



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

YOUR Excellency, Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, I would like to present these facts to you, fully confident that you will be concerned about them. These facts are regarding the abuse that targeted some press and printing houses due to the interference of some unrighteous people.

Over the last 30 years, Dar Al-Seyassah and other printing houses have been printing large quantities of textbooks for the Ministry of Education. In recent years, we noticed some influential figures within the

ministry – who are not part of its staff – interfering in tenders and taking shares through illegal means despite the fact that their publishing houses are of poor quality and outdated.

Some of these printing houses are nothing more than a paper cutting machine, which they call 'printing houses'. Tenders are managed in a way that they are settled for certain parties although these parties do not meet the conditions and lack the required capabilities.

Recently, we were awarded a tender as usual, along with three other printing presses – all of which possess the technical capabilities and modern printing specifications. However, we have been excluded from executing the tenders due to the interference of a certain figure who, for the first time, won half of the tenders floated by the ministry valued at more than KD3 million even if his printing house lacks the technical and printing capabilities and advanced technology.

When we inquired about the reasons behind excluding us from the tenders, we were told that a court ruling was issued against us in some labor or banking case.

So, I want to know if any of the other companies executing public projects have been dismissed for being embroiled in labor cases, banking disputes or mortgage issues. Is the agency that rejected us a judicial body or court?

The man who won the tenders provides suspicious consultations to some officials with the aim of obtaining public tenders. In case the illegal procedures are exposed, he simply dodges responsibility and dumps the charges on the concerned officials. He then looks for new victims.

We will not hide from you, Your Excellency, the Minister. We asked lawyers if the issuance of a court ruling in labor cases or mortgages leads to the suspension of a company. The answer was: They have

no right to suspend work or tenders, because they are not authorized to execute judicial rulings.

Strangely, a colleague in one of the printing houses was excluded from the tender, just because a court ruling was issued obliging him to pay KD1 court fee.

The truth is that newspapers, including Al-Seyassah daily, are often involved in court cases concerning labor, published articles or stories. Nevertheless, this does not allow any irrelevant agency to interfere even after the issuance of the court rulings. The Ministry of Justice is the only institution in charge of enforcing court rulings.

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# Kuwait breaks 'poison' chain

Liquor lairs, drug dens hit hard

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: The Drug Control General Department (DCGD) in the Interior Ministry – under the leadership of DCGD Director Brigadier General Mohammad Qabazard and Deputy Director Brigadier General Sheikh Hamad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, and with the support of First Deputy Prime Min-

ister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah – is confronting the narcotic threat with determination, leading to unprecedented security accomplishments in June, July and August 2025.

Security sources informed the newspaper that these extensive efforts thwarted the smuggling and production of massive quantities of narcotics and alcohol valued at millions of Kuwaiti dinars.

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Photo by Samer Shiher

Crowds gather at Marina Beach on a hot Friday, drawn like magnets to the ocean's refreshing refuge.

## KUWAIT, SAUDI, G.C.C. CALL FOR GAZA LIFELINE

# Gaza City in famine, confirms IPC



Left: Samah Matar poses for a photo with her sons, Yousef, 6, in her arms, and Amir, 4, affected by malnutrition and cerebral palsy, at a U.N.-run school in Gaza City, July 26, 2025. Right: Palestinians struggle to get donated food at a community kitchen in Gaza City, northern Gaza Strip, July 26, 2025. (AP)



## Strikes kill 25 amid hunger crisis

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23, (Agencies): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has followed up with deep concern the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) with famine confirmed in Gaza Strip according to the UN criteria.

The State of Kuwait renews its strong condemnation and denunciation of the policy of starvation, suppression and displacement, adopted by the occupation Israeli forces against the innocent civilians in Gaza.

Such a policy is a blatant breach of the international law and the international humanitarian law, disregards relevant resolutions of the international legitimacy namely the UN Security Council resolutions including the one number 2417 that condemns starving civilians as a combat method in conflicts.

The State of Kuwait stresses on the necessity that

the international community and the UNSC hold the responsibility and allow entry of humanitarian aid urgently to the strip, halt the genocide targeting the brotherly Palestinian people, bring to account the occupation-based power for the crimes it has been committing against humanity.

The Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the Kingdom's deep concern following the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report and the declaration of famine in the Gaza Strip.

In a statement on Friday, the Ministry condemned the genocide crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces against defenseless civilians.

"The Kingdom affirms that the worsening humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza is a direct result of the absence of deterrence and accountability mechanisms for the repeated crimes committed by the Israeli occupation," according to the statement carried by the

Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

"This will remain a stain on the moral standing of the international community, particularly the permanent members of the UN Security Council, unless immediate action is taken to end the famine and stop the genocide and crimes perpetrated by the Israeli occupation against the brotherly Palestinian people," the statement added.

The Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi on Friday underlined the importance of exerting swift pressure on the Israeli occupation to open up crossings for the delivery of aid to besieged Gaza.

In a statement, Al-Budaiwi made his remarks after an official declaration by a UN review committee on famine in Gaza.

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## Newswatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Amiri Diwan on Saturday mourned the demise of **Sheikha Suad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah**, wife of **Sheikh Fadh Al-Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah**, at the age of 74.

The funeral service was to take place on Saturday evening. (KUNA)



**KUWAIT CITY:** The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry on Friday emphatically denounced the recent targeting of World Food Program (WFP) aid convoys in **Sudan** in an unacceptable and

blatant breach of international laws and norms, and humanitarian efforts.

In a press release, the ministry said that the State of Kuwait deplores such criminal acts, underlining that it is essential to adhere to the Jeddah Declaration, which was signed on May 11, 2023, especially regarding safe access to humanitarian aid.

The ministry also reiterated Kuwait's absolute support for regional and international efforts to restore security and stability in Sudan and safeguard its territorial integrity and people's safety. (KUNA)

Surge set to lower prices

## Kuwait waters deliver fresh seafood windfall to markets

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: The seafood markets in the country were witnessing a boom with an unprecedented influx of shrimp and fish this month, considering more than 777 tons of such products were supplied in just 22 days – half of which came from local catch.

This surge happened amid expectations of further supply increases and price drops once the fishing season in territorial waters starts in September.

Statistics from Sharq Fish Market, affiliated with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, show that since the start of the fishing season in economic waters in early August, around 777.3 tons of shrimp and various fish have been supplied to the markets – about 386.9 tons of which were caught locally, accounting for 49.8 percent of the total, while imports reached 390.4 tons or 50.2 percent.



Al-Hamdi

Hamoud Al-Hamdi, Shift A Supervisor at Sharq Fish Market, told the newspaper that the Kuwaiti fishing fleet landed 290.4 tons of local shrimp and 96.5 tons of fish in the first three weeks of this month. He pointed out that the resumption of fishing in territorial waters in early September will boost supply and reduce prices for consumers.

Al-Hamdi added that imports have played a vital role in stabilizing the market over the past period, totaling 390.4 tons – various fish accounted for 82.4 percent (321.6 tons), while imported 'Umm Na'ira' shrimp reached 68.85 tons or 17.6 percent.

Regarding current prices, he disclosed that the price of a basket of Kuwaiti 'Umm Na'ira' shrimp ranged between KD50 and KD60, while a basket of 'Shahamiya' shrimp sells for KD20 to KD35. He said a bag of Kuwaiti 'Zubaidi' costs KD40 to KD130 and a single 'Hamour' (grouper) ranges between KD20 and KD37. He added that prices for other varieties like 'Baloul', 'Sha'oom', 'Sabaity' and 'Muzaizi', also vary.

He went on to say that for imported products, a basket of 'Umm Na'ira' shrimp is priced at KD35 to KD60, between KD30 and KD130 for 'Zubaidi',

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## Lebanon busts bold corset drug scheme

BEIRUT, Aug 23, (KUNA): Lebanese security forces thwarted on Friday an attempt to smuggle 20 kilograms of Captagon drug to Kuwait via the Rafik Hariri International Airport.

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## Do you know him?

THE Saturday Mouse wanted to devour the cheese of a ministry's tenders, so he excluded many bidders and worked hard to be the second highest bidder.

The Saturday Mouse used his influence and hired some women who do not know the law to frame them for corruption.

The minister exposed the Saturday Mouse's movements and an investigation is underway.

Those who escaped managed to get away ... Do you know him?



stc signs a joint cooperation protocol with Kuwait Airways to enhance digital services



KFH signs a strategic partnership with Sakan platform

## Philippines raises OFW domestic workers salary to \$500 from \$400

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) of the Republic of the Philippines issued a circular on the adoption of enhanced reform programs for overseas Filipino domestic workers (OFWs), in line with the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., aimed at protecting the rights, dignity and well-being of workers.

The circular states that the new re-

forms include raising the minimum monthly salary for domestic workers from \$400 to \$500, which should be incorporated in current and new contracts.

It stipulates mandatory annual medical tests for workers to protect their well-being, with agencies and employers bearing the costs of treatment in the event of work-related accidents or illnesses.

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Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	03:57	Asr .....	15:25
Sunrise ..	05:20	Maghrib ..	18:21
Zohr .....	11:51	Isha .....	19:42

# Local

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h.			
By Night: Hot to rather hot with			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	48	34	
Kuwait Airport	47	27	
Abdaly	47	29	
Bubyan	40	22	
Jahra	48	31	
Salmiyah	39	34	
Ahmadi	42	31	
Nuwaisib	44	30	
Wafra	45	28	
Salmiya	43	24	

## KISR seeks to enhance scientific culture, up skills of Kuwaiti youth



Summer course students from KISR visit the Al-Ajairi center.

KUNA photos

By Zahraa Al-Kazemi

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23, (KUNA): The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing students' scientific knowledge through various programs, training courses, and field visits to specialized scientific centers.

"Journey through Time" program is an initiative aiming to spread scientific culture and strengthen the capabilities of Kuwaiti youth, Dr. Sarah Al-Dousari, a researcher at KISR, told KUNA on Thursday.

As part of art of the 46th summer training course, a field visit was organized for students to the Al-Ajairi Scientific Center - one of the most significant scientific centers in the country, Dr. Al-Dousari noted.

During the visit, students received a detailed explanation of the biography of the late astronomer Dr. Saleh Al-Ajairi and learned about the tools he used in his work, thereby expanding their knowledge.

Yousef Al-Ajairi, Director-General of the Center, also spoke to KUNA, emphasizing that such visits enhance students' understanding of astronomy and space sciences, which are vital for those studying astronomy, aviation, and related fields.

He highlighted that the students learned about the history of astronomy in Kuwait, its unique aspects, and the advancements achieved through Dr. Saleh Al-Ajairi's contributions, as well as local and international collaborations to support scientific progress.

During the visit, students were informed about the center's historical and astronomical legacy, including data related to calendars, stars, astronomical phenomena, and bird migration patterns.

On July 27, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research proudly inaugurated its 46th summer training course, welcoming a vibrant cohort of 221 students comprising both young men and women.

This diverse group includes 162 enthusiastic high school students eager to explore scientific concepts alongside 59 university students looking to deepen their knowledge and skills.

The institute highlighted its ongoing commitment to fostering a robust scientific culture and equipping Kuwaiti youth with essential skills that will empower them to contribute meaningfully to the future of their nation.

It serves as a unique platform for discovering talent, fostering scientific thought, and linking theoretical knowledge with practical application in an inspiring research environment.

search environment.

It is important to note that the esteemed astronomer Dr. Saleh Al-Ajairi passed away on February 10, 2022, at the age of 101, after a long career filled with significant contributions to science and astronomy.

He is regarded as a key figure in astronomy in Kuwait and the Arab world. One of his most notable achievements was the establishment of the Al-Ajairi Calendar in 1952, which is recognized for its accuracy and is still printed annually today.

The State of Kuwait has adopted this calendar for its official transactions, and it is published in several Arab and foreign countries.

Additionally, Dr. Al-Ajairi built an astronomical observatory in Kuwait at his own expense in the early 1970s and opened the renowned Al-Ajairi Library in 1973 in the Hawalli area.

Throughout his career, he received numerous awards for his remarkable contributions to the fields of science and astronomy, including an honorary doctorate in science from Kuwait University in 1981, the GCC Medal for Science in 1988, the State Appreciation Award in 2005, and honorary membership in the Arab Union for Space Sciences and Astronomy in 2000, among many other local and regional honors.

## Visitors keep away ... no medical care at gov't hospitals, clinics

Training launched to improve hospital hotel services

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi on Thursday issued a decision excluding foreigners arriving on temporary visas or for the purpose of visiting from health services offered by government hospitals, specialized centers and primary care centers, as such services are for residents only.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Health

explained that the decision is part of a comprehensive health vision aimed at achieving balance between operational efficiency and the improvement of services, ensuring that medical care is granted only to those who truly deserve it.

The ministry affirmed that this step enhances the allocation of medical resources and capabilities to better serve citizens, thereby, contributing to the sustainability of the health system and maintaining the quality of health services in the country.

On the other hand, the ministry organized a training course to improve the quality of hotel services in hospitals.

Assistant Undersecretary for Health Services at the ministry Abdulaziz Al-Tasha sponsored and

attended the training course with the participation of 30 employees from various hospitals.

The ministry revealed in a press statement that the training course aimed to raise the efficiency of employees in following up and implementing laundry contracts by training the concerned health personnel to manage these contracts in a way that ensures a safe, clean and comfortable environment for the patients.

It emphasized that hotel services are an essential component of the patients' experience, contributing to the improvement of the recovery environment and raising the level of satisfaction among patients.

It added that all participants in the training course will be honored in order to raise awareness on the importance of maintaining a safe and comfortable environment in hospitals.

New legislation needed

## 'Women can own real estate through 3 main conditions'

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: The Kuwait Jurists Association organized a real estate discussion panel titled, "Real Estate in the Eyes of Women", to explore real estate ownership as a foundation of family housing and social stability, rather than merely a financial investment.

The discussion also touched on legislation affecting women in real estate, particularly in light of social transformations that have made Kuwaiti families increasingly independent and private.

Iman Al-Hashash, head of the Cultural Committee at the Association, explained that women in Kuwait can acquire property through three main paths: housing care, inheritance and free purchase, and each path involves specific legal considerations. She stated that while Kuwaiti women have access to advanced legal tools for property ownership, more legislation is needed to include some currently excluded groups.

Al-Hashash emphasized that housing care is the most important avenue for Kuwait women to acquire real estate with State support, under the Housing Care Law. Married women — both custodial and non-custodial — are eligible to apply jointly with their husbands, and half of the property is officially registered in their name.

She explained that the recent amendment of the law changed the point of ownership from the electricity connection to the date of the lottery, granting women full rights over their share, including the right to dispose of it after divorce, as they are recognized as joint owners from the moment of the lottery and this right cannot be waived.

Regarding inheritance, she pointed out that under the Islamic Sharia Law in force in Kuwait, a woman — whether a wife,

mother, daughter or sister — has the right to claim her share or to allocate and set it aside. She cannot be compelled to sell by other heirs and can resort to the court if disputes arise or if partners refuse to sell.

In the case of free purchase, Al-Hashash confirmed that Kuwaiti women have full legal capacity to buy real estate in their own name, whether in cash or through loans from Kuwait Credit Bank or commercial banks. She stressed the importance of documenting purchases with official contracts and registering them with the Real Estate Registration Department to safeguard ownership rights.

Arwa Al-Khamis, a member of the Association, addressed the residential real estate challenges faced by divorced women, framing them around three key questions: "Does a divorced woman have the right to remain in the marital home after divorce?" "What happens if the property is jointly owned?" and "If the husband reclaims the property through a new contract, does she regain her housing rights?"

She explained that divorce does not terminate a woman's real estate rights, rather, it can signal the start of greater housing independence if women understand the legal tools available to them, such as housing loans for divorced women or allocations by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare for certain groups. She called for a review of existing legal texts and recent amendments to achieve more gains for women.

Broker Dalal Al-Qaoud confirmed that Kuwaiti women today have real opportunities to enter the real estate market as investors, not just consumers. She pointed out this can be achieved by leveraging personal capital to purchase and rent properties, understanding market trends, and being aware of investment risks. She also addressed the challenges that women face in registering or negotiating real estate, often due to lack of legal knowledge or reliance on relatives or brokers.

She advised women considering investment to consult a legal advisor before purchasing, to understand construction and division conditions, and to ensure all contracts are thoroughly documented.



Al-Hashash

### Other Voices

## Cotton swabs ... cleaning ears

By Ahmad alsarraaf

This is a loose translation of a valuable medical study written by Caroline Graham for The New York Times, which includes the opinions of several of America's most renowned doctors on how to protect and clean the ears.

The first piece of advice, which everyone agreed on, was a warning against inserting any solid objects into the ear, even cotton swabs, whether to clean it or to stop itching!

Although eardrum perforations are "very rare," they can be serious, and when they do occur, cotton swabs are often the culprit.

The danger of inserting cotton swabs into the ear lies in the fact that the wax inside is not an enemy to be removed.

This sticky, sometimes crumbly substance, made up of sebum, sweat and dead skin cells, protects the delicate inner ear by preventing irritants such as dirt, dust, bacteria and fungi from entering the ear and helps regulate its moisture.

In addition, earwax helps remove dead skin cells that have fallen from the inner ear. When you shower or move your jaw while talking or chewing, earwax carries dead skin cells from deep within the ear canal to the outer ear, where it is eventually pushed out.

Dr. Hye Oke, an inner ear specialist at Columbia University, says that trying to remove earwax with cotton swabs can irritate the delicate skin of the inner ear.

Although cotton swabs appear soft, they are actually quite rough, and their roughness can cause the ear to produce more wax to protect the skin, which is now more vulnerable to damage.

These swabs can also push earwax deeper into the ear canal, where it ac-

cumulates and causes symptoms such as itching, pain, a feeling of fullness or dizziness.

If the condition worsens, it can also cause hearing loss. An estimated five percent of adults in the United States suffer from earwax buildup or impaction, although it may be more common in older adults or those who wear hearing aids.

