be used to stow guns. For consumers who like to research their options before they buy, technology and retail companies have introduced generative AI tools to help them find and compare products. Rufus, the AI-powered shopping assistant that Amazon launched last year, is now joined by Sparky, an app-only feature that Walmart shoppers can use to get age-specific product recommendations and other information in response to their questions. Just over a quarter of U.S. adults say they use AI for shopping, which is considerably lower than the number who say they use AI for tasks such as searching for information or brainstorming, according to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll in July. Before the pandemic turned a lot more people into online shoppers, schools and local Parent Teacher Associations embraced the idea of making back-to-school shopping easier by ordering ready-made bundles of teacher-recommended supplies. An extra fee on the price helped raise money for the school. Market data from Edukit, a supplier of school supply kits owned by TeachersList parent company School Family Media, shows that about 40% of parents end up buying the boxes, meaning the other 60% need to shop on their own, Griffin said. She noted that parents typically must commit no later than June to secure a bundle, which focus on essentials like notebooks and crayons.

Strike stranded 130,000 travelers

Government instructions force Air Canada strikers back to work

TORONTO, Aug 17, (AP): Air Canada said it plans to resume flights on Sunday after the Canadian government intervened and forced the airline and its striking flight attendants back to work and into arbitration. The strike stranded more than 100,000 travelers around the world during the peak summer travel season. The country’s largest airline said in a release that the first flights will resume Sunday evening but that it will take several days before its operations return to normal. It said some flights will be canceled over the next seven to 10 days until the schedule is stabilized. Less than 12 hours after workers walked off the job, Federal Jobs Minister Patty Hajdu ordered the 10,000 flight attendants back to work, saying now is not the time to take risks with the economy and noting the unprecedented tariffs the U.S. has imposed on Canada. Hajdu referred the work stoppage to the Canada Industrial Relations Board. The airline said Sunday the Canada Industrial Relations Board has extended the term of the existing collective agreement until a new one is determined by the arbitrator. The shutdown of Canada’s largest airline early Saturday was impacting

about 130,000 people a day. Air Canada operates around 700 flights per day. According to numbers from aviation analytics provider Cirium, Air Canada had canceled a total of 671 flights by Saturday afternoon - following 199 on Friday. And another 96 flights scheduled for Sunday were already suspended. The bitter contract fight escalated Friday as the union turned down Air Canada’s prior request to enter into government-directed arbitration, which allows a third-party mediator to decide the terms of a new contract. Flight attendants walked off the job around 1 a.m. EDT on Saturday. Around the same time, Air Canada said it would begin locking flight attendants out of airports. Last year, the government forced the country’s two major railroads into arbitration with their labor union during a work stoppage. The union for the rail workers is suing, arguing the government is removing a union’s leverage in negotiations. The Business Council of Canada had urged the government to impose binding arbitration in this case, too. And the Canadian Chamber of Commerce welcomed the intervention. Hajdu maintained that her Liberal

government is not anti-union, saying it is clear the two sides are at an impasse. Passengers whose flights are impacted will be eligible to request a full refund on the airline’s website or mobile app, according to Air Canada. The airline said it would also offer alternative travel options through other Canadian and foreign airlines when possible. Still, it warned that it could not guarantee immediate rebooking because flights on other airlines are already full “due to the summer travel peak.” Air Canada and the Canadian Union of Public Employees have been in contract talks for about eight months, but they have yet to reach a tentative deal. Both sides have said they remain far apart on the issue of pay and the unpaid work flight attendants do when planes aren’t in the air. The airline’s latest offer included a 38% increase in total compensation, including benefits and pensions, over four years, that it said “would have made our flight attendants the best compensated in Canada.” But the union pushed back, saying the proposed 8% raise in the first year didn’t go far enough because of inflation.

Some workers would be excluded from student loan forgiveness program for ‘illegal’ activity

WASHINGTON, Aug 17, (AP): Teachers, social workers, nurses and other public workers would be cut off from a popular student loan cancellation program if the Trump administration finds their employer engaged in activities with a “substantial illegal purpose,” under a new federal proposal released on Friday. The Education Department took aim at nonprofits or government bodies that work with immigrants and transgender youth, releasing plans to overhaul the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. Opponents fear the new policy would turn the loan forgiveness benefit into a tool of political retribution. The proposal would give the education secretary the final say in deciding whether a group or government entity should be excluded from the program, which was created by Congress in 2007 to encourage more college graduates to enter lower-paying public service fields. The proposal says illegal activity includes the trafficking or “chemical castration” of children, illegal immigration and supporting foreign terrorist organizations. “Chemical castration” is defined as using hormone therapy or drugs that delay puberty - gender-affirming care common for transgender children or teens. President Donald Trump ordered the changes in March, saying the loan forgiveness program was steering taxpayer money to “activist organizations” that pose a

threat to national security and do not serve the public. The public will be given 30 days to weigh in on the proposal before it can be finalized. Any changes would take effect in July 2026. Under current rules, government employees and many nonprofit workers can get their federal student loans canceled after they’ve made 10 years of payments. The program is open to government workers, including teachers, firefighters and employees of public hospitals, along with nonprofits that focus on certain areas. The new proposal would exclude employees of any organization tied to an activity deemed illegal. The Education Department predicts that fewer than 10 organizations would be deemed ineligible per year. It doesn’t expect a “significant reduction” in the percentage of borrowers who would be granted forgiveness under the program, according to the proposal. Yet the agency acknowledges that not all industries would be affected evenly. Schools, universities, health care providers, social workers and legal services organizations are among those most likely to have their eligibility jeopardized, the department wrote. It did not give more specifics about what “illegal” actions those groups were taking that could bar them from the program. But the proposal suggests that performing

gender-affirming care in the 27 states that outlaw it would be enough. If a state or federal court rules against an employer, that could lead to its expulsion from the program, or if the employer is involved in a legal settlement that includes an admission of wrongdoing. Even without a legal finding, however, the education secretary could determine independently that an organization should be ejected. The secretary could judge whether an organization participated in illegal activity by using a legal standard known as the “preponderance of the evidence” - meaning it’s more likely than not that an accusation is true. Once an organization is barred from the program, its workers’ future loan payments would no longer count toward cancellation. They would have to find work at another eligible employer to keep making progress toward forgiveness. A ban from the Education Department would last 10 years or until the employer completed a “corrective action plan” approved by the secretary. Critics blasted the proposal as an illegal attempt to weaponize student loan cancellation. Kristin McGuire, CEO of the nonprofit Young Invincibles, which advocates for loan forgiveness, called it a political stunt designed to confuse borrowers.

New album explores heartbreak and introspection

‘Wishbone’ confirms Conan Gray as Gen Z pop leader

NEW YORK, Aug 17, (AP): Rejection serves as inspiration for angst and contemplation on pop singer Conan Gray’s wistful fourth album, “Wishbone,” out Friday. It is a return to form for Gray with 12 diaristic tracks that oscillate between bold heartbreak anthems and moments of tender reflection.

Discovered on YouTube in the early 2010s, Gray’s narrative pop earned him a place among the tastemakers of Gen Z music. He collaborated closely with producer Dan Nigro (known for his work with Olivia Rodrigo and Chappell Roan) on his first two albums. The 26-year-old’s most recent, 2024’s “Found Heaven,” was a departure from Nigro and the affective melancholy of his previous singer-songwriter releases. Swedish super-producer Max Martin produced many of that project’s well-received 80s-inspired tracks, which saw an adaptable Gray convey big emotions through sound, rather than story.

Nigro returns as the executive producer of “Wish-

bone.” Their reunion finds Gray comfortable but candid, as recurring characters, settings and symbols help him recount relationships atop a sonic landscape informed by his past releases.

Heartbreak

Introduced with a trumpet’s call, “Romeo” details a destabilizing heartbreak. “I took the blade into my ribs,” Gray sings, taking inspiration from Shakespeare’s tragedy. His voice is pitched down to an almost robotic effect on the bridge: “Where art thou? I’m all alone now,” he sings. Unlike the teens pushed to violent ends in the Bard’s play, Gray and his 21st century Romeo meet their demise through more relatable means: egos, emotional manipulation and miscommunication. “Guess I was just your experiment!” Gray screams at the song’s midpoint, his voice cracking.

Romeo returns in “My World,” which opens with a

preppy drum beat. Elsewhere, “Connell” approaches the self-inflicted pain of a break up: “You remind me of how good it feels to hurt,” Gray coos over strings and electric guitar, an unguarded voice replacing the angsty, spoken word cadence of “Romeo.”

Many of Gray’s lyrical stories are relatable, but some of the stickiest tracks are the ones that focus on his inner thoughts. The acoustic guitar and piano that start “Nauseous” is drowned out by Gray’s layered vocals as it takes on his fear of love and the childhood trauma that informs it, “Caramel,” with an ear-worm of a chorus set to electric guitar, describes the memories he can’t shake after a breakup. The intimate “Class Clown” reflects on Gray’s self-image - and how that school-born label feels relevant, still.

“Everything comes back around, I still feel like the class clown,” he lolls. While Gray struggles with his place, the way he deftly tackles those feelings in song proves he’s among the star pupils of his class.



This album cover image released by Republic Records shows ‘Wishbone’ by Conan Gray. (AP)

Film

‘Lisbon Maru’ screened

London debuts WWII film ‘Dongji Rescue’

LONDON, Aug 17, (Xinhua): The European premiere of the World War II (WWII) film “Dongji Rescue” was held here Friday evening.

The film recounted the story of how Chinese fishermen risked their lives to rescue more than 300 British prisoners of war (POWs) from the Japanese ship Lisbon Maru in 1942. The premiere drew an audience of some 800.

In October 1942, Lisbon Maru, a cargo vessel requisitioned by the Japanese army to carry more than 1,800 British POWs from Hong Kong to Japan, was hit by the U.S. army off the Zhoushan Islands, China’s Zhejiang province.

The story “is very close to my heart, because my grandfather, Thomas Theodore Jones, was one of the survivors of the sinking of the Lisbon Maru,” Anthony Jones, chairman of the Lisbon Maru Memorial Association, told a reception before the screening.

“At the darkest hour of WWII, China and the UK fought on different fronts but shared a common mission: to defend humanity against fascism and aggression. Fighting side by side, the peoples of our two countries forged a deep friendship,” Chinese Ambassador to Britain Zheng Zeguang said at the reception.

Actor William Franklyn-Miller told Xinhua that he felt a responsibility to share this part of history more widely. “The bravery of the fishermen who rescued the British soldiers shines through,” he said.

“I didn’t know about this incident at all. It definitely taught me more about it,” said Alfie Howis, a member of the local audience. “I think this film will make people more aware of the Chinese contribution (during WWII).”

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. On the main Eastern battlefield, China’s resistance efforts were decisive in defeating Japanese fascism and supporting other fronts in Europe and Asia.



A screening of documentary “The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru” was held in Rabat, Morocco on Friday to mark the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War.

The event, organized by the Chinese embassy in Morocco, drew nearly 60 Moroccan guests from various sectors, including representatives of political parties, who have commended China’s contributions to the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War and expressed Morocco’s willingness to work with China in safeguarding world peace and promoting human well-being.

The documentary “showcased the extraordinary heroism of Chinese fishermen and conveyed the belief in safeguarding peace,” said Mohamed Auajjar, a member of the Political Bureau of the National Rally of Independents and former justice minister.

“I am deeply moved by the film and I have a deeper understanding of that period of history. It’s worth remembering forever,” said Moroccan student Arwa Labied.

“Eighty years ago, the Chinese people made enormous sacrifices to secure victory in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, and contributed significantly to the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War,” Zhou Zhicheng, charge d’affaires of the Chinese embassy in Morocco, said before the screening.

Zhou called for drawing lessons from history, cherishing peace, fostering a strong sense of building a community with a shared future for mankind, and jointly advancing global peace and development.

In October 1942, the Japanese army requisitioned the cargo-passenger vessel “Lisbon Maru” to carry more than 1,800 British prisoners of war (POWs) from Hong Kong to Japan.



Golden Leopard winner Sho Miyake, film director from Japan, poses with the award ‘Pardo d’Oro - Grand Prize of the Festival and City of Locarno’ of the ‘Concorso internazionale’ category for the movie ‘Tabi to Hibi’ (Two Seasons, Two Strangers) during a photocall at the 78th Locarno International Film Festival, in Locarno, Switzerland, Saturday, Aug. 16. (AP)

Film



This image released by Sony Pictures Classics shows Tabatha Zimiga in a scene from ‘East of Wall.’ (AP)

Beecroft blends fact, fiction to tell a new Western story

A lyrical ode to real cowgirls in ‘East of Wall’

LOS ANGELES, Aug 17, (AP): Filmmaker Kate Beecroft points her lens toward the real cowgirls of the Badlands in the lyrical new film “East of Wall.”

The film blends fact and fiction to tell a story about the working women of South Dakota, skilled riders and trainers with ranching and rodeo in their blood who also can’t seem to catch a break. There are a few Hollywood actors in the mix, including Jennifer Ehle as a hard living grandmother with a lifetime of regrets as well as some nuggets of wisdom and Scoot McNairy as an out-of-towner who wants to acquire the land, but most of the cast are non-actors playing themselves. The film won an audience award earlier this year at the Sundance Film Festival.

At the heart of “East of Wall,” now playing in select theaters, is Tabatha Zimiga, a South Dakota native whose ability to tame wild horses is the stuff of legend in the area. In the film, the horses she rescues and rehabilitates are sold at auctions and often accepted for far less than what they’re worth. She needs the money. There are bills to pay on the ranch and many mouths to feed (not just her own kids, but others from around the town who come to her for safety and shelter when their own caretakers stop providing).

Tabatha is also living with new and old traumas, from

the generational agony of abuse to the more recent death of her husband, the shocking circumstances of which are withheld for some time. But the effects of the loss are still felt, especially for their daughter Porshia (played by her real-life daughter Porshia Zimiga), whose grief is threatening to turn into hate of her mother. Teenage Porshia provides the poetic voiceovers, in which she talks about riding, her mother and, most effectively, the land. It’s reminiscent of Linda Manz’s narration in “Days of Heaven.”

Action

“East of Wall” is best when it’s capturing the landscapes and the girls in action, riding and filming energetic TikToks of their friends racing cars on horseback. Some have suggested that “East of Wall” might have been stronger as a documentary. These women are vibrant and authentic and don’t look like anyone we see in the movies these days, with real bodies and imperfect skin, heads half-shaved, tattoos everywhere and the ability to really, really ride - no stunt team required. And they have stories to tell, many of them unhappy, as we see in one of the most moving non-action scenes involving a group of mothers speaking candidly about their lives and

their regrets.

The real-life drama of financial instability is compelling and likely rooted in truth; however, the introduction of McNairy’s suspect Texan feels like a narrative contrivance and drama for drama’s sake. He offers to buy the ranch and let them live and work as usual, just for him now instead of themselves. These are the kind of scenes that remind you that the filmmakers, despite all their best intentions and care, are, in essence, also interlopers in this world.

Beecroft’s story of how she stumbled upon Tabatha and her cowgirls sounds like something out of a folk song. A native of Los Angeles who’d worked as an actress and production designer, Beecroft felt stalled and hopped in a truck with her friend and cinematographer Austin Shelton to find the stories of everyday Americans. A wrong turn, she said, led her to these women.

“East of Wall” is a promising start for a burgeoning filmmaker and a worthy portrait of an insular world that many of us will never know.

“East of Wall,” a Sony Pictures Classics release now in select theaters, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for “language throughout.” Running time: 97 minutes. Three stars out of four.

Variety

WASHINGTON: Melania Trump took the unique step of crafting a letter that calls for peace in Ukraine, having her husband President Donald Trump hand-deliver it to Russian President Vladimir Putin during their Friday meeting in Alaska.

The letter did not specifically name Ukraine, which Putin’s forces invaded in 2022, but beseeched him to think of children and “an innocence which stands above geography, government, and ideology.” Nor did the American first lady discuss the fighting other than to say to Putin that he could “singlehandedly restore” the “melodic laughter” of children who have been caught in the conflict.

“In protecting the innocence of these children, you will do more than serve Russia alone - you serve humanity itself,” she wrote on White House stationery.

A copy of the letter was first obtained by Fox News Digital and later posted on social media by supporters of the US president, including Attorney General Pam Bondi.

The first lady said that Putin could help these children with the stroke of a pen.