People with skin conditions, such as eczema or psoriasis, may also be at greater risk of blockage, as may those with narrow, small or irregularly shaped ear canals.

If you feel your ear is blocked, it is best to see a professional, not to mess with it.

The best way to keep your ears clean and healthy is to leave the earwax alone.

However, if the urge to look inside is strong, especially since the ear is lined with nerve endings, stimulating them can create a pleasurable sensation.

Therefore, when cleaning your ear, use a damp washcloth to wipe the auricle or outer part, just as you would wipe any other part of your body.

Never clean the inside. You can also try ear drops to aid the natural self-cleaning process. These are available without a prescription and are suitable for those with naturally dry earwax. The drops soften the wax, facilitating its natural removal.

We reiterate the doctors' advice to completely avoid using any medications to scrape or remove earwax, as this can be dangerous.

They also advise against ear cleaning using the funnel-and-candle method, which involves placing the unlit end of a hollow candle in the ear canal and lighting the other end. This is supposed to generate suction that pulls the earwax out.

However, this method is ineffective and dangerous and can lead to burns. Visible wax, which some may consider evidence of the success of this technique, is often simply wax from the candle, not the earwax itself.

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## 19 illegal shops shut in Jleeb and Khaitan

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Interior (MoI) launched on Saturday a large-scale campaign, closing 19 commercial shops that violated license terms and engaged in illegal activities in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Khaitan districts.

In a press release, the ministry said the campaign, launched in collaboration with some government bodies, is part of common efforts aiming to confront negative manifestations and great violations.

Supervised by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, the campaign resulted in the arrest of 26 violators and the removal of some mobile grocery shops, it added.

Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah directed all concerned bodies to intensify their efforts to monitor and register all shops violating regulations, and to take urgent legal action against illegitimate practices and violators, it stated.

The ministry affirmed its commitments to launching repeatedly field campaigns, in collaboration and coordination with all competent bodies, within the framework of a plan aimed at combating all types of violations in a manner that enhances public security and safety and protects society, it noted.

## Nod to retail sale of food items at flour mills outlets

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Abdullahif Al-Mishari has approved the request of Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company to add activities in all of its outlets within its bakery sites, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Mishari approved the decisions that the Municipal Council took during its fourth regular session for the 13th legislative term, held on July 28.

The council approved the use of retail outlets at the designated bakery sites of the company, adding activities such as retail sales of all food products manufactured by the company, cold and hot beverages, pies, pastries and sweets, an oven bakery and a tandoor bakery.

The decision allows the use of sites permitted for manufacturing and storage of the company's products, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Finance, Public Authority for Industry, and other concerned authorities. It also requires the submission of plans, including the activities, for approval by the Urban Planning

Department.

The technical team is authorized to amend the names in accordance with the Ministry of Commerce code and the names of the Public Authority for Industry, and to adhere to the contract concluded with the Ministry of Finance, particularly the State Property Department. Any previous decisions that contradict this will be repealed.

Al-Mishari also approved the decision regarding infrastructure-related requests.

These include the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy's request to allocate a water service route to supply the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company's liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant in Umm Al-Aish with fresh water, and the Ministry of Public Works' request to allocate a pumping station site and two

sewage routes to connect to it in order to pump wastewater from the West and South Abdullah Al-Mubarak housing areas to the Kabad treatment plant.

However, the minister objected to the decision to reject the request to cancel the Ministry of Public Works' pumping station site and allocate a transfer station site for the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy in Nuzha-Block One. He pointed out this decision contradicts the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy's request to allocate a site for a main transfer station to serve Nuzha and the neighboring areas in the same location designated for the Ministry of Public Works as a pumping station under the area's regulations, as stated in the Executive Authority's letter.

He explained that non-approval of the request conflicts with public interest requirements in terms of providing power stations to cope with the increasing electrical load pressure.



Al-Mishari



## Leadership built through experience and humility

“AT a time some are accustomed to managing affairs from behind air-conditioned offices, His Highness the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah stands out as one of the rare leaders who understands that security cannot be managed from afar, and that the prestige of the State is safeguarded in the field, not through official reports,” **Abdullah Sahoud Al-Fadhli** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“It is not unusual for those who know him to see him stepping out of his official vehicle in the middle of the night and standing among his men at a security checkpoint, observing, directing, holding accountable, and setting a living example of what true leadership means.

“He is not just a name mentioned in the news, but a face present in difficult situations, and a spirit that motivates security personnel to do more, not because they are forced to, but because they believe in their leadership.

“In a scene that has become rare, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef is seen moving between areas, inspecting security points, participating in campaigns, raiding, examining and smiling at the security officer while patting him on the shoulder in thanks and appreciation.

“This is not a show in front of the cameras, but a firm conviction that those who do not know the details in the field will not be able to make good decisions from the top.

“What distinguishes him from other officials is his deep understanding of the nature of security work, not only as a former officer, but as a leader who sees the real pulse of the State in the field.

“How many officials have sat in their chairs for years without ever setting foot in the positions of their men, while he cannot rest easy without seeing things with his own eyes and hearing them firsthand — the ‘street’.

“The praise he receives from security personnel and citizens does not come from nowhere.

“He possesses a rare combination of firmness and understanding, discipline and humanity, combining the mentality of a military commander who does not compromise in enforcing the law with the heart of a citizen who feels the pain of the street and the details of people’s daily lives.

“He launched initiatives, restructured sectors, supported young talent, and firmly confronted corruption and negligence.

“He believes that the position is not an honor, but a duty and a responsibility, and that courage lies not in speaking out loud, but in making difficult decisions when needed. In times of crisis, his presence is enough to calm the people and deter troublemakers.

“He does not need cameras or slogans, his presence alone is enough to deliver the message: The State is present and its men never sleep.

“He knows that security is not achieved solely by patrols and weapons, but by justice, discipline and example.

“Since leadership is not created by chance, but rather built through experience and humility, Sheikh Fahad created a rare case of popular support for a police officer, about whom articles are written and stories are told, not because he seeks the spotlight, but because he simply deserves it.

“Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef is a model of a statesman who does not content himself with directing from above, but goes down to the field, sees, listens, interacts and leads.

“He may leave his office for hours, but he never abandons his place in the hearts of the people.

“He is a man who was not changed by his position, as he rather changed the concept of the position itself.”

### Also:

“An ancient poet said: Speak sparingly and you will be safe from its consequences,” **Dr. Khaled Al-Janfawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Consequences are the slips and errors, and perhaps the evils that occur due to excessive speech and idle talk, and the resulting hatred, loathing and malice among people.

“Some of the things that a wise person should speak sparingly about include the following:

- Meddling in other people’s affairs: One manifestation of excessive speech is ‘poking one’s nose’ into other people’s affairs and making them a topic of conversation.

“Whoever speaks sparingly in this regard is never safe from slips and missteps of the tongue regarding people’s honor.

“Any backbiting about an absent person is a slip of the tongue.

- Speaking about what one does not understand: Someone speaks sparingly about matters, things and topics that they do not fully understand.

“Whoever says sparingly about what they do not know brings upon themselves worry and grief, and wastes their time and effort thinking excessively about matters they do not know, and may have nothing to do with them.

- Speech sparingly protects against slips: A wise person protects himself from slips of the tongue and actions by speaking little, especially when in the outside world.

“Speechlessness protects against committing mistakes against oneself and others, and prevents indulging in what is superfluous and excessive.

- The pitfalls of speech: A pitfall is a literal or figurative lapse, a deliberate or unintentional mistake.

“Excessive speech leads to pitfalls of life because it exposes the chatterer to matters and affairs that have nothing to do with him and in which he has no right to interfere. Speech sparingly represents the highest degree of sobriety.

- Minimize speech and self-control: A person reduces his speech when he is keen to possess the skill of self-control, and what it leads to in terms of controlling personal reactions when interacting with others in public life, and what it requires in terms of almost complete self-control in all situations, times and circumstances, to the extent of human ability, and by training himself to deal healthily with normal or severe psychological pressures, so reduce your speech and all will be well.”



“In recent years, women’s voices have risen in the Arab world, including Kuwait, demanding rights, raising slogans of equality, and emphasizing the need to empower women in all fields,” **Al-Bandari Al-Ajmi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“We hear passionate speeches about fairness, breaking restrictions, and liberating women from all forms of injustice to which they may be subjected.

“This is inherently human and cannot be denounced. However, behind these glittering banners, there is another, less radiant image, one that reflects a bitter reality: sometimes women are the first to fight women — not all of them, but some of them.

“You find them shouting at conferences and media platforms, demanding women’s representation in every field.

“Nevertheless, in the workplace, they may turn into bitter adversaries to their female colleagues.

“Instead of supporting or guiding them, they begin to fight them, stifle them, and perhaps fabricate stories or spread rumors — not because they are less qualified, but because jealousy or envy pulls the strings and there is no other justification.

“The painful irony is that men — who are portrayed in some discourses as the ‘wolf’ that devours rights — can sometimes be the defenders of women against the assault of another woman.

“We have seen this in countless situations: a man standing up to stop an unjust attack from a colleague against a female colleague, or trying to make peace when disagreements escalate to the point of threatening their livelihood.

“This duality is not merely an individual behavior, it is a wound in the very soul of the feminist movement itself.

“How can we call for equality while tearing each other down?

“How can we convince the world that women deserve more space, when we are the first to crowd them out?

“Demanding rights is not just a matter of slogans, it is a moral responsibility and daily practical behavior.

“If we want to prove that we deserve empowerment, we must first empower each other.

“Support does not mean overlooking mistakes, but it means correcting with love, guiding without insulting, and extending a helping hand, rather than pushing others toward failure.

“In the end, life is too short to spend it brooding over envy and finding fault. What remains on our scales is the good we have offered and the pure conscience we have carried.

“Let us raise the banner of true support, not empty slogans, and let us support one another, because women’s true battle is not against women, but against everything that robs them of their humanity and dignity.”

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



Abdullah Al-Fadhli



Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah giving instructions at the intersection project.



Farwaniya Governorate photos

## Comply, stick to road repairs schedule: Sheikh Athbi

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah inspected the Jordan Street and Mohammad Bin Qasim Street Intersection Development Project.

The project includes converting the existing intersection from a three-lane to a four-lane intersection. It is expected to be completed and opened in early September, in response to the

demand of the residents in the governorate to ease the traffic congestion.

Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works Eng. Eid Al-Rashidi, acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Maintenance Engineering Sector Eng. Fawaz Al-Shammari, Director of Farwaniya Security Directorate Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Ghasab and a number of other officials accompanied

Sheikh Athbi Nasser during the inspection tour.

While inspecting the project, Sheikh Athbi Nasser was briefed on its progress and the upcoming implementation steps. He then affirmed his commitment to monitor vital projects to ensure compliance with the timetable and achieve the desired benefits for those residing in the governorate.

## Pay cut warned for truant Mol officers

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: A reminder message was sent to Ministry of Interior employees through the ‘Sahel’ application emphasizing the necessity of using fingerprint attendance and departure for all staff, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The directive aims to ensure compliance and to prevent salary deductions that could result from neglecting or forgetting to record fingerprints.



KFF photo  
Industrial items thrown around in the basement of an industrial items shop.

## KFF shuts 207 facilities in safety rules violation

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: A recent inspection campaign in the Jahra Industrial Area (expansion zone) has led to the closure and issuance of warnings to 207 establishments found in violation of fire safety regulations, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to a statement from the Kuwait Fire Force, the campaign resulted in the administrative closure of 85 industrial shops and facilities, while 122 others received formal warnings for failing to comply with fire prevention and safety standards.

The inspection drive was carried out in collaboration with multiple government entities, including the Ministry of Commerce, the Public Authority for Industry, and the Kuwait Municipality. Officials confirmed that several violations were serious enough to necessitate immediate closure in the interest of public safety.

Authorities emphasized the ongoing commitment to enforcing safety regulations and ensuring that all industrial establishments adhere to required fire prevention measures.

## Youth faces charges for damaging police vehicle

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: Two security officers filed a complaint at Sulaibikhat Police Station against a young citizen for destroying State property, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

A security source revealed that two officers from the Vehicle Management Division at the Operations and Patrols Department in the Capital Governorate under the Public Security Sector in the Interior Ministry — one holding the rank of Corporal and the other a Police Officer — reported that a young man, born in 2000, damaged a patrol vehicle while in detention.

A case was registered against the young man.

## Check on construction works finds violations

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: Kuwait Municipality issued 18 warnings to violating properties in Bneid Al-Gar, as well as violation citations for nine properties whose owners failed to respond to the warnings, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The Public Relations Department at the Municipality confirmed the continuation of inspection campaigns as per the schedule to check construction works in the six governorates to ensure compliance with the building regulations for all uses — private, industrial, commercial, agricultural, investment and crafts.

The Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department in the Capital Governorate Municipality branch conducted a field campaign last Thursday, during which the inspection teams uncovered violations in investment housing.

The department stated that the fifth campaign resulted in the issuance of 18 warnings to violating properties — nine of which responded by removing the violations after the warnings. It also issued nine violation citations to properties whose owners failed to respond to the warnings.

### By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: The Ministry of Justice revealed that its Enforcement General Department completed 6,297,220 enforcement procedures -- court orders, seizures, travel bans, subpoenas for debtors and financial collections -- in the first half of 2025.**

Official statistics from the ministry showed a qualitative shift in the volume and quality of procedures within the first six months of the year. The Capital Governorate topped the list with 1,829,357 procedures or 30 percent of the total nationwide, followed by Farwaniya Governorate with 1,311,019 procedures, Ahmadi Governorate with 1,140,567 procedures, Hawally Governorate with 877,294 procedures, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate with 571,069 procedures and Jahra Governorate with 546,039 procedures.

External entities affiliated with the department, such as Shuaiba port and Kuwait Lawyers Association, carried out 15,035 procedures, demonstrating the comprehensiveness of executive work even outside the courts. Total financial collections during

this period reached around KD 13 million.

Regarding the quality of procedures, the statistics indicated that executive reservations were the most prominent and numerous, with 3,168,790 procedures or more than half of the total. These were followed by orders to cancel travel bans, which reached 38,086, while new travel ban orders reached 3,452. The enforcement departments in the governorates also executed 26,878 orders to arrest debtors in order to compel them to appear before judicial authorities.

Following are the procedures carried out in the first half of the year:

- Reopening Files: 13,303
- Issuance of ‘To Whom It May Concern’ certificates: 21,400
- Collection receipts: more than 123,000
- Renewal of arrest warrants: 37

The statistics also detailed the procedures completed by the Travel Ban Section, with a total of 45,050 procedures. Travel ban cancellation orders topped the list with 18,229 procedures (40.46 percent), followed by new travel ban orders with 3,452 procedures. One-time travel permission orders reached 4,670, in addition to the registration of 93 travel ban guarantees and 80 new travel ban requests.

Attorney Jassim Bandar confirmed to the newspaper that these figures reflect the increase in the volume of financial and commercial cases, particularly those related to debts, loans and rents, which explains the high number of seizure orders and travel bans.

He pointed out that the high collection rate is considered a remarkable success in the work of the enforcement departments, as millions of Kuwaiti dinars were recovered for the benefit of creditors within a relatively short period.



Bandar




# We are OPEN for BREAKFAST AT 7:00 AM



تيراس مول السالمية - مطل على شارع الخليج شارع سالم المبارك

**Terrace Mall Salmiya**  
Overlooking Gulf Road Salem Al Mubarak Street

## 1800 188 / 5501 1985



# NCCAL’s Summer Festival delves into poetry, reader engagement

Bahraini poet leads workshop on poetic arts reception

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23, (KUNA):** The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) organized a workshop titled “Mechanisms of Poetry Reception” as part of the 17th Cultural Summer Festival. The workshop was presented by Bahraini poet and playwright Mahdi Salman at the Seville Library.

Salman told KUNA that over the course of two days, he discussed the concept of historical hierarchy in understanding poetry across different poetic schools, including classical, romantic, symbolic, and modernist. He explained how these schools approached various elements of poetry, such as language, metaphor, rhythm, music, the reader’s perspective, and the notion of self within texts.

He added that the workshop highlighted the multiple dimensions of each of these elements, and how the modern poet, by employing them, can construct a poem with diverse and sometimes contrasting layers. He emphasized that the recipient of poetry must assimilate these elements to achieve



KUNA photo  
Mahdi Salman, poet and playwright

a conscious and insightful reading of the poem and its text.

During the workshop, Salman presented a series of exercises and practical experiments that allowed participants to define

their own vision of poetry and identify poetic forms that enrich their experience and meet their needs, while also gaining a deeper understanding of how to engage with poetic texts.

The workshop aimed to help participants discover their relationship with poetry and understand what it can offer on multiple levels — whether as an art form, a source of knowledge, a forward-looking vision, or even a means of engaging with life.

It is worth noting that Mahdi Salman is a poet and playwright from the Kingdom of Bahrain, a founding member of the Countryside Theater, and a member of the Bahraini Writers and Authors Association. His poetry collections include Nothing Happens, Not Even the Poem, A Laughter from a Hidden Place, and I Will Not Say Anything This Time.

The 17th Cultural Summer Festival, organized by NCCAL in Kuwait, continues to present a range of cultural and artistic events for various segments of society until August 29.



KUNA photo  
Ambassador Talal Al-Mansour presents his credentials as non-resident ambassador of Kuwait to Peru.

## Kuwait’s envoy presents his credentials to Peruvian Prez

**NEW YORK, Aug 23, (KUNA):** The Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Brazil Talal Al-Mansour has presented his credentials as the non-resident ambassador to the Republic of Peru to President Dina Boluarte in an official ceremony held at the presidential palace in Lima.

In a press statement issued on Friday, the Kuwaiti Embassy in Brazil stated that during the ceremony Ambassador Mansour conveyed the greetings and best wishes of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to the Peruvian President Boluarte and her people.