Putin’s invasion of Ukraine has resulted in Russia taking Ukrainian children out of their country so that they can be raised as Russian. The Associated Press documented the grabbing of Ukrainian children in 2022, after which the International Criminal Court said it had issued an arrest warrant for Putin for war crimes, accusing him of personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine. (AP)



Trump

JACKSON, Miss.: Greg Iles, the Mississippi author of the “Natchez Burning” trilogy and other works, has died. He was 65.

Iles died Friday after a decades-long battle with the blood cancer multiple myeloma, his literary agent Dan Conaway posted Saturday on Facebook.

Initially diagnosed with the incurable condition in 1996, he kept his illness private until completing his final novel, “Southern Man,” which was published in 2024.

Iles was born in Germany but moved to Natchez, Mississippi, with his family when he was just three years old and developed a deep connection with the region. Many of his stories are set in Mississippi, including the “Natchez Burning” trilogy, historical fiction suspense novels exploring race and class in the 1960s Jim Crow South. Conaway described Iles as “warm, funny, fearless, and completely sui generis.”

“To be on the other end of the phone as he talked through character and plot, problem-solving on the fly, was to be witness to genius at work, plain and simple,” he wrote on Saturday. “As a writer he fused story-craft, bone-deep humanity, and a growing sense of moral and political responsibility with the ferocious precisions of a whirling dervish or a master watchmaker.”

In March 2011, Iles suffered a ruptured aorta and a partial leg amputation and spent eight days in a medically induced coma after another driver struck his car on Highway 61 near Natchez. He eventually recovered.

Iles performed with the musical group The Rock Bottom Remainders along with popular authors Stephen King, Amy Tan and others. (AP)



ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.: For decades, tens of thousands of people have descended upon Albuquerque for what is billed as North America’s largest powwow, a celebration showcasing Indigenous dancers, musicians and artisans from around the world.

Organizers announced Saturday that 2026 will be the last time the cultural event is held, saying via email and social media that it will end after 43 years without providing details on the decision. “There comes a time,” Gathering of Nations Ltd. said in a statement.

The official poster for the 2026 event features the words “The Last Dance.”

Organizers did not immediately respond to phone and email messages seeking comment.

The New Mexico fairgrounds have hosted the powwow since 2017, but it’s unclear whether the venue would be available for future events given that the state is considering redeveloping the site.

There also has been criticism over the years by some Native Americans who said Gathering of Nations organizers were capitalizing on Indigenous culture. Organizers dismissed those claims, saying the money raised goes toward the expenses of putting on the event. (AP)

While offering spectators a glimpse into Indigenous cultures, large powwows like the one in Albuquerque have become more commercialized events with prize money for dancing and drumming competitions.

For some Native American leaders, it can be a struggle to keep traditional cultural practices and commercial powwows from being lumped into the same category. There have been efforts to focus on promoting smaller powwows that are held in tribal communities.

At Gathering of Nations, the signature event is the grand entry, in which a colorful procession of dancers spirals into the center of an arena. Participants wear elaborate regalia - some with jingling bells and others with feathers - and dance to rhythmic drumming.

The event also features the crowning of Miss Indian World, as well as horse parades in which riders are judged on the craftsmanship of their intricately beaded adornments or feathered headdresses and how well they work with their steeds. (AP)

‘I listen with my heart’

Meet the actor with Down syndrome eyeing Chile’s presidency

SANTIAGO, Chile, Aug 17, (AP): Sebastián Solorza is already a familiar face to many Chileans, having starred in a popular Netflix series and won national acting awards. Now, the 43-year-old actor with Down syndrome wants to enter the race for president in Chile’s national election this year.

Solorza is racing against the clock to gather 35,000 signatures by Aug. 18, a requirement for him to run as an independent candidate. He positions himself as a “point of balance” between the far right and the far left - a fierce ideological battle that dominates Chile’s political scene.

“I listen with my heart,” Solorza told The Associated Press, adding that his condition allows him to offer a softer communication style.

Should he enter the electoral race, his platform will focus on greater inclusion, improved healthcare and education, and enhanced security - a main concern of citizens who have been grappling with an unprecedented crisis of violence in recent years.

Chile will choose its new president on Nov. 16, with the campaign so far defined by the mutual attacks between the two main contestants: The far-right José Antonio Kast, who lost to current leftist president Gabriel Boric in 2021, and Jeannette Jara, the ruling coalition’s communist nominee.

With three months remaining until the election, polls show Kast and Jara vying for the top two spots. This scenario suggests they would face each other in a second-



Actor Sebastián Solorza, who has Down syndrome and aims to run for president as an independent candidate, poses for a photo at his home in Santiago, Chile, July 31, 2025. (AP)

round runoff on Dec. 14.

Solorza argues that his candidacy offers a middle ground between political extremes, while working toward a “more inclusive country.”

“I’ve spent my entire life breaking down prejudices, as an actor, as a worker and as a citizen,” he said last month when announcing his plans to run as an independent candidate. “We all deserve the same opportunities.”

The actor hopes his candidacy will give greater visibil-

ity to people with Down syndrome and other disabilities. While it’s unlikely he will secure the necessary support to run for president - he has collected a little over 600 of the 35,000 signatures required - he sees his political foray as a success.

Solorza keeps a tight schedule, balancing an acting career with a day job at a construction company. In his limited free time, he spends time visiting Congress, talking with members of the Parliament and meeting with constituents to promote his campaign.

On the streets of Huechuraba, a quiet and green neighborhood in the northern part of Chile’s capital, Solorza is often greeted by supporters, fans, and workers from restaurants and cafés where he is a regular. Always smiling, he walks slowly, making time for anyone who wants a photo or a brief chat.

In Valparaíso - a coastal town about 100 kilometers (62 miles) from Santiago - Chileans show up at the Parliament to express their support. “Good luck with the signatures,” one supporter said last week. “Let it be the people who ultimately decide our future.”

Solorza’s political aspirations open the door to “raise the voices of people with Down syndrome” and help to “demystify myths and prejudices still present in society,” said Carolina Gallardo, director of the Chilean nonprofit Down Up Foundation, which offers support and community for families raising children with Down syndrome.

The attempt at a political debut is just the latest in a

long line of barriers Solorza has overcome.

He was born and raised in the 1980s, a time with far less knowledge about Down syndrome than today. His mother, Jenny Solorza, recalls his early years as “very dark,” because doctors never provided a clear diagnosis for their son, leading them to search for information on their own.

“We wanted to do our best and always encouraged him with music,” she said. As a result, “Sebastián has a very broad musical culture, and that’s what he grew up with.”

Solorza attended special schools where he developed his passion for the arts, fueled by music, rather than focusing on traditional academics. At 18, he received a scholarship to join a theater school and began performing regularly on stage and appearing in popular TV talk shows.

He later rose to national fame for his leading role as Tomy in the Chilean thriller “Chromosome 21.” The series, which follows a detective trying to determine if a young man found at a murder scene is a witness or a suspect, ranked second on Netflix in Chile just two days after its release in 2022.

The part earned Solorza the Best New Actor award at the 2023 Caleuche Awards, one of the most important ceremonies in the Chilean film industry.

Despite social media criticism that he lacks preparedness and political experience to run for office, he insists he will not be deterred.

Stage



Jongmin Park as Pogner, (center left), and Michael Sypres, (center right), as Walther, appear during a dress rehearsal of Matthias David’s production of Wagner’s ‘Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg’ at the Bayreuth Festival on July 14, 2025. (AP)

Bayreuth 2025 reimagines Wagner’s classic opera

‘Meistersinger’ spins a technicolor twist

BAYREUTH, Germany, Aug 17, (AP): In Wagner’s home theater, a twist has been added to the classic opera “Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg.”

Instead of Walther joining the guild of master singers and preparing to marry Eva after he wins the song contest, in Bayreuth’s new version she grabs the medal out of the young knight’s hands, returns it to her father, then leads her future husband offstage for a future forsaking the traditions of their family and city.

“No thank you. Let’s go!” explained soprano Christian Nilsson, who is singing Eva in her role debut. “She is a strong girl.” Matthias Davids’ production runs through Aug. 22, emphasizing entertainment with a Hollywood Technicolor look highlighted by an upside-down inflatable cow and a tiny St. Catherine’s Church atop 34 steep steps.

Nilsson’s Eva arrives for the Feast of St. John, encased in flowers with additional blossoms in her headdress, carried atop horizontal poles by four men.

“We were always referring to Eva as the prize cow. We said she is sold like a prize cow,” said Davids, a 63-year-old German director known for his work in theater musicals.