The embassy pointed out that the ceremony took place on Thursday, just two days after the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a celebration to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the two friendly countries.

The celebration was sponsored by Peruvian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Elmer Schialer Salcedo, and was attended by several senior Peruvian officials.

Moreover, the Peruvian Ministry printed a commemorative stamp for this occasion.

In his speech at the event, the Peruvian Minister Salcedo praised the strong bilateral relations and expressed his gratitude for the State of Kuwait’s significant role in fostering in these relations across a variety of domains and at all levels.

Kuwait’s Ambassador Al-Mansour affirmed, in his speech, that the Kuwaiti-Peruvian relations, since their inception in 1975, have been based on solid foundations of mutual respect, shared interests, and a sincere desire to boost cooperation in various domains.

Al-Mansour noted that these relations have rapidly developed in recent years, particularly following the significant and successful visit of the Peruvian foreign minister to the State of Kuwait last April.

He added that the celebration of the golden jubilee of diplomatic relations between the two countries demonstrated the officials’ commitment to exploring new avenues of cooperation that will foster the shared interests and aspirations of their respective nations and peoples.

### Partnership aims to enhance justice and digital services

## Kuwait Lawyers Society, MoJ set to sign first MoU

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23:** The Kuwait Lawyers Society invited its members to an open meeting with Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait at 7:00 pm on Sunday in the theater at the headquarters of the Society, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the Society disclosed that this meet-

ing is part of its commitment to strengthen direct communication between lawyers and the Ministry of Justice, which will contribute to discussing professional issues and exchanging views on developing the judicial system and overcoming obstacles that colleagues may face in their daily practices.

It added that the meeting will include the signing of a memorandum of understanding — the first of its kind — between the Ministry of Justice and the Society, which aims to establish a partnership and institutional cooperation that keeps pace with the aspirations of the State to promote prompt justice and

develop legal and digital services.

The Society affirmed that this step is an important milestone on the path to institutional integration with the ministry, and consolidates its pioneering role as an incubator for the legal profession and a supportive umbrella for its members.

### Ahmadi schools set for digital upgrades

## MoE introduces ‘Balagh’ integrated e-program to raise school readiness

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23:** The Engineering Affairs Sector in Ahmadi Educational District confirmed that all schools in the district are continuing their preparations for the 2025/2026 academic year by following up the necessary maintenance and equipment works to ensure a safe and suitable learning environment for students and teaching staff, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Ahmed Al-Momen, the sector’s representative, disclosed that the ministry launched the ‘Balagh’ integrated electronic program to manage maintenance operations and logistical equipment for schools, as it is considered one of the most important digital initiatives in the educational facilities sector.

He said the program was initiated by Minister of Education Sayed Al-Tabtabaei who follows up its statistics and receives reports directly through digital monitoring screen.

This reflects the commitment of the min-

istry to enhance digital transformation and develop maintenance and equipment mechanisms in schools in integration with various relevant sectors, which achieves rapid response and raises the efficiency of performance in Kuwaiti schools.

Al-Momen confirmed that the maintenance teams have completed integrated works, which included the maintenance of air conditioning systems, electrical works, firefighting systems and water coolers, ensuring the readiness of all facilities to ensure a smooth and obstacle-free start of the school year.

He explained that the program has contributed to reducing the paperwork cycle, as school administrations are now able to submit their reports directly through the program without the need for paper correspondence. This allows the relevant authorities to respond immediately, with accurate monitoring of progress and problem resolution.

He affirmed that the schools in Ahmadi Educational District will be adequately prepared to welcome students at the start of the new academic year, indicating the engineering and digital efforts exerted will provide a safe educational environment, in line with the aspirations of the ministry and its vision for digital transformation.



Al-Momen

# AUGUST

## Room Promotion

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 57.173	BHD 128.000/-net
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 76.230 -net	BHD 170.247-net

Promo period from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025

Terms & conditions apply\*



KU photos  
Students honored for participation in interactive educational activities.

### ‘Have Fun and Learn’

## KU wraps up summer program

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23:** The Community Service and Continuing Education Center at Kuwait University concluded the second summer program – ‘Have Fun and Learn’ – for children 8 to 12 years old at Sabah Al-Salem University City on Thursday.

The program aimed to develop the skills and tap the creative potential of children in a safe educational environment.

Acting Director of the center Munira Ibrahim Al-Baz, and the training and volunteer team from the Community Programs Department at the center attended the event. Al-Baz revealed that the program was launched on Aug 10 with the participation of several students in the abovementioned age group.

She said this program complements the efforts of the center to provide a safe educational and recreational environment that contributes to honing the skills of participants.

She added the program included a series of lectures and interactive workshops that combined learning and entertainment, such as lessons in Arabic, English, Arabic calligraphy, Science and Mathematics.

She expressed gratitude and appreciation to all those involved in ensuring the success of the program.

The participants and their parents expressed their happiness over the diverse activities and quality of implementation of the program, affirming it was a rich experience that left a positive impact on the children and contributed to the development of their cognitive and social skills.

At the end of the program, the participating students were honored, along with the volunteers among the supervisors and administrators in the Community Programs Department at the center.



## Over 100 students compete

### Mubarak Al-Kabeer Center hosts 1st Summer Clubs Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: Mubarak Al-Kabeer Bowling Education and Training Center organized the first Summer Clubs Championship, under the patronage and in the presence of acting Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities Maryam Al-Enezi, and acting General Supervisor of Boys Physical Education Dr. Hessa Arab, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The tournament witnessed wide participation of teams representing various educational levels, with each team comprising five students in elementary, middle and high school levels.

The event aimed to foster team spirit and positive competition among students.

Al-Enezi pointed out that or-

ganizing such tournaments is in line with the commitment of the ministry to invest students’ time in ways that benefit them, indicating these activities are important for developing athletic and social skills in a safe and stimulating environment.

At the conclusion of the tournament, Al-Enezi thanked the organizers and parents who attended this event with their children, emphasizing that this fruitful co-operation reflects the mutual interest in supporting students and honing their talents.

Meanwhile, President of the center Dr. Mohammad Al-Ameer revealed that the number of participants in the summer program exceeded 100 students in all educational levels.

Ministry of Information revokes Al-Sabah newspaper, TV licenses

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: The Ministry of Information has revoked the licenses of Al-Sabah newspaper and Al-Sabah TV, reports Al-Rai daily.

The ministry issued two administrative decisions on the

cancellation of the licenses of the abovementioned media outlets.

Based on these decisions, Al-Sabah TV suspended its television broadcast, while Al-Sabah newspaper ceased its operations and publication.

Continued from Page 1

### Dear Minister

Your Excellency, for more than four decades, Dar Al-Seyassah Publishing and Printing House has been printing massive quantities for several ministries, yet none of them have objected or dismissed us, just because of rulings against the publishing house—whether labor or bank mortgages, as long as we are committed to implementing the contracts in a perfect manner.

We have been informed that the recent exclusion was the result of the intervention of that individual who keeps on interfering in the Education Ministry although he is not part of its staff.

Your Excellency, Minister of Education, we are ready to submit to you the documents and evidence, as well as reveal the names any time.

Dar Al-Seyassah and other printing presses have been wronged by these schemes.

Therefore, we ask that you, Your Excellency the Minister, form a trustworthy committee to inspect all the printing presses that won the tender, so you can uncover the truth and discover how this individual operates, using illegal means to monopolize tenders.

Again, it seems that someone facilitated this for him.

We all know, Your Excellency the Minister, that you are a key player in the current era. We are sure that you are fully committed to establish justice in a straightforward manner, armed with integrity and adopting the principle: Question yourselves before being questioned.

### Kuwait waters

and KD15 to KD42 for ‘Hamour’, while the prices of other varieties remain at relatively lower levels.

He pointed out that the increase in local production expected in September will support price stability and maintain market balance, especially with the continuous monitoring of product quality and sales in the local market by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

### Kuwait breaks

Sources affirmed this is part of a comprehensive strategy aimed at shielding society from toxins that endanger its security and stability.

Sources said the DCGD remains committed to safeguarding the youths and maintaining national stability by mobilizing all resources year-round. They stressed that the race is on to apprehend drug dealers and users.

In August, the department dealt severe blows to drug trafficking networks. In coordination with the Criminal Investigation Department, it arrested a criminal ring of Nepalese, Bangladeshi and Indians engaged in the production of local liquor that caused the death of around 23 Asians. Another 67 individuals were arrested for operating six liquor factories in different areas.

In a separate achievement, anti-narcotics teams raided a factory in Jakhour, Kabad – run by a Bedoun, seizing 25 kilograms of narcotic chemicals and 15,000 Lyrica pills. Laboratory tests revealed the use of lethal substances, such as pesticides and acetone, in the manufacturing process.

Another factory, operated by an individual whose Kuwaiti citizenship was revoked and has a criminal record, was dismantled, during which 30 liters of hazardous chemicals and six kilograms of shabu worth half a million Kuwaiti dinars were confiscated.

In other operations, two Egyptians

and a Kuwaiti were arrested in possession of 30 kilograms of various drugs, including marijuana, heroin, shabu and opium. Authorities also thwarted an attempt to smuggle imported alcohol through Shuaiba Port.

The department dismantled an international gang consisting of Indians with 14 kilograms of heroin and eight kilograms of shabu in their possession, thereby, foiling a major smuggling attempt.

Another gang, comprising of a Kuwaiti inmate convicted of drug offenses inside the Central Prison and a Bedoun accomplice, was taken down. Their arrest led to the seizure of 800,000 Lyrica pills worth hundreds of thousands of Kuwaiti dinars, proving the department’s reach even inside prisons.

In July, the department recorded exceptional successes, most notably seizing 47 kilograms of drugs in air cargo and arresting a convicted felon attempting to claim the shipment.

In cooperation with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), authorities intercepted a massive shipment of shabu worth KD1.15 million hidden in a sea container. This led to the arrest of an Afghan suspect at a ceramics factory in Amghara.

Another major operation foiled the smuggling of four million Captagon pills worth KD12 million, cleverly concealed inside imported water treatment pipes. During the same operation, a forger of Kuwaiti citizenship was arrested with one million Captagon pills worth millions of Kuwaiti dinars in his possession.

In one of the largest operations in the history of Kuwait, the department seized 200 kilograms of shabu valued at KD1.5 million from an Iranian, in addition to 16 kilograms of the same substance worth KD250,000.

A total of 31 suspects — including citizens, expatriates and Bedouns — were arrested in possession of various quantities of hashish, shabu, marijuana, heroin, chemicals, cocaine and Lyrica, in addition to firearms and ammunition.

Security sources stressed that these major accomplishments, which resulted in the confiscation of drugs worth enormous sums and the dismantling of both local and international criminal networks, underscore the crucial role of the DCGD in protecting the Kuwaiti society from toxins. They affirmed that “security strikes will not stop, and the sword of the law will reach all those who traffic or use these poisons that threaten societies, especially the youths.” They confirmed that anti-narcotics officers work tirelessly – day and night – to maintain national security and stability, and protect the future of its generations.

### Philippines raises

It stated the implementation of the ‘Know Your Employer’ (KYE) protocol through mandatory video interviews between the employee and the employer before signing the contract, and the launch of the ‘Kumusta Kabayan’ digital system to periodically monitor the workers’ conditions and address their complaints or problems.

The reforms include vocational training and qualification programs in the fields of healthcare, home management, hospitality services, digital literacy and language proficiency, in addition to improving recruitment agency standards to ensure safety and health, and imposing penalties on non-compliant agencies.

The circular confirmed the adoption of a whitelist policy for agencies, limiting recruitment to agencies that adhere to ethical standards, as well as activating the AKSYON Fund to cover legal, medical and financial assistance for workers in emergency situations.

It emphasized that the passport re-

# State lands under threat

Council forms subcommittee to stop illegal exploitation

By Inaas Awadh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: State-owned lands are important assets that require effective management and protection to ensure they are utilized in the interest of the public and in accordance with the laws and regulations.

In an effort to highlight the growing challenges related to the illegal exploitation of these lands, the newspaper interviewed several members of the Municipal Council who emphasized the need for swift action to put an end to the illegal exploitation of State-owned lands and facilities.

Council member Walid Al-Dagher said he referred a question to the Kuwait Municipality regarding the exploitation of State-owned lands for commercial purposes, affirming the elected members’ commitment to protect public properties and ensure they are utilized in a legal manner.

He revealed that Director General of the Municipality Manal Al-Asfour approved the response of the Municipality, confirming that the exploitation of any part of a State property is prohibited, unless approval is obtained from the State Property Contracts Department in the Ministry of Finance.

He said this approval must be translated into official lease contracts concluded by the ministry with the beneficiary, in accordance with the governing terms and regulations.

He added he is not satisfied with the response, so he repeated his question and requested for more details, but the Municipality did not provide any new information, prompting the Legal and Financial Affairs Committee to form a subcommittee to investigate the encroachments on State properties during its July 30 meeting. He disclosed that he chairs the subcommittee with Ismail Behbehani as Rapporteur and Fahad Al-Abdul Jader as member.

He emphasized that this step aims to protect public funds, uphold the rule of law, and ensure proper management and utilization of State properties. He explained that the monitoring and follow up mechanisms are implemented through the activation of oversight and inspection campaigns conducted by various departments – safety, audit, engineering, sanitation, road oc-



Al-Dagher

pancy and municipal services in the six branches.

He went on to say that the powers of the Municipality include the issuance of warnings and violation citations. He pointed out that some encroachments, such as ‘temporary defacement’, can be licensed, while unlicensed encroachments require immediate removal.

He cited the factors making it difficult to address encroachments as follows: absence of a complete inventory of State properties, their diversity, sophisticated encroachment methods and weak oversight. He said some violations involve fraud, such as exploiting temporary defacement licenses for commercial purposes by leasing them to others or exploiting the setbacks surrounding commercial complexes and medical centers as paid parking spaces, which negatively affect the urban appearance and urban planning.

Ismail Behbehani stressed the need to establish a precise mechanism to protect State lands from encroachment, indicating that these practices deprive the public treasury of significant revenues which could have been collected through lease contracts. He added they also impose additional costs on the State for monitoring and removing encroachments, engaging in litigation and rehabilitation of damaged lands. He asserted that the uncon-

trolled exploitation of land hinders the implementation of master plans and causes the deterioration of infrastructure.

Abdullah Al-Hathal Al-Enezi pointed out that encroachments are considered a major challenge and an obstacle to the implementation of major development projects for the realization of the New Kuwait 2035 vision. He warned that their continuation without effective action undermines the prestige of the law, hinders the implementation of government projects, and drains the resources of the administration.

He confirmed the importance of the step taken by the council to form a fact-finding subcommittee, hoping it will contribute to the development of an effective strategy to curb this negative phenomenon.

He warned that the danger posed by encroachments increases due to their negative impact on urban planning and public order, in addition to the financial losses incurred by the State due to the failure to make optimal use of these assets.

He pointed out that repeated encroachments on State properties without appropriate action affects the prestige of the law and confidence in the State’s ability to protect its properties. He added that monitoring and addressing encroachments drain the resources of the government and prevents it from focusing on other priorities.

### Modern dorms urgently needed

## Campus housing gap widens

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: Due to the rapid urban development in the country, the distance between residential areas and some educational institutions has become longer, creating challenges for students in their daily commute, reports Al-Rai daily.

In recent decades, Kuwait has expanded to include new areas such as Khairan, Wafra, Sabah Al-Ahmad, West Abdullah Al-Mubarak and Al-Mutlaa. These areas are witnessing a growing population, but they are very far from certain colleges at Kuwait University or the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), such as the College of Medicine in Jabriya and the College of Nursing in Shuwaikh.

This geographical distance not only affects students’ time and effort, but also their academic performance and lifestyle. Long commutes and traffic congestion, especially during peak hours, exhaust students and cause them to be late for class. This is in addition to the high cost of daily transportation.

Some of the daily struggles of students are as follows:

- Physical and psychological exhaustion,
- Financial drain due to the cost of transportation or drivers,
- Tardiness or absence from classes, especially in early periods,
- Decreased concentration and academic performance due to daily fatigue.

Although student housing is available for non-Kuwaiti students or those on scholarship, there is a lack of suitable housing options for Kuwaiti students who do not live near their college campuses.

With the increasing number of students residing in remote areas, the establishment of well-equipped student housing complexes is essential and cannot be ignored.

The proposed student housing should not be limited to providing a place to sleep, as it should include integrated service facilities, such as study halls, restaurants, cafés, academic support services, clinics and gyms, creating a comprehensive educational environment that enhances student well-being and excellence.

The need for organized and safe student housing is not a luxury, but an academic and humanitarian necessity. Such housing can provide students with the following:

- Safe and comfortable environment for study and stability,
- Reduced psychological stress resulting from daily commute,
- Promotion of social integration and academic interaction,
- Support for female students residing in remote areas, especially those with family restrictions in terms of daily transportation.

Successful international experience is observed in many countries where university housing is considered an essential part of services offered by higher education institutions. Dormitories are designed to be integrated learning and living environments, providing guidance, entertainment and psychological comfort.

It is imperative that the relevant authorities at Kuwait University, PAAET and the government in general take this need into consideration, and lay down an urgent and sustainable plan to establish modern and safe student housing complexes.

Student housing is not only an investment in infrastructure, it is a direct investment in the future of the nation and in the comfort and mental health of its youths.

It also supports national efforts to develop the higher education system and improve the quality of life for students.



# JOINT OPERATIONS

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC) KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)



Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from **24 AUG 2025** up to **16 SEP 2025** for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender.

Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tenders will be on **Thursday, 25 SEP 2025 @ 09:00 A.M.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES ( IN KD )
1	039662	PIG LAUNCHER AND RECEIVER	5
2	040362	LED FIXTURES AND LAMPS	5
3	040363	SUCKER ROD	15
4	040580	VALVES (GATE , CHECK AND BALL)	25
5	040835	S/F LUFKIN PUMP	25
6	040837	INSERT SLEEVES	100

Notes:

Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail [HBJH@chevron.com](mailto:HBJH@chevron.com) and [CBMS@chevron.com](mailto:CBMS@chevron.com) at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact:

Telephone No.: **23983639** - Ext. : **2502 - 3477**



‘We review all available information as part of our vetting’

## Trump administration reviewing all 55 million foreigners with US visas for any violations

WASHINGTON, Aug 23, (AP): The Trump administration said it is reviewing more than 55 million people who have valid US visas for any violations that could lead to deportation, part of a growing crackdown on foreigners who are permitted to be in the United States.

In a written answer to a question from The Associated Press, the State Department said all US visa holders, which can include tourists from many countries, are subject to “continuous vetting,” with an eye toward any indication they could be ineligible for permission to enter or stay in the United States.

Should such information be found, the visa will be revoked, and if the visa holder is in the United States, he or she would be subject to deportation.

Since President Donald Trump took office, his administration has focused on deporting migrants illegally in the United States as well as holders of student and visitor exchange visas. The State Department’s new language suggests that the continual vetting process, which officials acknowledge is time-consuming, is far more widespread and could mean even those approved to be in the US could abruptly see those permissions revoked.

There were 12.8 million green-card holders and 3.6 million people in the US on temporary visas last year, according to the Department of Home-

land Security.

The 55 million figure suggests that some people subject to review would currently be outside the United States with multiple-entry tourist visas, said Julia Gelatt, associate director of the US immigration policy program at the Migration Policy Institute. She questioned the value of spending resources on people who may never return to the United States.

The State Department said it was looking for indicators of ineligibility, including people staying past the authorized timeframe outlined in a visa, criminal activity, threats to public safety, engaging in any form of terrorist activity or providing support to a terrorist organization.

“We review all available information as part of our vetting, including law enforcement or immigration records or any other information that comes to light after visa issuance indicating a potential ineligibility,” the department said.

The U.S. also will stop issuing worker visas for commercial truck drivers, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Thursday on X. He said the change was effective immediately.

“The increasing number of foreign drivers operating large tractor-trailer trucks on US roads is endangering American lives and undercutting the livelihoods of American truckers,”



The Department of Justice seal during a news conference at the DOJ office in Washington on May 16, 2023. (AP)

Rubio posted.

The Trump administration in the past months has taken steps to enforce the requirement that truckers speak and read English proficiently. The Transportation Department said the aim is to improve road safety following incidents in which drivers’ ability to read signs or speak English may have contributed to traffic deaths.

The State Department said later Thursday it was pausing the process-

ing of these work visas to review its “screening and vetting protocols.”

“Ensuring that every driver on our roads meets the highest standards is important to protecting the livelihoods of American truckers and maintaining a secure, resilient supply chain,” the department said.

Edward Alden, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, said foreign workers have helped address a labor shortage of commercial truck

drivers.

“This action should be seen as part of a concerted effort by the administration to discourage American companies and other institutions like universities and hospitals from hiring and retaining foreign workers,” Alden wrote in an email.

“The goal here is not to target specific classes of workers, but to send the message to American employers that they are at risk if they are employing foreign workers. The economic consequences will be far larger than just visas being stripped from foreign workers in a few job categories.”

The administration has steadily imposed more restrictions and requirements on visa applicants, including requiring them to submit to in-person interviews. The review of all visa holders appears to be a significant expansion of what had initially been a process focused mainly on students who have been involved in what the government perceives as pro-Palestinian or anti-Israeli activity.

Officials say the reviews will include all visa holders’ social media accounts, law enforcement and immigration records in their home countries, along with any actionable violations of US law committed while they were in the United States.

The reviews will include new tools for data collection on past, present

and future visa applicants, including a complete scouring of social media sites made possible by new requirements introduced earlier this year. Those make it mandatory for privacy switches on cellphones and other electronic devices or apps to be turned off when an applicant appears for a visa interview.

“As part of the Trump Administration’s commitment to protect US national security and public safety, since Inauguration Day the State Department has revoked more than twice as many visas, including nearly four times as many student visas, as during the same time period last year,” the State Department said.

The vast majority of foreigners seeking to come to the US require visas, especially those who want to study or work for extended periods. Among the exceptions for short-term tourist or business visits are citizens of the 40 mainly European and Asian countries belonging to the Visa Waiver Program, which grants those nationals a stay of up to three months without having to apply for a visa.

But large swaths of the world - including highly populated countries like China, India, Indonesia, Russia and most of Africa - are not part of the program, meaning their citizens must apply for and receive visas to travel to the United States.



First responders work to rescue victims at the scene of a tour bus that crashed and rolled over on the New York State Thruway near Pembroke, NY on Aug 22. (AP)

### Tour bus rollover kills 5 on interstate highway in western NY

A tour bus returning to New York City from Niagara Falls with 54 people aboard crashed and rolled on its side Friday on an interstate highway, killing five passengers and injuring many others, authorities said.

The driver apparently became distracted, lost control and overcorrected before the bus went into the right shoulder and flipped over shortly before 12:30 p.m. on the

eastbound side of Interstate 90 in Pembroke, New York, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Buffalo, state police Maj. Andre Ray said at an evening news conference. He did not say how the driver became distracted, adding that the cause remains under investigation.

Ray said the passengers ranged in age from 1 to 74. Multiple people were ejected from the bus during the crash, and five people - all

adults - were pronounced dead at the scene, Ray said. Many others became entrapped in the wreck and were rescued. Dozens were taken to hospitals. Ray said it didn’t appear any other people had life-threatening injuries.

“An absolute tragedy took place,” Ray said. “And first and foremost, our thoughts, prayers and hearts go out to those involved, their friends and their families.” (AP)

## Chicago officials slam Trump’s threat to target city in next crime crackdown

CHICAGO, Aug 23, (AP): US President Donald Trump on Friday said Chicago will likely be the next target of his efforts to crack down on crime, homelessness and illegal immigration.

Trump indicated that the Midwestern city could receive similar treatment to what he’s done in Washington, DC, where he’s deployed 2,000 troops on the streets.

“I think Chicago will be our next,” Trump told reporters at the White House, later adding, “And then we’ll help with New York.”

The comments came as the Pentagon on Friday began ordering troops in Washington to carry firearms, though there have been no overt indications they have faced threats that would require them to carry weapons.

Trump has repeatedly described some of the nation’s largest cities - run by Democrats, with Black mayors and majority-minority populations - as dangerous and filthy.

He singled out Chicago on Friday, calling it a “mess” and saying residents there are “screaming for us to come” despite significant decreases in crimes of violence.

Trump’s suggestion that Chicago might be the next target for a crackdown on crime didn’t sit well with Illinois officials.

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson said his office has not received formal communication from the Trump



US President Donald Trump speaks in the Oval Office of the White House on Aug 22, in Washington. (AP)

administration about military or federal law enforcement deployments in Chicago but said “we have grave concerns about the impact of any unlawful deployment of National Guard troops.”

Johnson called Trump’s approach “uncoordinated, uncalled for, and unsound,” arguing it “has the potential to inflame tensions between residents and law enforcement.”

It is unclear how Trump would pursue an effort in Chicago that is similar

to his approach to D.C., where home rule laws give the federal government greater authority.

However, the president’s eldest son said it might be time to look at a whole host of cities in the Pacific Northwest. In an interview Thursday with Newsmax, Donald Trump Jr. blamed Democrats for “through-the-roof” murder rates.

“Maybe we should roll out the tour to Portland, Seattle, the other craphole cities of the country,” Trump Jr. said.

### Intense mutual attacks persist

## ‘Putin-Zelensky meet not being planned’

MOSCOW, Aug 23, (Xinhua): A meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is not being planned, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Friday as heavy fighting between Russia and Ukraine dragged on.

“Putin is ready to meet with Zelensky when the agenda would be ready for a summit, and this agenda is not ready at all,” Lavrov told the U.S. news outlet NBC.

His comments came a week after US President Donald Trump met with Putin in the US state of Alaska for talks aimed at ending the three-year conflict in Ukraine. The U.S. president also met with Zelensky and European leaders on Monday.

The latest discussions of a potential Putin-Zelensky meeting surfaced after Trump said he called Putin and started working on a bilateral meeting between Putin and Zelensky -- and possibly a trilateral one including himself -- following his talks on Monday.

Commenting on the potential meetings, Trump told reporters Friday: “We’re going to see if Putin and Zelensky will be working together. You know, that’s like oil and vinegar a little bit.”

“They don’t get along too well ... but we’ll see, and then we’ll see whether or not I would have to be there. I’d rather not. I’d rather have them have



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov waits to attend a working meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss the results of the Russia-US summit in Alaska at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, on Aug 16. (AP)

a meeting and see how they can do,” he said.

Lavrov told NBC that Russia has agreed to show flexibility on several issues raised by Trump during his meeting with Putin.

The foreign minister previously said that Russia does not reject any formats, either bilateral or trilateral, on resolving the conflict in Ukraine, but noted that any contacts over Ukraine involving top officials need to be prepared

“extremely carefully.”

Zelensky on Friday said Russia is “doing everything” to prevent his meeting with Putin from taking place.

“The meeting is one of the components of how to end the war. And since they don’t want to end it, they will look for space to (avoid it),” he added.

On the frontline, both Russia and Ukraine have intensified attacks on each other’s energy infrastructures over the past week.

## Texas redistricting fight shakes up battle lines for both parties in key Senate race

AUSTIN, Texas, Aug 23, (AP): Just as Democratic US Senate candidate Colin Allred was holding a town hall near the Mexican border as part of an “unrig Texas” campaign tour, the state’s Democratic fundraising powerhouse Beto O’Rourke rallied support in Austin for lawmakers who left the state to delay a redistricting plan led by President Donald Trump. The next morning, one of those wayward lawmakers, James Talarico, stood in the pulpit at former President Barack Obama’s old church in Chicago to say he and his fellow legislators had simply taken a leap of faith.

All three Democrats are either declared or potential contenders for the Senate seat on the ballot in next year’s midterm elections. In what would typically be a quiet period in Texas politics, Republicans have roiled the state’s 2026 Senate campaign with their rush to redraw congressional maps to give Trump more allies in Congress. The turmoil impacts contenders in both parties and gives Democrats fresh hope that they can capture a long-elusive seat, where an upset would dramatically improve their chances of regaining Senate control in Washington.

For Democrats, the GOP power play offers a new way to stand out as fighters against Trump and his Make America Great Again movement.



Texas Sen. Carol Alvarado, right, huddles with other democrat senators and staff members to fight against a bill on a redrawn U.S. congressional map during a special session in the Senate Chamber at the Texas Capitol in Austin, Texas on Aug 23. (AP)


For Republicans, including incumbent Sen. John Cornyn, it’s a Trump loyalty test. Cornyn publicly called for involving the FBI in rounding up the defiant Democrats. His main primary challenger, state Attorney General Ken Paxton, used his current office to ask state courts to remove departed lawmakers from office and to jail O’Rourke for raising funds to support the Demo-

cratic legislators. The clash has also been a welcome distraction from recent questions about Paxton’s private life.

Trump, meanwhile, had his eyes on the US House when he openly prodded Texas Republicans this summer to give him five more GOP seats in a state he won handily last year. He hoped to avoid losing a slim House majority, as he did during his first term in 2018.

America

Hawaii’s Kilauea volcano shoots lava: Hawaii’s Kilauea volcano resumed erupting Friday by shooting an arc of lava 100 feet (30 meters) into the air and across a section of its summit crater floor.



Hon

It was Kilauea’s 31st display of molten rock since December, an appropriately high frequency for one of the world’s most active volcanoes.

The north vent at the summit crater began continuously spattering in the morning, and then lava overflowed a few hours later. The vent started shooting lava fountains in the afternoon.

The eruption was contained within the summit crater, and no homes were threatened.

A few lucky residents and visitors will have a front-row view at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. If the past is a guide, hundreds of thousands more will be watching popular livestreams made possible by three camera angles set up

by the US Geological Survey.

A lower magma chamber under Halemaumau Crater is receiving magma directly from the earth’s interior at about 5 cubic yards (3.8 cubic meters) per second, said **Ken Hon**, scientist-in-charge at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory. This blows the chamber up like a balloon and forces magma into an upper chamber. From there it gets pushed above ground through cracks. (AP)

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**Erin never hit land or caused major damage:** As Hurricane Erin pelled North Carolina’s barrier islands with strong winds and waves this week, it destroyed many nests of threatened sea turtles, burying the eggs deep in sand or washing them out to sea.

On Topsail Island more than half the 43 loggerhead turtle nests were lost in the storm, according to Terry Meyer, conservation director for the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center.

“I didn’t anticipate the water table being so high and the eggs being just literally sitting in water when we got to them,” she said. “I don’t think I’ve seen that on such a wide scale.”

Erin never made landfall and caused no widespread damage to infrastructure despite being twice the size of an average hurricane. But the turtles were not so lucky. (AP)

## Hungarian FM Szijarto urges EU action after Druzhiba oil pipeline attack

BUDAPEST, Aug 23, (Xinhua): Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Peter Szijarto, together with Slovak Foreign Minister Juraj Blazar, has sent a joint letter to senior European Union (EU) officials, urging the European Commission to take immediate action following an attack on the Druzhiba oil pipeline at the Russian-Belarusian border.

“This vital pipeline has been attacked for the third time, and now oil deliveries to Hungary and Slovakia will stop for at least five days,” Szijarto wrote.

Crude oil deliveries to Hungary were suspended again following the overnight strike on the Druzhiba pipeline, Szijarto confirmed Friday morning. Despite the disruption, Hungarian oil and gas group MOL assured that regional supply security will be maintained, citing reserves and access to an alternative route via the Adriatic pipeline from Croatia.

In a Facebook post earlier in the day, Szijarto denounced the incident as “a direct assault on the country’s energy security” and “an attempt to drag Hungary into the war,” adding that Hungary would continue to support peace efforts with all its strength while safeguarding its national interests.

The leader of the Hungarian opposition Tisza Party, Peter Magyar, delivers his speech during St. Stephen’s Day in Pannonhalma, Hungary, Wednesday, August 20, 2025. (AP)



# Thai court acquits ex-prime minister Thaksin of royal defamation charge

BANGKOK, Aug 23, (AP): Thailand's former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra was acquitted of a royal defamation charge by a court on Friday, in a case that could have sent him to prison for up to 15 years.

The 76-year-old Thaksin, smiling as he walked away from the courtroom, was the first to reveal the verdict, responding to journalists' questions with the single word: "Dismissal."

His lawyer, Winyat Chatmontree, also confirmed the acquittal verdict, as did the Bangkok Criminal Court later in a news release.

The law on defaming the monarchy, an offense known as lese majeste, is punishable by three to 15 years in prison. It is among the harshest such laws globally and increasingly has been used in Thailand to punish government critics.

The legal aid group Thai Lawyers for Human Rights has said that since early 2020, more than 270 people - many of them student activists - have been charged with violating the law.

The court's news release said it had found the witnesses and evidence were too weak to support conviction.

Thaksin was originally charged in 2016 over remarks he made a year earlier to journalists in South Korea. The case was not pursued at that time because he was in exile and the nec-



Former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, center, arrives at Criminal Court for a verdict for allegedly defaming the monarchy in Bangkok, Thailand on Aug 22. (AP)

might have been motivated by political bias, because they have participated in political protests against him, leaving open the possibility they may have unfairly interpreted his words.

Thaksin's opponents, who were generally staunch royalists, accused him of corruption, abuse of power and disrespecting then-King Bhumibol, who died in 2016. Thaksin has always asserted that the cases against him were politically motivated.

When he was indicted last year, Thaksin's freedom on bail was approved with the condition that he could not travel out of Thailand unless approved by court. His passport was confiscated.

Despite facing various prosecutions since leaving office, Thaksin has spent no time in prison. He was abroad in 2006 when a military coup ousted him. He briefly returned in 2008, only to return quickly to exile to avoid a possible prison term.

He returned to Thailand in 2023 when the Pheu Thai political party that he is closely associated with came to power. He was sent to serve an eight-year prison term on charges related to corruption and abuse of power but was transferred immediately to a hospital on medical grounds. After six months in a hospital suite, he was granted a pardon and parole and set free.



This aerial photo released by Xinhua News Agency shows the site of an under construction bridge that collapsed on the Qinghai section of the Sichuan-Qinghai Railway causing multiple deaths and missing, in northwest China's Qinghai Province on Aug 22. (AP)

## Chinese bridge collapse kills at least 12 construction workers

Twelve people have been confirmed dead and four remain missing as of 6 pm Friday after a steel cable snapped during bridge construction in northwest China's Qinghai Province, according to the emergency command headquarters handling the accident.

The cable broke during a tensioning operation at around 3:10 am Friday at the site of the bridge under construction on the Qinghai section of the Sichuan-

Qinghai Railway in Jainca County, Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. The failure caused a 108-meter steel girder arch rib to collapse, with 16 workers present at the site at the time of the accident. (Xinhua)

## N.Korea accuses S.Korea of 'serious provocation' Lee in Tokyo to highlight friendly ties with Japan

TOKYO, Aug 23, (AP): South Korean President Lee Jae Myung held his first full summit with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba in Tokyo in a visit largely aimed at showcasing friendly ties between the two Asian neighbors that now face common challenges from the United States, their mutual ally.

Lee's visit Saturday comes in an unusual order, putting Japan ahead of the US, to help him better prepare for his crucial first summit in Washington with US President Donald Trump, mainly on trade and defense issues.

His Tokyo visit before Washington is well received by Japanese officials who see it as a sign Lee is placing great importance to relations between the two neighbors whose ties have repeatedly been disrupted by historical disputes, hampering their trilateral coordination with Washington.

Noting Lee's visit in Tokyo as the first destination of his foreign trip after taking office in June, Ishiba welcomed the South Korean president's arrival at the Prime Minister's Office and posted photos on social media platform X.