That idea led to the huge heifer, manufactured by a company that makes inflatables and covered with flame retardant coating, according to set designer Andrew Edwards.

Sixtus Beckmesser, the petulant town clerk who loses the song contest to Walther, pulls the plug on the cow, which darkens and sags, during the final ora-

tion defending the imperative of German art by the cobbler Hans Sachs.

While Sachs runs to restore the connection - re-inflating the bovine balloon and restoring light - the young lovers reject him and what he stands for. Townspeople, many wearing conical red caps that give them elf-like looks, shrug their shoulders at the final notes as Sachs and Beckmesser argue upstage.

When “Meistersinger” premiered in 1868, Wagner presented a happy ending in which Walther and Eva joined together and he is admitted to guild. Davids’ ending is less jarring than Kasper Holten’s 2017 Covent Garden staging, set in a men’s club where Eva is horrified Walther would want to join the misogynistic Meistersingers and runs away in tears.

Meaningful

“I saw some productions and I always found them kind of heavy and meaningful,” Davids said.

He read Wagner’s letters about his desire to produce a comedy to earn money and decided to search for lightness and humor while realizing comedy can’t constantly sustain over four hours. Details were worked out during rehearsals, with Davids inspired by the chemistry of Nilsson and tenor Michael Sypres, who also was making his debut as Walther.

Nilsson maintains a beatific beam during Walther’s prize song.

“I really felt like in this production Eva and Walther truly had a fun connection - fun, young, loving

connection - and I just leaned into that and listened to Sypres’ beautiful tenor,” Nilsson said.

Davids’ contrast was sharp from Barrie Kosky’s 2017 production, set partly in Wagner’s home of Wahnfried and the Nuremberg trials courtroom, with Walther and Sachs portrayed as Wagner of various ages.

This time Georg Zeppenfeld was a grandfatherly Sachs in an argyle button through sweater vest. Beckmesser, played fussily but without histrionics by Michael Nagy, had a shimmering silver sweater below a cream Trachten jacket, mirror sunglasses and lute transformed to resemble a heart-shaped electric guitar outlined by pink light that gave him an Elvis Presley look. Jongmin Park, an imposing Pogner as Eva’s father, was attired in a more flowing robe.

Eva wore a traditional dirndl and Walther, an upstart, a punkish T-shirt. Susanne Hubrich costumed various townspeople to resemble German entertainer Thomas Gottschalk, comedian Loriot, fans of the soccer club Kickers Offenbach and former German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

“Ms. Merkel is a Wagner fan and attends the Bayreuth Festival almost every year,” Hubrich said. “I spoke with her after opening night. She was amused.”

Edwards, the set designer, had orange and yellow spears of light that resemble fairgrounds and included architectural details from the Bayreuth auditorium such as circular lamps in sets of three in the church and seats like the ones the audience was viewing from.

NBC brings ordinary contestants to castle

‘The Traitors’ opening its doors to everyday people

LOS ANGELES, Aug 17, (AP): The US version of “The Traitors” has brought a group of public figures to a castle in the Scottish Highlands for a game of deceit, with hundreds of thousands of dollars up for grabs. Now, the Emmy award-winning competition will open its doors to everyday people.

NBC is now casting for a civilian version of the popular Peacock series, the network announced Thursday. The competition reality series, an American spin-off to its British counterpart, had only cast celebrities for its first three seasons, the last of which aired early this year. The new version will bring a group of everyday people together to play what the host, Alan Cumming, called his “treacherous game” in a video announcing the public casting.

Cumming is set to host the new version as well, with production for the show starting in 2026, according to the network. Those who are interested in participating can apply now on the show’s website.

The fourth season of the celebrity version is set to launch next year, and a fifth season has already been confirmed. The star-studded cast for season 4,



Alan Cumming, (center), and the team from ‘The Traitors’ pose with the award for outstanding reality competition program during the 76th Primetime Emmy Awards, Sept. 15, 2024, at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. (AP)

announced in June, includes reality stars from “Love Island,” “Big Brother” and “Survivor.”

“We’re thrilled to be working with NBC to open up the experience to a new group of civilian players, whose stories and strategies will make the gameplay even more unpredictable - and, we hope, even more addictive for viewers,” Stephen Lambert, CEO of Studio Lambert, the producers of both the Peacock and NBC versions, said in a statement.

The show features a group of contestants who participate in a murder mystery game similar to Clue or Mafia. A subset of the cast are secretly labeled as traitors and must work together to eliminate the other contestants, who are considered faithfuls. On the line is a prize fund worth up to \$250,000. If the faithful manage to eliminate all the traitors, then they share the money. But, if a traitor makes it to the end, they take it all.

The British version uses the same location and has used civilian contestants from the start.

Casting everyday people will allow complete strangers to meet for the first time, a “unique opportunity” that “will be an incredible watch,” said Sharon Vuong, the executive vice president of unscripted programming at NBCUniversal Entertainment.

Social media rules tighten

RushTok backlash leads to sorority posting ban

TUSCALOOSA, Ala., Aug 17, (AP): Kylan Darnell became an overnight celebrity in the TikTok niche that documents the glitzy, ritualistic recruitment process for sororities. As a 21-year-old rising senior four years later, she’s taking more of her sorority life offline.

Darnell has until now been the embodiment of RushTok, a week-long marathon that has teens at schools around the country meticulously documenting their efforts to land a cherished spot in a sorority during the colorful, girly and enigmatic recruitment process known as rush week.

Reactions to the content that once catapulted her to fame - depicting her life as a Zeta Tau Alpha member at the University of Alabama - had become so negative that it was affecting her mental health, she said. “This year it was just like a whole different level of hate,” Darnell said.

Citing a need to protect prospects from harassment, many sororities have made similar moves, issuing a de facto ban against talking to the press or posting on social media during rush week at Alabama, where almost 13,000 students participate in the nation’s largest on-campus Greek life.

Sororities

Across the country, rush is typically a 10-day event where “prospective new members” try out sororities through rounds of activities prescribing a strict slate of outfits and etiquette. In the lead-up, girls often submit “social resumes” and letters of recommendation from sorority alums.

Participation often requires an eye-opening price tag.

After spending sometimes tens of thousands of dollars on outfits, makeup and plane tickets, each of this week’s 2,600 recruits paid \$550 to participate. It’s non-refundable if they don’t get picked. If accepted, they’ll pay an average \$8,400 a semester to live in the sorority house, or \$4,100 if they live elsewhere, according to the Alabama Panhellenic Association.

The pressure can be so intense that an industry of consultants now helps girls navigate the often mysterious criteria for landing a desired sorority. Some charge up to \$10,000 for months of services that can begin in high school.

Throughout rush, many events are invite-only. At any point, girls can get a dreaded call informing them they’ve been dropped - that a sorority is no longer interested in letting them join. Matches are finally made on bid day as prospects rank top choices and sororities make offers.

Morgan Cadenhead, now 20, gained such an audience on RushTok despite being dropped that she covered most of her tuition with income from social media. Then came the social cost as she was slammed online for criticizing Greek life. Now the marketing major - featured on Lifetime’s “Sorority Mom’s Guide to Rush!” - said she’s looking for offline work.

Fixation

A fixation with rush was renewed when sororities resumed in-person recruiting after the pandemic.

Social media became flooded with “outfit of the day” and “get ready with me” videos showing sorority members and recruits in well-lit rooms, sometimes flaunting exorbitantly priced designer wear or pieces purchased on Amazon, always precisely curated.

Alabama’s Greek life got attention before, when its traditionally white sororities racially integrated, accepting their first Black members in 2013. Targeted by protests following allegations of racial discrimination, the university agreed with the Justice Department in 2016 to encourage diversity. Today, Black students outside of traditionally Black sororities and fraternities represent 2% of the total Greek membership, the university website says.

Meanwhile, online attention to rush has led to books, a polarizing documentary and the reality television series, widening the appeal of sororities in the South in particular, according to Lorie Stefaneli, a New York City-based consultant who flies to Tuscaloosa each year for rush.

Stefaneli coaches girls from around the country, and about a third of her clients enroll at Alabama. She says many are drawn by the vibrant depictions of sisterhood, showing female friendships that can ensure girls feel seen and supported.

Tech tip: Simple ways to prevent your devices from overheating

LONDON, Aug 17, (AP): The summer holidays are here and many of us will heading off on trips to hot and sunny destinations, and bringing our electronic devices along.