The two leaders first met in a closed, small group of officials before summit talks with expanded groups.

For Ishiba, who faces pressure from rightwing rivals within his governing party to resign over its July election loss, Lee's visit and a successful summit could shore up his support.

Rintaro Nishimura, an associate with The Asia Group's Japan branch, said the timing of Lee's visit shows



South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, (left), meets Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba in Tokyo on Aug 23. (AP)

"his way of pragmatic diplomacy" with a focus both on bilateral and trilateral relations with the U.S.

**Also:**  
**SEOUL, South Korea:** North Korea accused South Korea of a "serious provocation" Saturday after South Korean troops fired warning shots at North Korean soldiers setting up barriers along their tense border.

**Ko Jong Chol**, vice chief of the North Korean People's Army's General Staff, noted that Tuesday's warning shots coincided with the South Korea-

US summertime military drills and accused Seoul of deliberately trying to raise tensions.

Shortly after Ko's statement, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff confirmed it had fired warning shots Tuesday afternoon at North Korean soldiers who briefly crossed the military demarcation line in the central border region while carrying out unspecified construction work. The South's military said the soldiers returned to North Korean territory without incident and that the North didn't return fire.

# Costa Rica's president appears before lawmakers, denies corruption claims

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, Aug 23, (AP): For the first time in Costa Rica's history, a sitting president defended himself Friday before three lawmakers considering a petition to lift his immunity so he can be prosecuted on corruption charges.

President Rodrigo Chaves said the effort was an attempt at political revenge by the country's attorney general and magistrates of the Supreme Court, who requested he be stripped of his immunity.

They allege that Chaves pressured a producer who had been awarded a contract by the Central American Bank for Economic Integration to give a portion of that money to a former campaign adviser.

Chaves denied the allegations. He pointed to other long-running corruption investigations in Costa Rica that continue without resolution, as well



Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves is surrounded by journalists and supporters after addressing a legislative committee considering a request from the Supreme Court to lift his immunity so he can stand trial on corruption charges in San Jose, Costa Rica on Aug 22. (AP)

as drug traffickers who pass through the courts without punishment.

Leaving the Legislative Assembly, Chaves addressed a group of supporters, saying opposition lawmakers "staged a ridiculous case to carry out a judicial coup d'etat, to convince (people) I was a scoundrel."

The panel of three lawmakers now have to put together a report to present to the full Congress, which will vote at a still unknown date on whether Chaves should lose his immunity or not.

Chaves, a conservative economist, ran an outsider's campaign in 2022 despite having briefly served as finance minister in the administration of outgoing President Carlos Alvarado.

National elections are scheduled for Feb. 1, but Costa Rica does not allow presidential reelection.

# Congo's prosecutor asks for death penalty for former president Kabila for war crimes

GOMA, Congo, Aug 23, (AP): Congo's public prosecutor on Friday asked for the death penalty for former president Joseph Kabila, who is being tried in absentia in a treason case that includes war crimes charges related to his ties to the M23 rebel group.

Kabila, who led Congo from 2001 to 2019, has been on trial since July, charged with war crimes, murder and rape. He took office at the age of 29 - after his father and former President Laurent Kabila was assassinated - and extended his mandate by delaying elections for two years after his term ended in 2017.

He is accused by the Congolese government of supporting the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels who have seized major cities and towns in the country's east in the past months.

Kabila had been in self-imposed exile since 2023 until April, when he arrived in the rebel-held city of Goma following its seizure in a rapid rebel offensive.

His supporters say the trial is politically motivated. Kabila's presidential immunity was revoked in May. His current location is unknown.

In court on Friday, Gen. Lucien René Likulia representing the prosecution, also asked, in addition to the death penalty, for a 20-year-sentence for Kabila's alleged condoning of war crimes and 15 years for conspiracy. The general did not elaborate on those charges or say what they referred to.

No date has yet been set for the announcement of the verdict.

Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi last year accused Kabila of backing the rebels and "preparing an insurrection" with them, a claim Kabila denies.

Ferdinand Kambere, a former minister under Kabila and



Former Democratic Republic of the Congo president Joseph Kabila arrives to meet with religious leaders at his Kinyogote residence in M23 controlled Goma, Eastern Congo on May 29. (AP)

current head of his party, the PPRD, said revoking Kabila's immunity as senator-for-life was the start of the campaign against him.

"What we saw was truly a disgrace for the Republic," Kambere told The Associated Press by phone.

Henry-Pacifique Mayala, a researcher and coordinator of the Kivu Security Tracker, told the AP that the prosecution's demands seem to be "more of a settling of scores session than a quest for truth."

# Sri Lankan former president arrested on allegations of misusing state funds

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Aug 23, (Agencies): Police in Sri Lanka arrested former President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Friday over allegations that the senior opposition politician misused public funds during his presidency, police said.

Wickremesinghe, who was president from 2022 to 2024, is accused of using the funds to attend his wife's graduation ceremony in London after an official visit to the United States, police spokesman Fredrick Wootler told The Associated Press.

Wickremesinghe appeared for a lengthy hearing before a magistrate court in the capital, Colombo, and was ordered to be kept in custody until Aug. 26. He didn't comment during the hearing, and there was no immediate statement from his office. A large crowd of Wickremesinghe's supporters gathered outside the court to protest his arrest.

**Also:**  
**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka has issued over 1,300 driving licenses to foreign nationals after the Department of Motor Traffic (DMT) established a license issuance counter at the Bandaranaike International Airport, the DMT said on Wednesday.

The DMT said 1,338 driving licenses have been issued until Aug.



Former Sri Lankan president Ranil Wickremesinghe sits inside a bus taking him from court to a prison in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Aug 22. (AP)

17 since the counter was established on Aug 3.

The dedicated counter was introduced for the convenience of foreigners visiting Sri Lanka. Earlier, foreign tourists who wanted a driving license had to visit the DMT office in Colombo.

Over 1.5 million foreign tourists have arrived in Sri Lanka so far this year.

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**COLOMBO:** The Sri Lankan parlia-

ment on Tuesday passed a bill that grants provisions for the establishment of the Gambling Regulatory Authority with amendments.

The Gambling Regulatory Authority has the authority to regulate all forms of gambling, including casinos.

The authority has many powers, including the collection of gambling-related revenue, ensuring transparency and good governance in gambling operations, and preventing illegal gambling activities.



Security forces inspect the site of a bomb explosion outside an Air Force base in Cali, Colombia on Aug 21. (AP)

## Car bomb and attack on helicopter in Colombia kill 17

An attack on a Colombian police helicopter killed at least eight police officers according to President Gustavo Petro, who attributed it to dissidents of the defunct Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, commonly known as FARC.

Petro said on X that the helicopter was transporting personnel to an area in Antioquia, in northern Colombia, to eradicate coca leaf crops, the raw material for cocaine.

Antioquia Gov. Andrés Julián said on the same social media

platform that a drone attacked the helicopter as it flew over coca leaf crops. Colombian Defense Minister Pedro Sánchez said that preliminary information indicates the attack caused a fire in the aircraft. (AP)

# Large Interpol cybercrime crackdown in Africa leads to arrest of 1,209 suspects

DAKAR, Senegal, Aug 23, (AP): A major cybercrime crackdown coordinated by Interpol has led to the arrest of 1,209 suspects across Africa and the recovery of nearly \$97.4 million, the organization announced Friday.

Dubbed Operation Serengeti 2.0, the operation took place between June and August. It brought together investigators from 18 African countries and the United Kingdom to fight harmful cybercrimes including inheritance scams, ransomware and business email compromise.

Altogether, the scams targeted nearly 88,000 victims, the international police organization said in a statement.

Interpol said that authorities in Angola dismantled 25 cryptocurrency mining centers where 60 Chinese nationals had been mining cryptocurrency. The operation resulted in the confiscation of equipment worth over \$37 million; the government now plans to use the equipment to support power distribution in vulnerable areas.

In Zambia, the operation dismantled an online investment scheme that defrauded more than 65,000 victims of an estimated \$300 million through a fraudulent high-return cryptocurrency scam.

"The scammers lured victims into investing in cryptocurrency through extensive advertising campaigns promising



People walk on the Interpol logo at the international police agency headquarters in Lyon, France, on Nov 8, 2018. (AP)

high-yield returns. Victims were then instructed to download multiple apps to participate," Interpol said. It said that 15 people had been arrested and that authorities seized evidence including domains, mobile numbers and bank accounts.



Kuwait oil price surges to \$71.24 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti crude oil rose by 25 cents to US 71.24 per barrel (pb) on Friday, compared to USD 70.99 pb on Thursday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on

Saturday.

Globally, the price of Brent crude increased by six cents to USD 67.73 pb, while West Texas Intermediate crude went up by 14 cents to USD 63.66 pb.

Business

To enhance the experience for customers and the crew of Kuwait Airways

stc signs a joint cooperation protocol with Kuwait Airways to enhance digital services

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers enabling digital transformation in Kuwait, signed a joint cooperation protocol agreement with Kuwait Airways, the national carrier of Kuwait. The protocol aims to strengthen the strategic cooperation between the two parties in the fields of telecommunications and aviation, providing integrated and innovative services that support shared objectives and enhance the overall customer experience.

This partnership reflects stc’s strategic vision to expand its partnerships with key sectors in Kuwait, further contributing to enabling the nation’s digital transformation strategy. It also reflects the Company’s commitment to developing advanced technological solutions that meet the evolving needs of various industries within Kuwait’s public and private sectors.

Scope of Cooperation and Strategic Objectives

In a statement, stc highlighted that the agreement covers several key areas designed to integrate telecom and aviation solutions. These include a range of offerings that allow customers from both companies to enjoy exclusive benefits and services. Through this joint approach, stc and Kuwait Airways will enrich the customer experience and enhance the value of services and offerings provided.

The cooperation also includes the exchange of technical and technological expertise, particularly in developing digital systems and advanced communication solutions. These initiatives will be implemented in collaboration with major global companies such as Oracle, one of stc’s strategic partners. In return, this exchange will enhance operational efficiency and improve the quality of services across both sectors.

Innovation and Technology

In addition, joint marketing campaigns will be launched to promote the services of both parties, with a focus on providing innovative solutions of the highest standards, reflecting the level of service quality that each entity strongly maintains



Engineer Muataz Aldharab and Captain Abdulmohsen Salem Alfagaan during the signing of the joint cooperation protocol.



A token of appreciation presented during the celebration of signing of the joint cooperation protocol.



Officials from Kuwait Telecommunications Company and Kuwait Airways pose for a group photo during the signing ceremony.

for its customers. These campaigns will mainly showcase the breadth of services and advanced solutions that this protocol will introduce to both customers and crew.

Training, Development, and Community Initiatives

In terms of social responsibility,

the companies will implement initiatives that serve the Kuwaiti community, while supporting the community’s sustainable development. These initiatives will spread awareness on environmental, educational, and social programs that reflect the values of both organizations.

Future Outlook and Expansion

Commenting on the agreement, Engineer Muataz Aldharab, CEO of stc, said, “We are proud to have signed this cooperation protocol with Kuwait Airways, which represents an important step in our journey to enable digital transformation in Kuwait. This collaboration reflects

our vision of building long-standing relationships with various sectors in the public sector. It also follows on our commitment to introducing innovative and new-to-market solutions that meet the needs of our growing customer base.”

Aldharab added, “This agreement will introduce new innovative devel-

opments within both sectors as we work together to explore and implement the latest technologies within the telecom and aviation sectors. We believe that such cooperations between pioneers in Kuwait sets the path to achieving excellence and leadership on a local and regional level. Having said that, we look forward to the positive results that will emerge from this protocol, benefiting all parties involved and the Kuwaiti society as a whole.”

On this occasion, Captain Abdulmohsen Salem Alfagaan, Chairman of Kuwait Airways, said, “Kuwait Airways is pleased to host the signing ceremony of a joint cooperation protocol with stc, one of the largest telecom operators in Kuwait. This cooperation underscores Kuwait Airways’ pivotal role in building and strengthening relationships with both the public and private sectors in ways that benefit our beloved country.”

Capt. Alfagaan added, “This protocol between Kuwait Airways and stc represents a significant step forward in expanding our cooperation into new areas and strengthening our ability to achieve our shared objectives. Building on the expertise that we possess within our sectors, we aim to add value and contribute to technology, aviation, telecom, and other sectors. We believe that these objectives will not only serve our interests but also support the growth of our national economy.”

Capt. Alfagaan expressed that Kuwait Airways value stc’s prominent role in providing telecom, internet, and digital solutions to individuals and companies, as well as its contribution to developing the country’s digital infrastructure and delivering innovative services to customers.

He concluded by stating that this protocol is one of the important and fruitful agreements that will play a major role in achieving the desired objectives through successful partnerships. He also commended stc’s tangible efforts in building strong and productive relationships across both the public and private sectors, and its role as a key driver and developer of advanced telecom and ICT solutions.

Other Voices

‘Oil future hinges on privatization push’

If KPC splits its 10 ‘K’ subsidiaries, will it be better for the Kuwaiti oil industry?

By Kamel Al-Harami  
Independent oil analyst

This is a very theoretical assumption, yet it is in the right direction. With more decentralization, the chief executive officer (CEO) will be given the space and time needed to oversee the overall performance of all 10 ‘K’ oil companies -- each with diverse activities such as upstream, downstream, refining, shipping, gas imports, marine agency services, daily administration and more.

There are also surprises, unexpected incidents and accidents in any of the facilities of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) that require full attention. The CEO is often tied up with daily meetings in and outside the KPC headquarters. Even with four or five deputies, it remains difficult to exercise full control under our classic system, which relies heavily on hands-on management of nearly every detail. This is in addition to answering calls from various members of Parliament, often regarding ‘wasta’ to hire or recruit friends, relatives or cousins -- even now, in the absence of Parliament.

Perhaps, with decentralization, each company and subsidiary will become more efficient -- hopefully -- by taking on active responsibility. The idea of splitting KPC is to make it more core-focused, allowing it to concentrate on its essential activities without interference. This will also allow the companies to operate more independently, without constantly looking over each other’s shoulders.

The concept of splitting KPC is not new. Before 1975, Kuwait’s oil industry consisted of various independent oil companies, each serving a specific function. Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) handled refining, Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) took care of shipping and Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) led the petrochemical business. Other ‘K’ companies managed aviation, lube oil, marine



Al-Harami

shipping agencies and overseas downstream investments, including crude oil and gas exploration outside Kuwait.

The time has come to separate them again from KPC -- possibly as a first step toward selling and privatizing non-core oil activities. The main intention is to reduce full government control, as many of our oil companies were originally fully or partially owned by the private sector. For example, KNPC once had 40 percent private shareholders, and our oil tanker and petrochemical companies were initially created and owned by private local merchants.

Therefore, we do not lack experience in converting most of the KPC subsidiaries back to their roots as independent, privately owned companies. This move could prepare the non-core oil companies for eventual privatization.

Meanwhile, the core oil companies -- such as Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), which is responsible for exploration and discovery of crude oil within the State, and the international marketing arm handling the sale of crude oil and petroleum products -- could remain under State control. The rest of the industry could be easily privatized and sold to the private sector or handed back to their original creators and investors.

By privatizing and selling most of our non-core oil businesses back to their original founders, we can return full business responsibility to them, while the State generates massive revenues. This will also unburden the government from non-core operations.

Definitely, it may seem like wishful thinking, but it could become a reality. This model will almost certainly work better for Kuwait’s oil industry and allow it to excel, becoming competitive both locally and internationally.

Let us consider the performance of our local banks, some of our private oil companies, and other commercial entities. Kuwait is not short on creativity and hard work, it only lacks an open opportunity. Our history in pearling and trading is not far behind us.

Will the privatization of our oil industry come to us soon?



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Gulf Bank’s shift spurs Islamic banking debate

Islamic banks gain ground over conventional rivals

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: The Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Kuwait recently gave initial approval for the transformation of Gulf Bank into a Sharia-compliant bank, which is considered an important step toward expanding the scope of Islamic banking in the local market.

The newspaper asked a number of economic and banking experts if Kuwait will become a regional hub for Islamic banking and if the Islamic banking sector already started to pull the rug from under its ‘conventional’ counterpart.

These questions are on the minds of businesspersons and ordinary Kuwaitis.

Some experts confirmed that there are many reasons behind this transformation, the most important of which are the growing market need for Islamic products, financial solvency of Islamic banks, and some citizens who refuse to deal with conventional banks.

Some of them believe that the new step will push for more competition between the two sides and create new banking tools and products that serve the interests of the customers of both Islamic and conventional banks.

Economic expert Mohammad Ramadan believes that the Central Bank’s initial approval of the transformation of Gulf Bank into a bank operating in accordance with the Islamic law does not mean the Islamic banks have pulled the rug from the threshold of conventional banks.

He explained that competition is between Islamic and non-Islamic banks to provide the best services to customers, in addition to competition between conventional and traditional banks.

“If we compare traditional and Islamic banks, this move serves the interests of Islamic banks and expands the scope of competition between Islamic banks. At the same time, competition between conventional banks decreases, given the exit of one of them and its transformation into an Islamic bank,” he elaborated.

Ramadan pointed that the only bank in the country that combines conventional and Islamic transactions is the National Bank of Kuwait, indicating that the conversion to Islamic banks remains an option for customers.

Economic and media activist Faisal Daham Al-Harbi thinks this move is a manifestation of the level of customer confidence in Islamic banks.

He disclosed that in recent years, many citizens and merchants in Kuwait transferred their deposits from conventional banks and to Islamic banks.

He said this is one of the main reasons why some conventional banks intend to transform into banks that operate in accordance with the Islamic Sharia, pointing out that customers -- ordinary citizens and merchants -- fully trust Islamic banks and their reputation in international markets, in addition to their transparency in dealings, which prompted many to consider turning to Islamic banks due to lower risk compared to conventional banks.

He added there are two groups of clients who prefer dealing with

Islamic banks: the first group does not want any suspicion regarding their money, especially loan interest, so they prefer dealing with Islamic banks.

He said the second group is not really concerned about the religious aspect, as they focus on the profitability and high indicators of Islamic banks. He cited the success of Islamic banks led by Kuwait Finance House (KFH), which was once the nucleus of Islamic banks in Kuwait.

Economic expert and lawyer Adhbi Al-Tahnoon stated that when conventional banks carefully studied the market and realized the extent to which many clients deal with Islamic banks, they wanted to transform into banks that deal with Islamic Sharia in order to meet market requirements.

He also mentioned the importance of preserving the role of conventional banks alongside their Islamic counterparts, and that the client has the freedom to choose, especially since there are religious fatwas that permit dealing with conventional banks on the ground that they are institutions, not individuals.

A banking expert, who preferred to remain anonymous, stressed that the decision affirms the strength of Islamic banks in Kuwait.

He said Islamic banks have achieved remarkable profits in recent years, with estimates indicating that Islamic banks have grown significantly compared to their conventional counterparts, particularly since these banks have not only succeeded locally but have also expanded their activities abroad.

He cited as an example the KFH, which has branches in other Gulf states and regional markets such as Malaysia, Turkiye and Egypt.

He pointed out that Islamic banks will welcome the idea of merging with conventional banks as the Central Bank already approved the conversion of a conventional bank to an Islamic bank. He said such a merger has numerous benefits, including enabling the Islamic bank to expand locally and internationally in light of the rising demand for Islamic transactions.

He stated that the merger of Ahli United Bank in Bahrain with KFH greatly contributed to the international expansion of the latter, in addition to increasing its deposits and assets.

He explained that data from international financial institutions showed Kuwait had, over the past several months, recorded the second-highest market share for Islamic banking, surpassed only by Saudi Arabia in Islamic financial markets as a whole.

Kuwait’s Islamic banking market share also exceeds that of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Turkiye, Jordan and Qatar.



Ramadan



Al-Harbi



Al-Tahnoon



To promote a fully digital experience in the real estate market

# KFH signs a strategic partnership with Sakan platform

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has signed a strategic partnership with Sakan Global for General Trading (Sakan), fostering collaboration on real estate and financing opportunities through Sakan's Prop-tech Enabled Platform. This initiative underscores KFH's ongoing commitment to innovation, market leadership, in addition to promoting technology for real estate transactions.

Under this agreement, KFH's retail and corporate customers will enjoy a more seamless and efficient experience when searching for, purchasing, selling, and managing properties. This is achieved by combining KFH's extensive expertise in real estate financing with Sakan's advanced digital solutions.

Commenting on the partnership, KFH Deputy Group CEO, Private Banking, Wealth Management and Business Excellence, Alexander Liddle, said: "We are proud of this strategic partnership, which represents a turning point for Kuwait's real estate market. It affirms our solid commitment to providing innovative solutions for our customers and strengthening our leadership in this vital sector. We have always been keen on being at the forefront of institutions offering real estate products in accordance with Shariah principles. This partnership extends that approach by bringing together our well-established local market expertise with Sakan's latest digital technologies."

He added that, "Innovation is integral to KFH's advancement of banking services. The partnership solidifies this commitment in terms of customer centricity and digital development. It also stimulates the real estate market, and contributes to inclusive economic growth," noted Liddle. "KFH will maintain its leadership in delivering innovative and tailored real estate solutions that meet market needs."

KFH Group Chief Technology and Digital Transformation Officer, Meshaal AlMunaikh, said:



From right: Abdullah Alsaleh, Alexander Liddle, and Meshaal AlMunaikh after signing the agreement.



Officials signing the agreement.



A group photo of some officials from Kuwait Finance House and Sakan.

"This strategic partnership enables us to deliver smart, technology-powered real estate services tailored to the evolving needs of our customers. By integrating our tailored financing tools with Sakan's digital platform, customers will be able to explore

properties, complete financing transactions, and manage the ownership process with ease and flexibility. This approach serves all customer segments comprehensively and conveniently, ensuring streamlined procedures from finding the right property to

completing the purchase." Meanwhile, Sakan's Chief Executive Officer, Abdullah Alsaleh, was proud to announce the partnership, saying: "We consider our collaboration with KFH an important step in our journey towards expan-

sion, delivering innovative digital real estate services, and achieving the strategic vision we have placed when the company was founded in 2019." He explained that the agreement will link listed properties to the Bank's real estate financing

services, provide tools to calculate installments, and expedite pre-approvals, thereby enhancing transparency and simplifying customer experience.

Alsaleh commended KFH's pioneering role in supporting national projects and digital initiatives, noting that Sakan looks forward to expanding its services in the Kuwaiti and Gulf markets over the coming period.

It is worth noting that KFH continues to strengthen its position as a strategic partner in the real estate sector through its active role in promoting transparency and developing capabilities. This includes its regular quarterly Real Estate Reports, which offer comprehensive, objective analysis of Kuwait's property market which provides investors and stakeholders with accurate data to support informed decision making.

Beyond market insights, KFH has also invested in building specialized professional competencies through the launch of the Certified Real Estate Appraiser Program, the first of its kind in Kuwait. This pioneering initiative raises professional standards in real estate appraisal and supports the market with qualified experts who possess the knowledge and skills needed to bolster confidence in real estate transactions, thereby contributing to the sector's economic growth.

### Liddle:

- This partnership affirms our commitment to innovation, leadership and supporting the national economic development

### AlMunaikh:

- KFH offers smart technology-powered real estate solutions to complete financing transactions and the property ownership process

### Alsaleh:

- Sakan's collaboration with KFH is integral to providing innovative real estate services

## Global REITs outshine property in liquidity

By NBK Wealth

What are REITs? Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) are companies that own, operate, or finance income producing real estate. They allow investors to access real estate without directly owning property. Most REITs are publicly traded on major stock exchanges, providing investors with diversified real estate exposure through shares, eliminating the need to directly purchase physical assets.

### Types of REITs

While REITs are generally classified by the type of properties they invest in, some offer diversified exposure across multiple sectors. In addition to publicly traded REITs, investors can access public non-listed and private REITs.

### REITs are broadly categorized into two main types:

- **Equity REITs** own and operate income-generating real estate.
- **Mortgage REITs (mREITs)** invest in real estate debt and mortgage-backed securities.
- **Investors** can participate in REITs by purchasing shares of publicly traded REITs, mutual funds, or exchange-traded funds (ETFs).

### Why Invest in REITs?

- **Access to a High-Barrier Asset Class:** Direct investment in real estate is illiquid, capital-intensive, and requires specialized management. REITs provide an efficient, liquid way to gain exposure to real estate, eliminating



the operational and financial complexities of direct ownership.

- **Income with Capital Appreciation Potential:** REITs listed in the U.S. are required to distribute most of their taxable income as dividends. They may also provide capital appreciation as property values rise, and act as a hedge against inflation.
- **Liquidity, Transparency and Low Costs:** REITs offer liquidity and transparency with lower transaction costs compared to direct property investment. Regulatory requirements enhance investor protection.
- **Diversification:** REITs allow diversification across property types, sectors, and geographies, reducing concentration risk to a single property.
- **Professional Management:** REITs are managed by experienced professionals in property acquisition, development, and management, improving operational efficiency and investment returns.

### Why Invest in REITs Now?

REITs are sensitive to interest rate movements. In a declining rate environment, they benefit from lower borrowing costs, higher property valuations, and more attractive dividend yields compared to other income-generating assets.

- **Lower Borrowing Costs:** REITs typically use debt to finance property acquisitions and development projects. Hence lower cost of



borrowing enables them to access capital at more favorable terms.

- **Higher Property Values:** When borrowing costs decline, demand for real estate increases, which would lead to higher valuations for the REITs' underlying properties.
- **Attractive Dividends:** Stable rental income supports consistent or growing dividends, appealing to income-focused investors.
- **Stable Income:** Lower interest rates reduce bond yields, making REITs relatively more attractive for income-seeking investors due to their higher, steady dividends.

### The Role of REITs in a Portfolio

REITs offer income, diversification, inflation protection, and liquidity. Because real estate cycles are typically longer (10-18 years) than average business cycles (4-5 years), REITs can provide stable income during market fluctuations.

Adding REITs to a portfolio may improve risk-adjusted returns, as real estate performance often differs from that of other asset classes.

Investors, however, should consult their financial advisors to align REIT allocations with their investment goals, considering their unique risks and tax implications.

### Key Considerations

- **Risks and limitations of REITs investing:**
- **Higher Tax Rates:** REIT dividends are generally taxed as ordinary income reducing after-tax returns compared to some stocks.
- **Volatility:** Publicly traded REITs can be more volatile than direct real estate holdings.
- **Sector-Specific Risks:** REITs concentrated in a single sector face heightened exposure to sector downturns.
- **Interest Rates:** REITs are sensitive to changes in interest rates; rising rates can reduce yields and property values.

### Key Takeaways

- REITs simplify real estate investing, eliminating the complexities of direct ownership.
- REITs generally distribute most of their income as dividends, supporting stable cash flow in portfolios.
- REITs offer defensive characteristics due to real estate's longer cycles compared to average business cycles.
- REITs offer diversified exposure across property types and geographies and are managed by experienced professionals.
- REITs are liquid, cost-efficient, and transparent.
- Investors should be mindful of tax implications, as REIT dividends are taxed as ordinary income.

Banking, telecom lead profit growth

## Boursa Kuwait firms' H1 profits plunge 13.7% to KD 1.243 billion

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23, (KUNA): A recent report by Al-Shall Consulting revealed that 135 companies listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) recorded combined net profits of approximately KWD 1.243 billion (USD 3.7 billion) during the first half of 2025, reflecting a 13.7 percent decline compared with the KWD 1.440 billion (USD 4.3 billion) earned in the same period in 2024.

The companies included in the report represent about 96.4 percent of the KSE's total 140 listed firms, excluding entities that have yet to release their results or operate under different fiscal calendars.

According to the findings, corporate earnings weakened significantly in the second quarter of 2025, falling by 30.8 percent compared with the first quarter. Profits slipped to KWD 508.4 million (USD 1.5 billion) in Q2, down from KWD 734.4 million (USD 2.2 billion) in Q1.

Despite the overall decline, the report highlighted improved performance for 84 companies compared to the first half of 2024. Of these, 70 companies posted higher profits, while another 14 either returned to profitability or reduced their losses. Collectively, this means 62.2 percent of firms showed positive developments. On the other hand, 51 companies reported weaker results, with 34 recording earnings contractions, and 17 turning losses or deepening existing losses.

Performance diverged across sectors. Seven out of 13 sectors posted improved profitability year-on-year, while six sectors saw declines.

**Banking Sector:** Led performance with profits of KWD 882.2 million (USD 2.6 billion), up 4.3 percent from KWD 845.8 million (USD 2.5 billion) in the first half of 2024.

**Financial Services Sector:** Ranked second, reporting strong growth of 23.8 percent. Profits rose to KWD 215.4 million (USD 657 million), compared to KWD 174 million (USD 531 million) a year earlier.

**Telecommunications Sector:** Came third, with profits jumping 45.8 percent to KWD 179.9 million (USD 548.6 million) from KWD 123.4 million (USD 376.3 million) in the same period of 2024.

By contrast, the industrial sector faced the steepest downturn, swinging from profits of KWD 83.3 million (USD 254 million) in the first half of 2024 to losses of KWD 207.7 million (USD 633.4 million) in the same period this year — a deterioration of KWD 291 million (USD 887.5 million).

The report concluded that while the majority of companies showed resilience, particularly in banking, financial services, and telecommunications, deep losses in the industrial sector and weaker second-quarter performance highlight challenges that could weigh on overall market growth in 2025.

## Green power application zone to debut at China-Arab expo

YINCHUAN, Aug 23, (Xinhua): The seventh China-Arab States Expo will feature its first-ever green power application zone, highlighting cutting-edge solutions for renewable energy consumption, organizers announced on Friday.

Set to run from Aug. 28 to 31 in Yinchuan, capital of northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, the expo's newly added zone will showcase how green electricity transitions from generation to real-world applications -- thereby facilitating China-Arab cooperation in the field of clean energy technologies.

Exhibits will focus on integrated

power grid systems that combine generation, transmission, consumption and storage to enhance grid stability and renewable energy utilization efficiency. Operation of direct green power supply and integrated development of green electricity with agriculture in desertified areas will also be presented at the exhibition area.

The whole of the expo's exhibition area will be powered by green electricity through a green power trading platform, to show the public the feasibility of large-scale application of clean energy.

## Turkiye's central bank ends FX-protected KKM accounts to bolster financial stability

ISTANBUL, Aug 23, (KUNA): The Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye (CBRT) decided to terminate the opening and renewal of FX-protected deposit (KKM) accounts (excluding YUVAM accounts), effective August 23, 2025.

Accounts opened prior to this date will remain valid until their maturity, following which the relevant Communiqués will be repealed, the Bank said in a press release on Saturday.

With the termination of KKM accounts, the total target for KKM accounts' transition to New Turkish Lira (TRY) and renewals has been abolished.

Accordingly, the CBRT has revised its regulations on reserve requirement remuneration and commission practices, the statement added.

Commenting on the decision, Minister of Treasury and Finance Mehmet Simsek said the termination of deposits protected against fluctuation of foreign exchange rates would strengthen the country's financial stability.

The total value of KKM accounts, which hit TRY 3.4 trillion (USD 140 billion) in August 2023, slid dramatically to USD 32.5 billion in early 2025 and then to TRY 441 billion (USD 11 billion) at present, the minister added.

Simsek says move strengthens financial stability



## BUSINESS

# Powell hints at possible Fed rate cut amid sluggish hiring

Stock market rises

**JACKSON HOLE, Aug 23, (AP): Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Friday opened the door ever so slightly to lowering a key interest rate in the coming months but gave no hint on the timing of a move and suggested the central bank will proceed cautiously as it continues to evaluate the impact of tariffs and other policies on the economy.**

In a high-profile speech closely watched at the White House and on Wall Street, Powell said that there are risks of both rising unemployment and stubbornly higher inflation. Yet he suggested that with hiring sluggish, the job market could weaken further.

“The shifting balance of risks may warrant adjusting our policy stance,” he said, a reference to his concerns about weaker job gains and a more direct sign that the Fed is considering a rate cut than he has made in previous comments.

Still, Powell’s remarks suggest the Fed will proceed carefully in the coming months and will make its rate decisions based on how inflation and unemployment evolve. The Fed has three more meetings this year, including next month, in late October, and in December, and it’s not clear whether the Fed will cut at all those meetings.

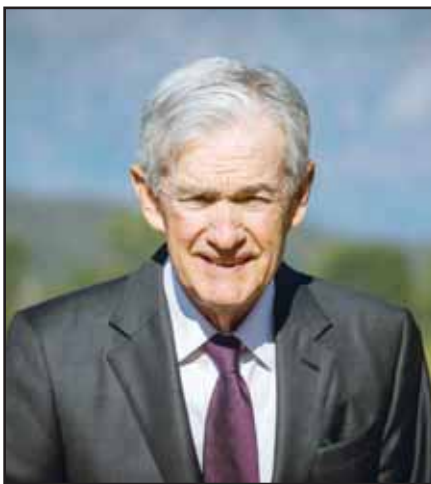
“The stability of the unemployment rate and other labor market measures allows us to proceed carefully as we consider changes to our policy stance,” Powell said. That suggests the Fed will continue to evaluate jobs and inflation data as it decides whether to cut rates.

The stock market jumped in response to Powell’s remarks, with the broad S&P 500 index rising 1.5% in midday trading.

“We see Powell’s remarks as consistent with our expectation of” a quarter-point cut to the Fed’s short-term rate at its Sept. 16-17 meeting, economists at Goldman Sachs wrote in a note to clients. The Fed’s rate currently stands at 4.3%.

Powell spoke with the Fed under unprecedented public scrutiny from the White House, as President Donald Trump has repeatedly insulted Powell and has urged him to cut rates, arguing there is “no inflation” and saying that a cut would lower the government’s interest payments on its \$37 trillion in debt.

Trump also says a cut would boost the moribund housing market. A rate cut by the Fed often leads to lower borrowing costs for mortgages, car loans, and business borrowing, but it doesn’t always.



Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell walks outside of Jackson Lake Lodge during a break at the Jackson Hole Economic Policy Symposium in Moran, Wyo., on Friday, Aug. 22, 2025. (AP)

While Powell spoke, Trump elevated his attacks, telling reporters in Washington, D.C. that he would fire Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook if she did not step down over allegations from an administration official that she committed mortgage fraud.

If Cook is removed, that would give Trump an opportunity to put a loyalist on the Fed’s governing board. The Fed has long been considered independent from day-to-day politics. The president can’t fire a Fed governor over disagreements on interest rate policy, but he can do so “for cause,” which is generally seen as malfeasance or neglect of duty. (backslash)

Powell spoke at the Fed’s annual economic symposium in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, a conference with about 100 academics, economists, and central bank officials from around the world. He was given a standing ovation before he spoke.

Cook, who is also attending the conference, declined to comment on the president’s remarks.

In his remarks, the Fed chair underscored that tariffs are lifting inflation and could push it higher in the coming months.

“The effects of tariffs on consumer prices are now clearly visible. We expect those effects to accumulate over coming months, with high uncertainty about timing and amounts,” Powell said.

Inflation has crept higher in recent months though it is down from a peak of 9.1% three years ago. Tariffs have not spurred inflation as much as some economists worried, but they are starting to lift the prices of heavily imported goods such as furniture, toys, and shoes.

Consumer prices rose 2.7% in July from a year ago, above the Fed’s target of 2%. Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices rose 3.1%.

Powell added that higher prices from tariffs could cause a one-time shift to prices, rather than an ongoing bout of inflation. Other Fed officials have said that is the most likely outcome and as a result the central bank can cut rates to boost the job market.