But don’t forget that phones, tablets and other electronics are vulnerable to extreme heat. Southern European nations like Spain, Italy and Greece have been baking under the sun, while forecasters have consistently issued heat advisories across the United States, particularly in the Southeast.

Here’s what device makers and experts say on keeping your electronics cool:

Most electronic devices work best in a specific temperature range. Apple says iPhones and iPads are designed to be used in temperatures between 32-95 degrees Fahrenheit (0-35 degrees Celsius).

A device might change its behavior to deal with extreme temperatures, Apple warns. “Using an iOS or iPadOS device in very hot conditions can permanently shorten battery life.”

Your phone might temporarily warm up if you’re charging wirelessly, downloading big files, streaming high-quality video or doing anything else that requires lots of power or data. Samsung says that’s normal and it won’t affect the performance or battery lifespan.

If your phone gets so hot that it becomes uncomfortable to hold, Samsung recommends that you stop using it.

An overheating iPhone will alert users with a warning message that it needs to cool down before it can be used. Android devices will display a similar message, telling user that the screen will dim, apps will be closed and charging will be paused.

There are things you can do to protect your device from high heat.

Don’t leave it in a car on hot day and don’t leave it in direct sunlight for long.

Apple also warns against using some features when it’s very hot or in direct sunlight for long periods, like GPS navigation when driving, playing a graphics-heavy video game or using the camera.

Google, which makes Pixel Android phones, advises users not to use resource-intensive features or apps while charging.

The best thing you can do in extreme heat is turn off your device completely.

“Even background processes can generate heat,” say experts at British electronics chain Curry’s. “A full shutdown helps it cool faster.”

Remove the case, if your phone or tablet has one, because they can trap heat.

Also keep it out of direct sunlight and put it somewhere cool, like an air-conditioned room or in front of a fan. Be careful about putting it in cool places.

“Never put your device in the fridge or freezer, as condensation can cause water damage,” Curry’s says.

Senegal tackles maternal deaths

‘Schools for husbands’ aim to save mothers

DAKAR, Senegal, Aug. 17, (AP): On a recent evening in Senegal’s capital of Dakar, an imam named Ibrahima Diane explained to a group of men why they should be more involved in household chores.

“The Prophet himself says a man who does not help support his wife and children is not a good Muslim,” the 53-year-old said, as he described bathing his baby and helping his wife with other duties.

Some of the 14 men chuckled, not quite sold. Others applauded.

Diane was taking part in a “school for husbands,” a United Nations-backed initiative where respected male community members learn about “positive masculinity” in health and social issues and promote them in their communities.

In Senegal, as in many other West African countries with large rural or conservative populations, men often have the final say in major household decisions, including ones related to health.

Women may need their permission for life-changing decisions on accessing family planning or other reproductive health services, along with hospital deliveries or prenatal care.

Following his sessions at the school for husbands, Diane regularly holds sermons during Friday prayers where he discusses issues around gender and reproductive health, from gender-based violence to fighting stigma around HIV.

“Many women appreciate my sermons,” he said. “They say their husbands’ behavior changed since they attended them.” He said some men have told him the sermons inspired them to become more caring husbands and fathers.

Habib Diallo, a 60-year-old former army commando, said attending the sermons and discussions with the imam taught him about the risks of home births.

“When my son’s wife was pregnant, I encouraged him to take her to the hospital for the delivery,” Diallo said. “At first, he was hesitant. He worried about the cost and didn’t trust the hospital. But when I explained how much safer it would be for both his wife and the baby, he agreed.”

The program launched in Senegal in 2011 but in recent years has caught the attention of the Ministry of Women, Family, Gender and Child Protection, which sees it an effective strategy to combat maternal and infant mortality.

“Without men’s involvement, attitudes around maternal health won’t change,” said 54-year-old Aida Diouf, a female health worker who collaborates with the program. Many husbands prefer their wives not be treated by male health workers, she said.

The classes for husbands follow similar efforts in other African countries, particularly Niger, Togo, and Burkina Faso, where the United Nations Population Fund says it improved women’s access to reproductive health services by increasing male involvement, growing the use of contraceptives by both men and women and expanding access to prenatal care and skilled birth attendants.

Discussions for men also have focused on girls’ rights, equality and the harmful effects of female genital mutilation.

The program now operates over 20 schools in Senegal, and over 300 men have been trained.

In some communities, men who once enforced patriarchal norms now promote gender equality, which has led to a reduction in the number of forced marriages and more acceptance of family planning, according to Senegal’s ministry of gender.

Men join the groups after being recruited based on trust, leadership and commitment. Candidates must be married, respected locally and supportive of women’s health and rights.

After training, the men act as peer educators, visiting homes and hosting informal talks.

“My husband used to not do much around the house, just bark orders. Now he actually cooks and helps out with daily tasks,” said Khary Ndeye, 52.

While maternal and infant deaths in Senegal have declined over the past decade, experts say it still has a long way to go. It recorded 237 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births in 2023, while 21 newborns out of every 1,000 died within their first month. The U.N. globally wants to reduce maternal deaths to 70 deaths per 100,000 live births and newborn deaths to under 12 per 1,000 by 2030.

One key problem was that many women have been giving birth at home, said El Hadj Malick, one of the Senegal program’s coordinators.



A photo from the Ministry of Health’s awareness campaign on the risks of multiple medications, launched under the slogan ‘Health through Balanced Medication.’

Awareness raised on safe medication use

MoH launches campaign on polypharmacy risks

KUWAIT, Aug 17, (KUNA): Ministry of Health, represented by the Elderly Health Services Department, launched on Sunday an awareness campaign on the risks of polypharmacy.

The campaign, running from August 17 to 21, aims to raise awareness among the elderly and their caregivers on the importance of safe and balanced medication use.

Events are being held across several venues, starting today at Al-Assima Mall from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm local-time, Monday at the Al-Oyon Polyclinic from 09:00 am to 12:00 pm, Tuesday at Jabriya Health Center from 09:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Activities will proceed Wednesday at Bayan Health Center and conclude on Thursday at Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital from 09:00 am to 12:00 pm.

The initiative is part of the ministry’s efforts to enhance community awareness on the dangers of multiple medication use, especially among seniors, and to encourage them to regularly review their medications with experts.

1m women, girls in Gaza at risk of starvation: UN

Gaza woman evacuated to Italy in a ‘state of severe deterioration’ dies

MADRID, Aug 17, (Agencies): A 20-year old Palestinian woman described as being in a “state of severe physical deterioration” has died after being transferred to Italy for treatment, the hospital said Saturday.

The patient was admitted to Pisa University Hospital late Wednesday and died on Friday. She was removed from the Gaza Strip as part of a humanitarian mission and arrived with a “with a very complex, compromised clinical picture,” according to the hospital.

She died after entering a respiratory crisis and subsequently going into cardiac arrest, it said in a statement.

Hospital staff had performed tests and started supportive therapy before she died, the statement said.

The woman, named by Italian media as Marah Abu Zuhri, had arrived in Italy with her mother.

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said almost 120 Palestinians - 31 patients and their families - had been flown to Rome, Milan and Pisa on three planes.

In a post on X, Tajani said that it was the 14th medical evacuation of Palestinians that Italy had conducted since January 2024, and the largest.

The hospital did not specify whether the woman had suffered from malnutrition, but said that she had arrived in a “state of severe physical deterioration.”

Eugenio Giani, leader of the Tuscan region, expressed his condolences Saturday for the woman’s death.

Earlier in the week, United Nations spokesman Stephane Dujarric said that starvation and malnutrition in Gaza were at their highest levels since the Israel-Hamas war began.

The U.N. says nearly 12,000 children under 5 were found to have acute



Palestinian children and their families evacuated from Gaza arrive at Rome’s Ciampino military airport, Thursday, Aug. 14. (AP)

malnutrition in July - including more than 2,500 with severe malnutrition, the most dangerous level. The World Health Organization says the numbers are likely an undercount.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last month no one in Gaza is starving. “There is no policy of starvation in Gaza, and there is no starvation in Gaza,” he said.

U.S. President Donald Trump responded to Netanyahu’s claim by noting the images emerging of emaciated people. “I don’t know,” Trump said when asked if he agreed with the Israeli leader’s comment. “I mean, based on television, I would say not particularly because those children look very hungry.”

Over the past two weeks, Israel has allowed around triple the amount of food into Gaza than what had been entering since late May.