The Fed chair said it is largely up to the central bank to ensure that tariffs don’t lead to sustained inflation.

“Come what may, we will not allow a one-time increase in the price level to become an ongoing inflation problem,” he said, suggesting deep rate cuts, as Trump has demanded, are unlikely.

Regarding the job market, Powell noted that even as hiring has slowed sharply this year, the unemployment rate remains low. He added that with immigration falling sharply, fewer jobs are needed to keep unemployment in check.

Yet with hiring sluggish, the risks of a sharper downturn, with rising layoffs, has risen, Powell said.

Powell also suggested the Fed would continue to set its interest-rate policy free from political pressure.

Fed officials “will make these decisions, based solely on their assessment of the data and its implications for the economic outlook and the balance of risks. We will never deviate from that approach.”

Powell dedicated the second half of his speech to announcing changes to the Fed’s policy framework that was issued in August 2020. The framework, which has been blamed for delaying the Fed’s response to the pandemic inflation spike, provides guidelines on how the Fed would respond to changes in inflation and employment.

In 2020, after a decade of low inflation and low interest rates following the financial crisis and Great Recession in 2008-2009, the Fed changed its framework to allow inflation to top its 2% target temporarily, so that inflation would average 2% over time.

And after unemployment fell to a half-century low in 2018, without pushing up inflation, the 2020 framework said that the Fed would focus only on “shortfalls” in employment, rather than “deviations.” That meant it would cut rates if unemployment rose, but wouldn’t necessarily raise them if it fell.

The Fed reviewed its framework this year and concluded that it was tied too closely to the pre-pandemic economy, which has since shifted. Inflation spiked to a four-decade high in 2022 and the Fed rapidly boosted interest rates afterward.

computer chips.

It said U.S. experts on AI had said such chips have “mature tracking and location and remote shutdown technologies” and Nvidia had been asked to explain any such risks and provide documentation about the issue.

Huang said Nvidia was surprised by the accusation and was discussing the issue with Beijing.

“As you know, they requested and urged us to secure licenses for the H20s for some time. And I’ve worked quite hard to help them secure the licenses. And so hopefully this will be resolved,” Huang said.

Unconfirmed reports said Chinese authorities were also unhappy over comments by U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick suggesting the U.S. was only selling outdated chips to China.

Speaking on CNBC, Lutnick said the U.S. strategy was to keep China reliant on American chip technology.

“We don’t sell them our best stuff,” he said. “Not our second best stuff. Not even our third best, but I think fourth best is where we’ve come out that we’re cool,” he said.

China’s ruling Communist Party has made self-reliance in advanced technology a strategic priority, though it still relies on foreign semiconductor knowhow for much of what it produces.

## USMCA review to begin ahead of 2026

# Canada drops retaliatory tariffs to match US exemptions

**TORONTO, Aug 23, (AP):** Canada is dropping many of its retaliatory tariffs to match U.S. tariff exemptions for goods covered under the United States-Mexico-Canada trade pact, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced Friday.

Carney said Canada will include the carve-out that the U.S. has on Canadian goods under the 2020 free trade deal that shields the vast majority of goods from the punishing duties, easing Canada’s previous stance on holding the line on punitive tariffs until U.S. President Donald Trump relents more on those imposed by the U.S.

Some Canadian politicians and union leaders characterized Carney’s move as capitulation, but the prime minister accentuated what he considered Canada’s favorable position so far and said that the exemptions would jump-start further trade talks with Washington.

“Canada currently has the best trade deal with the United States. And while it’s different from what we had before, it’s still better than that of any other country,” Carney said.

Carney and Trump spoke on the phone Thursday, and Carney met with his Cabinet on Friday before making the announcement.

“We had a very good call,” Trump said Friday in the Oval Office. “We are working on something. We want to be very good to Canada. I like Carney a lot. I think he’s a very good person.” He also said: “I am fighting for the United States, and Canada and Mexico have taken a lot of our business over the years.”

Carney said Trump told him that lifting the tariffs would reset trade negotiations. The United States-Mexico-Canada trade pact, or USMCA, is up for

review in 2026, and Carney called the pact a unique advantage for Canada at a time when it is clear that the U.S. is charging for access to its market.

Carney said the commitment of the U.S. to the core of USMCA means that over 85% of Canada-U.S. trade continues to be free of tariffs. He said the U.S. average tariff rate on Canadian goods is 5.6% and remains the lowest among all its trading partners.

Canadian and Mexican companies can claim preferential treatment under the USMCA.

Canada and China are the only countries that have retaliated against Trump in his trade war. Canada imposed 25% tariffs on a long list of American goods in March, including oranges, alcohol, clothing and shoes, motorcycles and cosmetics.

Former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau initially put on retaliatory tariffs in response to U.S. tariffs, but before the U.S. tariffs were applied the Trump administration exempted goods covered by the free trade deal.

Most imports from Canada and Mexico are still protected by the USMCA, but U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick has said, “I think the president is absolutely going to renegotiate USMCA.”

Preserving the free trade pact will be critical for Canada and Mexico. More than 75% of Canada’s exports go to the U.S. while more than 80% of Mexico’s exports go there.

Trump has announced some sector-specific tariffs that do apply for Canada despite the USMCA - known as 232 tariffs - which are having an impact on the Canadian economy. There is a 50% tariff on steel and aluminum imports,

## CEO praises White House confidence

# Trump admin secures 10% Intel stake despite CEO controversy

**WASHINGTON, Aug 23, (AP):** President Donald Trump on Friday announced the U.S. government has secured a 10% stake in struggling Silicon Valley pioneer Intel in a deal that was completed just a couple weeks after he was depicting the company’s CEO as a conflicted leader unfit for the job.

“The United States of America now fully owns and controls 10% of INTEL, a Great American Company that has an even more incredible future,” Trump wrote in a post.

The U.S. government is getting the stake through the conversion of \$11.1 billion in previously issued funds and pledges. All told, the government is getting 433.3 million shares of non-voting stock priced at \$20.47 apiece - a discount from Friday’s closing price at \$24.80. That spread means the U.S. government already has a gain of \$1.9 billion, on paper.

The remarkable turn of events makes the U.S. government one of Intel’s largest shareholders at a time that the Santa Clara, California, company is in the process of jettisoning more than 20,000 workers as part of its latest attempt to bounce back from years of missteps taken under a variety of CEOs.

Intel’s current CEO, Lip-Bu Tan, has only been on the job for slightly more than five months, and earlier this month, it looked like he might be on shaky ground already after some lawmakers raised national security concerns about his past investments in Chinese companies while he was a venture capitalist. Trump latched on to those concerns in an August 7 post demanding that Tan resign.

But Trump backed off after the Malaysian-born Tan professed his allegiance to the U.S. in a public letter to Intel employees and went to the White House to meet with the president, leading to a deal that now has the U.S. government betting that the company is on the comeback trail after losing more than \$22 billion since the end of 2023. Trump hailed Tan as “highly respected” CEO in his Friday post.

In a statement, Tan applauded Trump for “driving historic investments in a vital industry” and resolved to reward his faith in Intel. “We are grateful for the confidence the President and the Administration have placed in Intel, and we look forward to working to advance U.S. technology and manufacturing leadership,” Tan said.

Intel’s current stock price is just slightly above where it was when Tan was hired in March and more than 60% below its peak of about \$75 reached 25 years ago when its chips were still dominating the personal computer boom before being undercut by a shift to smartphones a few years later. The company’s market value currently stands at about \$108 billion - a fraction of the current chip kingpin, Nvidia, which is valued at \$4.3 trillion.

The stake is coming primarily through U.S. government grants to Intel through the CHIPS and Science Act that was started under President Joe Biden’s administration as a way to foster more domestic manufacturing of computer chips to lessen the dependence on overseas factories.

But the Trump administration, which has regularly pilloried the policies of the Biden administration, saw the CHIPS act as a needless giveaway and is now hoping to make a profit off the funding that had been pledged to Intel.

“We think America should get the benefit of the bargain,” U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said earlier this week. “It’s obvious that it’s the right move to make.”

About \$7.8 billion had been pledged to Intel under the incentives program, but only \$2.2 billion had been funded so far. Another \$3.2 billion of the government investment is coming through the funds from another program called “Secure Enclave.”

Although U.S. government can’t vote with its shares and won’t have a seat on Intel’s board of directors, critics of the deal view it as a troubling cross-pollination between the public and private sectors that could hurt the tech industry in a variety of ways.

For instance, more tech companies may feel pressured to buy potentially inferior chips from Intel to curry favor with Trump at a time that he is already waging a trade war that threatens to affect their products in a potential scenario cited by Scott Lincincome, vice president of general economics for the Cato Institute.

“Overall, it’s a horrendous move that will have real harms for U.S. companies, U.S. tech leadership, and the U.S. economy overall,” Lincincome posted Friday.

The 10% stake could also intensify the pressure already facing Tan, especially if Trump starts fixating on Intel’s stock price while resorting to his penchant for celebrating his past successes in business.

Nancy Tengler, CEO of money manager Laffer Tengler Investments, is among the investors who abandoned Intel years ago because of all the challenges facing Intel.

“I don’t see the benefit to the American taxpayer, nor do I see the benefit, necessarily to the chip industry,” Tengler said while also raising worries about Trump meddling in Intel’s business.

“I don’t care how good of businessman you are, give it to the private sector and let people like me be the critic and let the government get to the business of government,” Tengler said.

Although rare, it’s not unprecedented for the U.S. government to become a significant shareholder in a prominent company. One of the most notable instances occurred during the Great Recession in 2008 when the government injected nearly \$50 billion into General Motors in return for a roughly 60% stake in the automaker at a time it was on the verge of bankruptcy. The government ended up with a roughly \$10 billion loss after it sold its stock in GM.

The U.S. government’s stake in Intel coincides with Trump’s push to bring production to the U.S., which has been a focal point of the trade war that he has been waging throughout the world. By lessening the country’s dependence on chips manufactured overseas, the president believes the U.S. will be better positioned to maintain its technological lead on China in the race to create artificial intelligence.

Even before gaining the 10% stake in Intel, Trump had been leveraging his power to reprogram the operations of major computer chip companies. The administration is requiring Nvidia and Advanced Micro Devices, two companies whose chips are powering the AI craze, to pay a 15% commission on their sales of chips in China in exchange for export licenses.

# European postal services halt US shipments amid tariff uncertainty

**ATHENS, Aug 23, (AP):** Multiple postal services around Europe announced Saturday that they are suspending the shipment of many packages to the United States amid a lack of clarity over new import duties.

Postal services in Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Italy said they will stop shipping most merchandise to the U.S. effective immediately. France and Austria will follow Monday, and the United Kingdom Tuesday.

Under a decree signed by President Donald Trump last month, international goods that were previously exempt from U.S. tariffs - those valued under \$800 - will be subject to import duties from Aug. 29. Letters, books, gifts and small parcels worth less than \$100 will continue to be exempt.

A trade framework agreed by the U.S. and the European Union last month set a 15% tariff on the vast majority of products shipped from the EU.

Many European postal services say they are pausing deliveries now because they cannot guarantee the goods will enter the U.S. before Aug. 29. They cite ambiguity about what kind of goods are covered by the new rules, and the lack of time to process their implications.

Starting Saturday, Deutsche Post and DHL Parcel Germany said they “will no longer be able to accept and transport parcels and postal items containing goods from business customers destined for the US.”

PostNord, the Nordic logistics company, and Italy’s postal service announced similar suspensions effective Saturday.

“In the absence of different instructions from US authorities ... Poste Italiane will be forced, like other European postal operators, to temporarily suspend acceptance of all shipments containing goods destined for the United States, starting August 23. Mail shipments not containing merchandise will continue to be accepted,” Poste Italiane said Friday.

Shipping by services such as DHL Express remains possible, it added.

Björn Bergman, head of PostNord’s Group Brand and Communication, said the pause was “unfortunate but necessary to ensure full compliance of the newly implemented rules.”

In the Netherlands, PostNL spokesperson Wout Witteveen said the Trump administration is pressing ahead with the new duties despite U.S. authorities lacking a system to collect them.





This image released by Focus Features shows Emma Stone in a scene from 'Bugonia.' (AP)

### Heavy-hitting lineup

## 12 films that could steal the spotlight at Venice

VENICE, Aug. 23, (AP) — The Venice Film Festival offers an embarrassment of auteur riches this year. The 82nd edition, which kicks off on Wednesday, has films from Guillermo del Toro, Kathryn Bigelow, Park Chan-wook, Yorgos Lanthimos, Sofia Coppola, Jim Jarmusch, Gus Van Sant and Luca Guadagnino, to name a few. Even Charlie Kaufman has a short film ("How to Shoot a Ghost").

Depending on how they play, some in the lineup will surely be part of the Oscar conversation in the new year, as several filmmakers this year can attest from experience. In 2017, del Toro launched "The Shape of Water" at Venice, where its Golden Lion win was the first of many that awards season, culminating with a best picture and best director prize at the Academy Awards. In 2023, Lanthimos also had a charmed Venice debut for "Poor Things," another Golden Lion winner that would get Emma Stone a best actress Oscar.

Here's a preview of 12 films to get excited about this year.

**"Bugonia"** (Aug. 28, in competition)

It's always an event when Lanthimos teams up with Stone. Described as a science-fiction black comedy and a remake of a South Korean film, "Bugonia" stars Jesse Plemons as a conspiracy-obsessed man who (along with Aidan Delbis) kidnaps Stone's character, the CEO of a pharmaceutical group, because they believe she's an alien. Focus Features plays a late October theatrical release.

**"Jay Kelly"** (Aug. 28, in competition)

Noah Baumbach takes on his own industry, and the idea that coming-of-age stories are only for the young, in "Jay Kelly," casting George Clooney as a movie star on an introspective (and comedic) journey through Europe with his manager Ron (Adam Sandler). Baumbach cowrote the script with Emily Mortimer, who is part of the large ensemble cast including Laura Dern, Billy Crudup and Greta Gerwig. In theaters in November and on Netflix in December.

**"MEGADOC"** (Aug. 28, out of competition)

Another Coppola-related documentary, but this one, directed by Mike Figgis, is about the making of Francis Ford Coppola's "Megalopolis," his decades-in-the-making, self-financed epic. The film takes viewers behind the scenes of the creative process, from the rehearsal space to the set where you can be sure that Shia LaBeouf is going to speak his mind. In theaters Sept. 19.

**"After the Hunt"** (Aug. 29, out of competition)

Julia Roberts plays a beloved and glamorous college professor whose mentee (Ayo Edebiri) accuses her close friend and colleague (Andrew Garfield) of "crossing the line" in this psychosexual drama from Luca Guadagnino. The stacked cast also includes Guadagnino regulars Chloë Sevigny and Michael Stuhlbarg. Amazon MGM Studios will release it in theaters in October.

**"No Other Choice"** (Aug. 29, in competition)

Korean filmmaker Park Chan-wook's highly anticipated follow-up to "Decision to Leave" has been a long time coming. He first mentioned work on an adaptation of Donald Westlake's novel "The Ax" in 2009. The story is about a middle-aged manager at a paper company who grows increasingly, and violently, desperate after being laid off. Lee Byung-hun and Son Yejin star. Neon has not set a release date.

**"Frankenstein"** (Aug. 30, in competition)

Visionary filmmaker Guillermo del Toro's decades-long

dream of adapting Mary Shelley's classic novel, which he has said is his absolute favorite book, has come true. A master of the gothic milieu, his "Frankenstein" stars Oscar Isaac as Dr. Viktor Frankenstein and Jacob Elordi as the monster. It's one of the most anticipated films of the year. Mia Goth, Christoph Waltz and Charles Dance also star. "Frankenstein" is in theaters in October and streaming on Netflix in November.

**"Father Mother Sister Brother"** (Aug. 31, in competition)

Jim Jarmusch directs Tom Waits, Adam Driver, Mayim Bialik, Charlotte Rampling, Cate Blanchett and Vicky Krieps in a triptych anthology film about relationships between adult children. Jarmusch said in a statement that it's an "anti-action film, its subtle and quiet style carefully constructed to allow small details to accumulate." The filmmaker, a Cannes darling, was last on the Lido out of competition with "Coffee and Cigarettes" over 20 years ago. MUBI will release the film in theaters this fall.

**"The Smashing Machine"** (Sept. 29, in competition)

Is Dwayne Johnson destined for an Oscar nomination? His transformation into MMA and UFC fighter Mark Kerr, a champion and addict, might just be the ticket, with filmmaker Benny Safdie (who codirected "Uncut Gems") at the helm and Emily Blunt playing his wife. A24 will release it in theaters in October.

**"The Testament of Ann Lee"** (Sept. 1, in competition)

Amanda Seyfried plays the founding leader of the Shakers, the 18th century religious sect, in a musical drama from filmmaker Mona Fastvold, who cowrote "The Testament of Ann Lee" with her partner Brady Corbett. Like "The Brutalist," which Fastvold shared writing duties on, it was also shot on 70 mm film, but runs a slimmer 130 minutes. The cast includes Thomasin McKenzie, Lewis Pullman, Stacy Martin, Tim Blake Nelson and Christopher Abbott.

**"A House of Dynamite"** (Sept. 2, in competition)

Not too much is known about Kathryn Bigelow's political thriller, set inside the White House around an impending missile strike on the US and starring Idris Elba and Rebecca Ferguson. It's the Oscar winner's first film since "Detroit" came out in 2017, and written by former NBC News president Noah Oppenheim, whose script for "Jackie" won the best screenplay prize at Venice in 2016. Netflix plans an October release for both streaming and theatrical.

**"Marc by Sofia"** (Sept. 2, out of competition)

Sofia Coppola follows in her late mother's footsteps by directing a documentary (her first), about fashion designer Marc Jacobs. Their friendship goes back to the early 1990s in New York. It's a relationship that goes beyond muse territory and has spawned numerous collaborations. She even wore one of his dresses when she won her first Oscar. For fashion and film fans, it's a must-see. A24 has not set a release date.