That was after two and a half months when Israel barred all food, medicine and other supplies, saying it was to pressure Hamas to release hostages taken during its October 2023 attack that launched the war.

One million women and girls are facing mass starvation, violence, and abuse in Gaza, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said Saturday on social media platform X.

“Hunger is spreading fast in Gaza ... Women and girls are forced to adopt increasingly dangerous survival strategies like venturing out in search of food and water at the extreme risk of being killed,” UNRWA said.

It urged lifting the Israeli blockade on Gaza, home to more than 2 million people, and bringing in humanitarian aid “at scale.”

4th death

Kellogg cereals to go dye-free

NEW YORK, Aug. 17, (AP): WK Kellogg Co. plans to remove artificial dyes from its breakfast cereals in the next two and a half years, according to the company and the attorney general of Texas. The maker of Froot Loops and Apple Jacks gave the timeline as US food producers face increasing pressure from the US government and consumers to phase out synthetic colorings from their products.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said Wednesday that Kellogg had signed an agreement assuring his office that the Michigan-based company would “permanently remove toxic dyes” from its cereals by the end of 2027.

Paxton launched an investigation earlier this year into whether Kellogg violated state consumer protection laws by continuing to use blue, red, yellow, green, and orange artificial dyes. Around the same time, US health officials said that they would urge foodmakers to voluntarily work toward removing petroleum-based colors.

Both Kellogg and General Mills, another major US cereal maker, said they would. General Mills later joined Kraft Heinz, Nestle, Smuckers and some other food manufacturers in announcing target dates for making all their products without artificial dyes.

But Paxton’s office said Kellogg was the first to sign a “legally binding” agreement. “Following months of investigating and negotiating, I’m proud to officially say Kellogg’s will stop putting these unhealthy ingredients in its cereals,” the attorney general said in a statement.

Details about the terms of the agreement Kellogg signed, which is legally known as an assurance of voluntary compliance, were not immediately clear. The company did not comment on it directly when reached by The Associated Press on Thursday but said it appreciates “the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Texas AG’s office and share their focus on health and wellness.”

Kellogg also pointed to its earlier commitment to phase out FD&C dyes, which are synthetic additives that the US Food and Drug Administration approved for use in food, drugs and cosmetics. It said it already planned to stop launching new products with the dyes in January.

Legionnaires: A fourth person has died in connection with a Legionnaires’ disease outbreak in New York City, health officials disclosed Thursday as they revealed that some cooling towers that tested positive for the bacteria are in city-run buildings.

The outbreak in Central Harlem has sickened dozens since it began in late July. Seventeen people were hospitalized as of Thursday, according to the health department.

The bacteria that causes Legionnaires’ disease had been discovered in 12 cooling towers on 10 buildings, including a city-run hospital and sexual health clinic, health officials said. Remediation efforts have been completed on 11 of the cooling towers, with the final tower’s remediation required to be completed Friday.

Legionnaires’ disease is a type of pneumonia that is caused by Legionella bacteria, which grow in warm water and spread through building water systems. The city’s outbreak has been linked to cooling towers, which use water and a fan to cool buildings.

Phthalates common

Pregnancy exposure to plastics not linked to preterm delivery

CANBERRA, Aug 17, (Xinhua): An Australian study found common plastic chemicals exposure in pregnancy does not raise preterm birth risk, challenging earlier global research.

Phthalates, found in food packaging and personal care items, are endocrine disruptors previously linked to shorter pregnancies and higher preterm birth rates, according to a statement released Friday by the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI).

SAHMRI scientists tested urine from 605 pregnant women at 22-26 weeks for 13 phthalate metabolites as part of the national ORIP omega-3 pregnancy trial.

Published in BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth in London, the study found phthalates in 99 percent of the participants, but no link to gestation length or preterm birth.

“Phthalates were found in almost every single woman in our study, they are extremely common in the modern environment,” said lead researcher Karen Best from SAHMRI and Australia’s University of Adelaide.

The findings offered “reassuring” Australian-specific data on gestation and preterm birth, but Best cautioned that phthalates may still pose other health risks not assessed in the study.

The study also noted higher phthalate levels among women with lower incomes and education levels, those with higher body mass index, and those who smoked before pregnancy.

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Debut delight as Díaz helps Bayern win Supercup

Wolfsburg routs Hemelingen in German Cup

BERLIN, Aug 17, (AP): Luis Díaz scored and won a title on his Bayern Munich debut after a 2-1 win over Stuttgart in the German Supercup.

Harry Kane also scored for the Bundesliga champion to win the least important trophy of the season, opening the scoring in the 18th minute when the ball dropped kindly for him to shoot inside the left post.

“To start with, a trophy is the most important thing,” Kane said after winning just his second career team title. The Bundesliga in May was his first.

Bayern dominated the early stages, but Stuttgart fought back with Nick Woltemade drawing a good save from Manuel Neuer.

Woltemade was and possibly still is a summer transfer target for Bayern. The clubs have so far been unable to agree on a fee despite the player’s openness to the move.

“The file is closed,” Stuttgart chief executive Alexander Wehrle said before the game.

Díaz joined Bayern from Liverpool last month and remains the club’s biggest deal of the off-season.

Neuer produced an outstanding reflex save to deny Jamie Leweling two minutes before Díaz scored in the 77th when Leweling was receiving off-field treatment after clashing knees with Bayern’s Sacha Boey.

“Undoubtedly painful, but still, and perhaps unpopular, but he needs to feel the pain on the field and not two meters away from it,” Stuttgart coach Sebastian Hoeneß said.

Leweling recovered and headed Stuttgart’s answer in stoppage time.

It’s the fourth year that German soccer officials have staged what was the traditional curtain-raiser for the season on the same weekend as the first round of the German Cup, forcing the participants to postpone their cup games.

Stuttgart starts its title defense at Eintracht Braunschweig on Aug.



Bayern’s goalkeeper Manuel Neuer celebrates with teammates after winning the German Supercup final soccer match between VfB Stuttgart and Bayern Munich in Stuttgart, Germany. (AP)

26 with Bayern playing third-division side Wehen Wiesbaden the following day.

Wolfsburg routed fifth-tier SV Hemelingen 9-0 in the first round of the German Cup, and other Bundesliga teams also enjoyed big wins over lower-league opposition.

Two-time champion Leipzig

twice came from behind to beat fourth-tier SV Sandhausen 4-2 with new signings Ezechiel Banzuzi and Yan Diomande scoring.

Heidenheim won at 10-man fourth-tier Bahlhagen SC 5-0, Hoffenheim won at third-division Hansa Rostock 4-0, and Freiburg won at fourth-tier club Sportfreunde Lotte 2-0.

Hamburger SV, which clinched its return to the Bundesliga last season, survived a scare at fifth-tier Pirmasens, equalizing late to send the match to extra time, where Ransford-Yeboah Königsdörffer headed the winner for 2-1.

Königsdörffer was playing for Hamburg only because a proposed

early August move to Nice broke down after his medical check with the French team.

Bochum also needed a late goal to level before prevailing at nine-man Dynamo Berlin 3-1.

St. Pauli needed penalties to get past fourth-tier Hamburg rival Eintracht Norderstedt. In contrast, fourth-tier Bavarian team FV

Illertissen upset Miroslav Klose’s Nuremberg by winning 6-5 on penalties after their game ended 3-3 with extra time.

Also, second-division side Darmstadt won 2-1 at fourth-tier Lübeck, and third-division Energie Cottbus won 1-0 to upset Hannover, which is playing in the division above.

Kuwait Club, Al-Sulaibikhat tune up for Arab Handball Championship in Bosnia

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Kuwait Club kicked off its training camp in Bosnia as it prepares to defend its title at the 40th Arab Handball Championship for League and Cup-winning Clubs, scheduled from September 12 to 22.

The delegation is led by First Team Director Samih Al-Hajri and includes Algerian head coach Saeed Hijazi, administrative and medical staff, and 20 players, featuring professionals Qatari Francis Marzo, Montenegrin Vladan Lipova, and Portu-



Kuwait Club, Al-Sulaibikhat players prepare for the championship.

guese Victor Ituriza. The camp includes intensive morning and evening training sessions and several friendly matches.

The Arab Handball Federation confirmed the participating clubs: Kuwait Club, Kazma, Al-Sulaibikhat, Al-Ahly (Egypt), Al-Hashd Al-Riyadi (Iraq), Al-Taliaa and Al-Nawaer (Syria), and Al-Ahly (Qatar).

Kuwait Club enters the tournament as the reigning champion, having defeated Zamalek in the 2023 final in Dammam and Al-Salmiya in last year’s final.

Meanwhile, Al-Sulaibikhat is also training in Bosnia until August 28, playing three

friendly matches to gear up for both the Arab Championship and the Premier League. The delegation includes Board Member Jaber Sanaseri, First Team Manager Hussein Siwan, Supervisor Dawood Dashti, national coach Waleed Salmeen, his assistant Nabil Taleb, goalkeeper coach Ahmed Abdel-Latif, and 20 players, including French-Algerian Nouri Ben Halima and Portuguese Gonzalo Ribery.

In other news, Yarmouk Club has signed former Al-Nasr professional Mahmoud Naaman to strengthen its first-team squad for the upcoming season.

Kuwait Club adds American stars Vassell, Moore, extends Jones deal

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Kuwait Club has strengthened its first basketball team for the new season by signing American players Keishawn Vassell and Charlie Moore, while renewing the contract of fellow American Jamal Jones for another year.

Vassell, a 2.6-meter center with experience in multiple international leagues, is expected to be a major asset as Kuwait Club aims to defend its league and cup titles. Moore, a point guard who previously played for Al-Ahly Tripoli in Libya, brings leadership on the court and strong outside shooting skills.

Jamal Jones joined the team late last season and played a key role in securing both the league and cup championships, earning him a contract extension.

On the local front, Kuwait released Hussein Al-Khabaz and Abdulrahman Al-Jum’ah after their contracts expired, while signing Mohamed Al-



In this file photo, Jamal Jones shoots past Yarmouk player.

Dakhil from Al-Qadisiya.

The team will hold a 10-day overseas training camp in Serbia starting in early September, featuring several friendly matches to prepare for the new season.

China sweeps breaking titles

US retains women’s softball title at World Games

CHENGDU, Aug 17, (Xinhua): The United States retained the title with a 5-0 victory over Chinese Taipei in the women’s softball final at the Chengdu World Games on Sunday.

The U.S. took control early as Amanda Mazur walked and Bubba Nickles singled to put runners on the corners. Sj Jaquish then hit a 3-run homer to left field, driving in Mazur and Nickles.

Chinese Taipei was unable to respond, with Chen Chia-Yi striking out and Lin Chih-Ying and Chiang Ting-En grounding out. The U.S. added two more runs in the seventh inning and closed out the win.

In the bronze medal game, Japan defeated Canada 10-0 in four innings.

Rain on Saturday forced the semifinals to be played early Sunday. In a 10-inning contest, the U.S. edged Japan 7-6 to advance to the gold medal game, while Chinese Taipei secured its spot in the final with a 6-4 win over Canada.

China swept both titles of breaking at The World Games 2025 at the Chengbei Gymnasium as Guo Pu (B-Girl Royal) and Qi Xiangyu (B-Boy Lithe-ing) clinched the women’s and men’s gold medals respectively.

The men’s semifinals featured three Japanese dancers and Lithe-ing as the lone Chinese. The 20-year-old defeated Hiroto Ono (B-Boy Hiro10) before overcoming Isshin Hishikawa (B-Boy Issin) in the final, with the home crowd on their feet throughout the contest, cheering passionately for the local favorite.

Paris Olympic bronze medalist Shigeyuki Nakarai (B-Boy Shigekix) outperformed Hiro10 in an all-Japanese bronze medal clash.

Last year at the Paris Olympics, he was drawn into a “Group of Death”



Players of the United States celebrate a home run during the Softball Women’s Finals Gold Medal Game between Chinese Taipei and the United States at the World Games 2025 in Chengdu, southwest China’s Sichuan Province. (Xinhua)

with Shigekix and Hiro10, and failed to advance to the knockout stage, leaving the battle field in tears. After a year of adjustment and growth, he has become more composed and mature - this time standing on top of the podium as champion.

The triumph marked the first title for a Chinese B-Boy at a multi-sport event.

In the women’s event, China showed even greater dominance as Royal faced her national teammate Liu Qingyi (B-Girl 671) in the final, winning in three rounds to claim the gold.

The 16-year-old prodigy has been one of the hottest names in women’s breaking over the past half year. Earlier this year, Royal rose to prominence by winning the FISE World Series in Montpellier, France, and

went on to capture back-to-back titles at the Asian Youth Championships and the Asian Championships.

By the time she stepped onto the World Games stage in Chengdu, Royal had already established herself as one of the world’s top B-Girls.

In the semifinals, Royal defeated France’s Sya Dembele (B-Girl Syssy), while 671 overcame Paris Olympic silver medalist Dominika Banevich of Lithuania (B-Girl Nicka) in a rematch of last year’s Olympic semifinal.

This time 671 prevailed to reach the final, while Nicka later beat Syssy in the bronze medal contest.

It was only the second time that breaking featured at a World Games. While China had just one semifinalist - 671 - in Birmingham in 2022, this time three Chinese dancers reached

the semifinals, bringing home two golds and one silver for a breakthrough performance.

France’s Mounir Biba, a legendary B-Boy and multiple champion at international events including the Red Bull BC One, took charge as head coach of the Chinese national team in early 2022. At that time, few Chinese dancers were able to advance from the group stage at major world competitions.

“It’s amazing to see how far we’ve come in such a short time,” Biba said. “Two gold medals here, an all-Chinese final for the B-girls, and our first-ever men’s title - this is a fantastic moment for the team.” “When I started, Chinese breaking was almost unknown internationally,” he noted. “Now we have an Olympic bronze, Asian Games gold, and two World Games golds and a silver. In my 30 years as a B-boy, I’ve never seen a country progress so fast.” “The atmosphere in Chengdu showed how much breaking is growing in China,” Biba added. “With so many young dancers and so much passion, I believe the next 10 to 15 years will be even brighter for us.” Despite breaking’s absence from the Los Angeles 2028 after making its Olympic debut in Paris, the sport will continue to feature at major multi-sport events such as The World Games, the Asian Games and the Youth Olympic Games.

For Biba and his Chinese B-Boys and B-Girls, the World Games triumph in Chengdu is not an end, but a new beginning.

Zhang Hao secured China’s second gold medal in roller sports at The World Games, winning the men’s classic slalom in inline freestyle skating on Sunday before teammate Zhu Siyi clinched the women’s title.

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NEWS



Fireworks are seen during the closing ceremony of the World Games 2025 in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province. (Xinhua)

Sports

Kuwait storms past Palestine at Arab Championship



Kuwait players celebrate victory over Palestine.

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

AMMAN, Aug 17: Kuwait cruised past Palestine with a 3-0 victory (25-20, 25-14, 25-20) in its Group B opener at the 17th Arab U-18 Volleyball Championship, held in Amman, Jordan, and running through August 26.

The team wraps up the group stage tomorrow against Iraq. Elsewhere in Group B, Bahrain takes on Iraq today, while Group A features matchups

between Egypt and Lebanon, and Jordan against Libya.

Under the tournament format, all teams advance to the quarterfinals. The top seed from Group A will play the fourth seed from Group B, while the second from Group B faces the third from Group A. Similarly, the Group B leader meets the fourth from Group A, and the second from Group A takes on the third from Group B.

Kuwait prepared for the tournament with a training camp in Cairo, where it played five friendlies against Egyptian youth teams, winning two matches and losing three.

Wallabies stun Springboks at Ellis Park from 22-0 down

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 17, (AP): Australia topped South Africa at Ellis Park for the first time in 62 years with a sensational 38-22 comeback win from 22-0 down in the Rugby Championship opener.

The Wallabies scored a remarkable six straight tries against the double world champion and Rugby Championship titleholder to earn one of their greatest wins in the professional era.

Australia came to the highveld battle-hardened from the narrow home series loss to the British and Irish Lions, but its record in South Africa made it an obvious underdog. It hadn't won in South Africa since 2011 or at Ellis Park since 1963.

The Springboks underlined their credentials by sprinting to 22-0 in 17 minutes with three well-made tries.

But they never scored again.

Australia didn't panic, absorbed the blows, tightened its defense and watched a Springboks side packed with 18 World Cup winners surprisingly wobble as the pressure was returned.

The Wallabies, down 22-5 at half-time, didn't go ahead until the 64th minute through captain Harry Wilson's second try and last act of the match. They added two more tries to finish the stronger team at an altitude in which they have traditionally struggled for decades. This was only their second ever win over the Boks at their spiritual home in 92 years.

"At 22-0 down, there was real courage again from the players," Wallabies coach Joe Schmidt told broadcaster SuperSport. "We were forced to take a few risks and there were a few lucky bounces for us, so we are not going to get too carried away."

"At the same time I am incredibly proud of the group. I am realistic about getting a little bit of luck, but delighted we came back. Nineteen-sixty-three was a long time ago so the players are delighted."

Following the heaviest defeat by the Springboks since Rassie Erasmus took charge in 2018, the coach admitted



South Africa's Eben Etzebeth, front, is tackled by Australia's Tom Hooper during a rugby championship test match between South Africa and Australia, at Ellis Park stadium in Johannesburg, South Africa. (AP)

he was embarrassed to go to the press conference.

"We were really awful," he said. "They beat us in most departments. We didn't scrum them, they beat us in the lineouts, and they bullied us at the breakdown after Siya Kolisi went off and Marco van Staden had to go off for an HIA."

"Tactically, we totally overplayed every time we thought something was on. I don't think they tactically outsmarted us but they physically dominated us, and the interesting thing is that the longer the game went on they were supposed to struggle but it just shows what Joe Schmidt is building there."

Wilson opened the second half scoring a soft try from replacement prop Angus Bell's pass into a gap 25 meters out.

Len Ikitau limped off and Australia pitched the midfield with Andrew Kellaway, and put flyhalf backup Tane Edmed on the wing for the injured Dylan Pietsch.

Palace frustrates Chelsea in Stamford Bridge draw



Nottingham Forest's Dan Ndoye, left, and Brentford's Rico Henry battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Nottingham Forest and Brentford at City Ground, Nottingham, England. (AP)

Ndoye scores on debut, Forest off to winning start

LONDON, Aug 17, (AP): Chelsea was held to a 0-0 draw by Crystal Palace in the Premier League on Sunday in the team's first competitive match as the club world champion.

A month after stunning Paris Saint-Germain in the Club World Cup final, Chelsea toiled in its league opener at Stamford Bridge after a short preseason because of its exertions in the United States.

Nottingham Forest, meanwhile, hit the ground running with a 3-1 win over Brentford, with striker Chris Wood - the team's top scorer last season with 20 goals - netting twice in the first half, either side of a goal on debut by Dan Ndoye.

Eberechi Eze has been heavily linked with a move to Tottenham, so the England midfielder might have been making his final appearance for Palace. He almost marked it with a goal.

In the 13th minute, Eze smashed a direct free kick past Chelsea goalkeeper Robert Sanchez from the edge of the area, but the goal was ruled out after a video review spotted an infringement

by Palace captain Marc Guehi as he attempted to push aside Chelsea's Moises Caicedo in the defensive wall.

The Premier League confirmed Guehi was standing less than one meter (yard) from the wall as the shot was taken, which is not allowed. Joao Pedro and Cole Palmer, stars for Chelsea in the Club World Cup, were quiet.

The hosts lacked intensity because they've only been back in training for a couple of weeks, while Palace has had a long preseason and was coming off beating Liverpool on penalties in the Community Shield last weekend.

Chris Wood started quickly last season in the best goalscoring top-flight campaign of his career, and he needed just five minutes to open his account this time round, making the most of a poor clearance at a corner to give Forest the lead against Brentford.

Wood headed in a second in the 42nd minute, and Wood rounded the goalkeeper in first-half stoppage time to stroke in a third.

Igor Thiago converted a late penalty for a consolation for Brentford, which has sold star forward Bryan Mbeumo to Manchester United, and didn't play Yoane Wissa, a striker linked with a move to Newcastle.

All matches on Sunday featured a period of silence before kickoff as a tribute to Diogo Jota and Andre Silva, the brothers who were killed in a car crash in Spain last month. Jota was a player for Liverpool at the time.



Chelsea's goalkeeper Robert Sanchez punches the ball over Crystal Palace's Marc Guehi during the Premier League soccer match between Chelsea and Crystal Palace in London. (AP)

Mallorca crumbles under Barcelona firepower

Barca opens title defense with statement win

MADRID, Aug 17, (AP): Barcelona began the defense of its La Liga title with a comfortable 3-0 win at Mallorca, scoring early and taking advantage of two first-half red cards for the host on Saturday.

Raphinha and Lamine Yamal, who led Barcelona's prolific attack last season, needed only seven minutes to impress again. Yamal's curling cross found Raphinha by the far post, and the Brazil forward headed in from close range.

Ferran Torres' shot from outside the area in the 23rd was a goal that drew complaints from Mallorca because one of its players was on the ground after being hit by the ball in the head in the buildup.

Some Mallorca players stopped playing after teammate Antonio Raïllo went down, but the referee allowed play to continue. Mallorca immediately complained after Ferran scored.

"The ball hit my head and I got dizzy. I tried to get up, and I couldn't. The referee should have stopped the game," Raïllo said. "After that, everything was hard, and the game got out of control."

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said he understood why Mallorca was upset with how the goal developed.

"Maybe I would not be happy," Flick said. "But in the end I always say to my team, 'Until the referee stops the match, you have to continue.'"

Raïllo noted that Torres said he shot the ball only because he thought the game was stopping.

Mallorca coach Jagoba Arrasate said it should be protocol to immediately stop play if someone gets hit in the head, as happened to Raïllo.

"The fourth official told the referee to stop the game, I don't know why he didn't," Arrasate said. "Then there were the red cards, and there was no more match after that. With



Mallorca's Pablo Torre, left, and Barcelona's Pedri fight for the ball during the La Liga soccer match between Mallorca and Barcelona in Mallorca, Spain. (AP)

nine players, it was impossible."

The host went a man down 10 minutes later when Manu Morlanes was sent off for a second yellow card for fouling Yamal on the run. His first yellow was for protesting Barcelona's second goal.

The second red card in the 39th came from Mallorca striker Vedat Muriqi, who hit the head of Barcelona goalkeeper Joan Garcia with his left foot while reaching up for a high ball. The referee changed the card from yellow to red after a video review.

Yamal made it 3-0 in second-half stoppage time by hitting the top corner.

Barcelona, which won the league last season after scoring 102 goals, was without veteran striker Robert Lewandowski because of an injury.

Newly signed forward Marcus Rashford went in as a substitute in the 69th minute.

Garcia didn't have to work much in his Barcelona debut after being signed in the offseason in a transfer from city rival Espanyol.

Regular starting goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen is out after undergoing lower back surgery, and Garcia started ahead of Wojciech Szczesny and Iñaki Peña, who replaced Ter Stegen last season.

Also debuting for Barcelona was 18-year-old defender Jofre Torrents.

Valencia was held to 1-1 by visiting Real Sociedad, with Diego López putting the home team ahead in the 53rd and Takefusa Kubo equalizing for Sociedad three minutes later.

Alaves opened with a 2-1 home victory over promoted Levante thanks to Nahuel Tenaglia's stoppage-time winner.

Rayo Vallecano won at Girona 3-1, and Villarreal defeated promoted Oviedo 2-0.

Robertson wins Saudi Snooker Masters title

JEDDAH, Aug 17, (Xinhua): Australia's Neil Robertson edged seven-time world champion Ronnie O'Sullivan 10-9 in a dramatic final on Saturday night to claim the Saudi Arabia Snooker Masters title in Jeddah.

Robertson took control early, building a 6-2 lead after the first session. He extended the advantage to 7-2 in the second session and appeared firmly in command.

O'Sullivan, who had made two 147 maximum breaks the previous day, rallied with five straight frames featuring breaks of more than 50 to level the match at 7-7.

Robertson responded in the 15th frame with a break of 75 to regain the lead, but O'Sullivan captured the next two frames to move 9-8 ahead and reach match point.

Refusing to concede, Robertson fired a century break to force a decider. In the final frame, he capitalized on an O'Sullivan error to seal the victory.

"I have had to answer a lot of questions like whether I can still beat someone like Ronnie in a final of this magnitude. To beat him here with so much on the line, it's definitely my best win," Robertson said after the match.

The victory marked Robertson's 26th career ranking title, tying Mark Williams for sixth on the all-time list. Along with the 500,000 pounds (about 677,000 U.S. dollars) winner's prize, the Australian also rose to world No. 3 in the rankings.