**"The Voice of Hind Rajab"** (Sept. 3, in competition)

Set entirely inside the Red Crescent Society call center, Tunisian filmmaker Kaouther Ben Hania tells the story of the efforts to rescue the young girl Hind Rajab from her family's shot-out car in Gaza City last January, using the real audio of her voice.

Festival head Alberto Barbera predicted that it "will be one of the films that will get the most intense response from everybody ... not only political reasons but for emotional, human reasons." The film is seeking distribution.

### Acoustic simplicity elevates songs' swing and sway

## Batiste opts for chill vibe on new album 'Big Money'

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 23, (AP) — On "Big Money," Super Bowl-sized singer Jon Batiste opts for a surprisingly intimate sound.

The just over 32-minute, nine-song set released Friday, and it's not nearly as loud as the New Orleans' jazzman's eye-popping wardrobe. The stripped-down, mostly acoustic arrangements create a chill vibe. Simplicity somehow only intensifies the songs' swing and sway.

Batiste pairs lyrics about devotion, values, angels and ecology with music that mixes folk and funk, gospel and the blues. The range is such that Batiste even plays a little fiddle and mandolin, but he shines brightest on two songs featuring his solo piano.

The first is a wonderful duet with Randy Newman, another piano man with New Orleans roots, who in recent years has been slowed by health issues and kept a low profile. They cover Doc Pomus' "Lonely Avenue," and Newman's legendarily froggy tenor provides a comical contrast to Batiste's vocal sheen. "I could die, I could die, I could die," Newman sings. "It sounds like I'm



This album cover image released by Interscope/Verve shows 'Big Money' by Jon Batiste. (AP)

dying."

Also stellar is "Maybe," a ballad filled with

thick chords and questions about the big picture. "Or maybe we should all just take a collective pause," Batiste sings, before launching into a keyboard exploration worthy of Jelly Roll Morton.

The bouncy "Lean on My Love" draws from Prince, Sly Stone and the Spinners as Batiste sings in unison with Andra Day. The equally buoyant title cut rhymes "money" and "dummy" in a strummy sing-along that includes backing vocals by the Womack Sisters, granddaughters of soul singer Sam Cooke.

"Pinnacle" chooses a similar tempo to kick up Delta dust around a delightful word salad. "Hop scotch/Double Dutchie jumping rope/Twistin' it and ya wobble it/And let it go," he sings on one verse.

Batiste's gospel influences are most evident on the closing reggae tune "Angels" and the ballad "Do It All Again," a love song that could be interpreted as secular or spiritual.

"When I'm happy, it's your shine," Batiste sings. As always, he makes joy sound genuine.

### Film



This image released by Neon shows, (from left), Michael Angelo Covino, Kyle Marvin, Adria Arjona, and Dakota Johnson in a scene from 'Splitville.' (AP)

Johnson shines amid male mayhem

## A rom-com roller coaster in 'Splitville'

By Jake Coyle

You can say this: Michael Angelo Covino and Kyle Marvin know how to start a movie.

Their 2020 breakout film, "The Climb," begins with two best friends on a bike ride just before Kyle (Marvin) is to be wed. Mid-climb, Mike (Covino) confesses he slept with the bride-to-be. In one long take, an argument on two wheels ensues, with huffing and puffing in between.

Their new follow-up to that film, "Splitville," likewise kicks off with heartbreak on the open road. This time, Carey (Marvin), a gym teacher, is driving along a highway with his life coach wife, Ashley (Adria Arjona). They seem happy enough, though there are hints of trouble. When Ashley says she wants to have new experiences, Carey suggests pottery. Ashley corrects him: "I meant sexual."

When an erratic driver careens off the road, they run to check on the passengers. Finding the woman thrown clear of the car, Ashley - faced with her own mortality - decides then and there to get a divorce.

In both "The Climb" and "Splitville," these are just the first sharp turns in relationship roller coasters that unfold in clattering one-take set pieces mixed with nakedly frank heart-to-hearts. Their movies - Covino directs; they write together - are

a little like Wile E. Coyote versions of a rom-com. And part of their considerable appeal is in how much Marvin and Covino are willing to put themselves through the ringer.

Like "The Climb," "Splitville" is a relationship farce that keeps amplifying and recycling. From the scene of the accident, as the credits unspool, Carey trudges seemingly aimless across the countryside. (Splitville is Nowheresville.) Eventually, though, he arrives at the handsome lakeside home of his childhood best friend, Paul (Covino), who lives there with his wife Julie (Dakota Johnson) and young son Russ (Simon Webster).

### Relationship

Paul and Carey have a close enough relationship that Paul comes right into the shower to check for ticks on Carey. Later that night, he and Julie casually acknowledge that they have an open marriage. Julie, for instance, could sleep with anyone. Even Carey, they note.

Much of the fun of "Splitville" is seeing how things topple from here, but it's obvious enough that Julie and Paul's agreement will get tested, very quickly. From there, the four central characters of the film - Carey, Paul, Julie and Ashley - will take various turns in less of a romantic triangle than an adult game of musical chairs.

Though there are elaborately choreographed

long takes that smack of contemporary moviemaking, "Splitville" belongs more to a screwball tradition stretching back to the 1930s. This is - even here in the low ebb of late summer - an uncommonly adult farce of infidelity that Cary Grant and Irene Dunne might have chuckled at, even if they didn't get the "Vanilla Sky" reference, the digs about New Balance sneakers or the delight of seeing Nicholas Braun turn up, late in the film, as a mentalist.

I'm convinced, though, that the performer here who would have been most at home in that bygone comedy heyday is Johnson. For the second time this year, following "Materlists," she finds herself caught between the affections of two men. Here, just her watchful poise brings a welcome perspective on the mostly male mayhem around her.

The twists and turns of "Splitville" can grow a little tiresome. Reversals pile on top of each other. But in a movie about infidelity where everyone is lying more to themselves than to their partners, those patterns effectively lead back to where everyone started.

"Splitville," a Neon release is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language throughout, sexual content and graphic nudity. Running time: 100 minutes. Three stars out of four. (AP)

### Variety

**LOS ANGELES:** Rapper Lil Nas X was arrested and briefly taken to a hospital for a suspected overdose Thursday after Los Angeles police say he charged at officers responding to a report of a naked man walking on a busy boulevard.

Lil Nas X, whose legal name is Montero Lamar Hill, was booked on suspicion of misdemeanor obstructing an officer and was being held in jail.

Officers found him walking on the normally very busy Ventura Boulevard in the Studio City neighborhood shortly before 6 a.m., Los Angeles police spokesman Officer Charles Miller said.

After charging at arriving police, he was taken into custody, but the officers, suspecting a drug overdose, took him to a hospital first, Miller said. There was no further word on his condition, but he was released from the hospital and taken to jail after just a few hours.

Video obtained by TMZ appeared to show him on the street wearing only underwear and boots.

He was being held at Valley Jail in Van Nuys, near where the police found him.

Messages to Lil Nas X representatives seeking comment were not immediately answered.

The 26-year-old rapper and singer from Atlanta is



Lil Nas X

best known for his huge hit from 2018, "Old Town Road," which merged country and hip-hop. It spent a record 19 weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100. (AP)

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**LOS ANGELES:** Millie Bobby Brown and Jake Bongiovi adopted a daughter, the first child for the married couple, this summer, they announced Thursday.

"We are beyond excited to embark on this beautiful next chapter of parenthood in both peace and privacy," the couple wrote in a social media statement. No further details were released.

Brown, 21, and Bongiovi, 23, were married in a private ceremony in May 2024. Representatives for Brown and Bongiovi did not immediately respond to The Associated Press' request for comment.

Brown gained recognition for her starring role as Eleven in the Duffer brothers' sci-fi series "Stranger Things." The fifth and final season will air this November and December, a culmination of nine years of the show's production. The British actor has pursued other acting and business ventures in that time, including the Netflix original "Enola Holmes" films and a "Godzilla" film. She even released a romance book in 2023.

Bongiovi is the son of Jon Bon Jovi, founder and frontman of the rock band Bon Jovi. Bongiovi debuted his own acting career as the star in "Rockbottom," which released last year.

Brown stressed the importance of family during the 2024 premiere of her Netflix film "Damsel,"

where Bongiovi and his parents were in attendance.

"I'm just so lucky that they're here tonight and it just means so much to me," Brown told The Associated Press then. "Family is everything and just to have my second family here means everything." (AP)

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**DAKAR, Senegal:** Ghanaian singer Shatta Wale was taken into custody in connection with a US fraud investigation tied to his luxury vehicle, authorities said Thursday.

Ghana's Economic and Organized Crime Office, EOCO, said Wale voluntarily appeared for questioning Wednesday as part of a US government request to investigate the origins of his 2019 Lamborghini Urus.

He was released Thursday on bail.

The investigation is part of a larger probe into a "\$4 million crime that occurred in the US involving some Ghanaians and the recovery of the crime's proceeds," EOCO said in a statement.

The case centers on Nana Kwabena Amuah, a Ghanaian national, who was sentenced in 2023 to seven years in a US federal prison for his role in a \$4 million scheme to defraud the city of Lexington, Kentucky, by impersonating nonprofit organizations and tricking city officials into wiring money into a series of shell companies.

US authorities suspect Wale's vehicle was purchased with the proceeds of the Kentucky case, according to EOCO.

Wale has said he is unable to identify the individual he bought the car from. (AP)



Tea masters urge respect for matcha’s roots

Matcha madness leaves Japan’s tea ceremony pros skeptical

TOKYO, Aug 23, (AP): Clad in an elegant kimono of pale green, tea ceremony instructor Keiko Kaneko uses a tiny wooden spoon to place a speck of matcha into a porcelain bowl.

She froths up the special powdered Japanese green tea with a bamboo whisk after pouring hot water with a ladle from a pot simmering over hot coal.

Her solemn, dance-like movements celebrate a Zenlike transient moment, solitude broken up by the ritualistic sharing of a drink.

No wonder Kaneko and others serious about “sado,” or “the way of tea,” are a bit taken aback by how matcha is suddenly popping up in all sorts of things, from lattes and ice cream to cakes and chocolate.

No one knows for sure who started the global matcha boom, which has been going on for several years. But it’s clear that harvests, especially of fine-grade matcha, can’t keep up with demand.

Matcha is a type of tea that’s grown in shade, steamed and then ground into a very fine powder. It’s processed differently from regular green tea, with the best matcha ground using stone mills, and switching from one to the other takes time. No farmer wants to switch and then find that matcha fever has died.

The Japanese agricultural ministry has been working to boost tea growth, offering help for farmers with new machines, special soil, financial aid and counseling to try to coax tea growers to switch to matcha from regular green “sencha” tea.

“We don’t want this to end up just a fad, but instead make matcha a standard as a flavor and Japanese global brand,” said Tomoyuki Kawai, who works at the tea section of the agricultural ministry.

Production of “tencha,” the kind of tea used for matcha, nearly tripled from 1,452 tons in 2008, to 4,176 tons in 2023, according to government data.

Japan’s tea exports have more than doubled over the last decade, with the US now accounting for about a third. Much of that growth is of matcha, according to Japanese government data. The concern is that with labor shortages as aging farmers leave their fields, the matcha crunch may worsen in coming years.

Other countries, including China and some Southeast Asian countries, also are producing matcha, so Japan is racing to establish its branding as the origin of the tea.

Tea ceremony practitioners aren’t angered by the craze, just perplexed. They



Tea ceremony master Keiko Kaneko demonstrates the tea ceremony at her tea house in Tokyo, Aug. 8. (AP)

hope it will lead to people taking an interest in sado, whose followers have been steadily declining. But they aren’t counting on it.

The tea ceremony is “reminding us to cherish every encounter as unique and unrepeatable,” said Kaneko, who is a licensed instructor.

She pointed to the special small entrance to her tea house. Noble samurai had to stoop to enter, leaving their swords behind them. The message: when partaking of tea, everyone is equal.

The purity and stillness of the ceremony are a world apart from the hectic and mundane, and from the craze for matcha that’s brewing outside the tea house.

The Matcha Crème Frappuccino is standard fare at the Starbucks coffee out-

lets everywhere. While matcha, a special ingredient traditionally used in the tea ceremony, isn’t meant to be drunk in great quantities at once like regular tea or juices, it’s suddenly being consumed like other fruit and flavors.

Matcha drinks have become popular at cafes from Melbourne to Los Angeles. Various cookbooks offer matcha recipes, and foreign tourists to Japan are taking home tins and bags of matcha as souvenirs.

It’s a modern take on traditions perfected by the 16th century Buddhist monk Sen no Rikyu in Kyoto, who helped shape the traditions of tea ceremony and of “wabi-sabi,” the rustic, imperfect but pure and nature-oriented aesthetic often seen as synonymous with high-class Japanese culture.

Minoru Handa, the third-generation chief of suburban tea store Tokyo Handa-en, which sells green and brown tea as well as matcha, says the appeal of matcha is in its versatility. Unlike tea leaves, the powder can be easily mixed into just about anything.

“The health boom and the interest in Japanese culture have added to the momentum,” he said, stirring a machine that was roasting brown tea, sending a pungent aroma through the streets.

“It’s safe and healthy so there’s practically no reason it won’t sell,” said Handa.

His business, which dates back to 1815, has a longtime relationship with growers in Kagoshima, southwestern Japan, and has a steady supply of matcha. To guard against hoarders he limits purchases at his store to one can per customer.

Handa, who has exhibited his prize-winning tea in the U.S. and Europe, expects that growers will increase the supply and shrugs off the hullabaloo over the matcha shortage.

But Anna Poian, co-director and founder of the Global Japanese Tea Association, thinks lower-grade matcha should be used for things like lattes, since one has to put in quite a lot of fine-grade matcha to be able to taste it.

“It’s a bit of a shame. It’s a bit of a waste,” she said.

The best matcha should be reserved for the real thing, she said in an interview from Madrid.

“It is a very delicate, complex tea that is produced with the idea to be drunk only with water,” she said.

Cellphone violations

Menendez brothers denied parole, must wait 18 months

LOS ANGELES, Aug 23, (AP): Erik and Lyle Menendez were denied parole by a California board this week after decades in prison for killing their parents in 1989 at their Beverly Hills mansion.

During two days of hearings, the brothers were each questioned by panels of two commissioners and asked to speak with complete candor on the abuse they suffered in childhood, their mindsets leading up to and after the murders and various prison transgressions.

The brothers were sentenced to life in prison in 1996 for fatally shooting Jose and Kitty Menendez. The case has long captivated true crime enthusiasts, with the brothers amassing public support in the past year after shows on Netflix renewed interest.

The hearings marked the closest they have come to freedom since their convictions. Despite each receiving three-year denials, they will be eligible to request an administrative review in one year. If granted, they could appear before the parole board again as early as 18 months from now.

Here are takeaways from the hearings: While it might not seem like a big deal to the nonincarcerated public, commissioners emphasized to the brothers that their use of illicit cellphones cast a shadow on their positive achievements while behind bars.

Cellphones can be used to order hits, move drugs in prison and coordinate attacks on officers, they noted. Their presence meant a correctional officer had to smuggle them in, and a prison gang may

have benefited by charging a tax on it, commissioner Robert Barton told Erik Menendez. “What I got in terms of the phone and my connection with the outside world was far greater than the consequences of me getting caught with the phone,” Erik Menendez said. He said he used it to speak with his wife, watch YouTube, listen to music and watch pornography.

In denying him parole, Barton said his behavior was “selfish,” a sign he believes the rules do not apply to him and the “ends justify the means.”

Lyle Menendez also had two recent cellphone infractions, including one in March. He said correctional staffers were monitoring his communications with his wife and family and selling their content to tabloids, so he saw cellphones as a privacy measure.

There was “a lot of stress” in his marriage around the time he transferred to the prison in San Diego, and he wanted to stay in touch with his wife, he said.

“I had convinced myself that this wasn’t a means that was harming anyone but myself in a rule violation,” Lyle Menendez said. “I didn’t think it really disrupted prison management very much.”

Of the two, Erik Menendez committed more serious rules infractions. Commissioners questioned why he associated himself with a prison gang called the Two Fivers and helped them with a tax scheme around 2013. Menendez said he was trying to survive an “extremely violent yard” where close friends were stabbed or raped.

“I was in tremendous fear,” he said. “When the Two Fivers came and asked for help, I thought this was a great opportunity to align myself with them and to survive.”

Menendez told commissioners that he prioritized protecting himself over the rules because at the time, he had no hope of ever getting out.



Aapo Rautio ‘The Angus’ of Finland performs during the Air Guitar World Championships final in Oulu, Finland, Friday Aug. 22. (AP)

Air guitar world title returns home to Finland after 25 yrs

OULU, Finland, Aug 23, (AP): Finnish air guitarist Aapo “The Angus” Rautio plucked victory from thin air on Friday night, grabbing the world championship title for his homeland for the first time since 2000.

This year’s Air Guitar World Championships reached the climax with a final Friday evening on a square in the western city of Oulu. It’s the 28th edition of a three-day event held in Finland that brings together competitors from 13 countries.

Contestants are judged on the performance of two songs in two separate rounds, each lasting 60 seconds, with the singers pretending to play an imaginary guitar.

Passion is a must, but much of the rest is up to the contenders. Props and costumes are allowed, but backup bands and real instruments are off-

limits.

The two-hour final pits last year’s winner, Canada’s Zachary “Ichabod Fame” Knowles, against eight national champions and seven contenders who emerged from the qualifying rounds. The challengers include U.S. champion Saladin “Six String Sal” Thomas and German champion Patrick “Van Airhoven” Culek.

The winner is chosen by a five-member jury of performing arts professionals. Whoever is crowned will win an actual guitar - a “Flying Finn” made by Finnish guitar maker Matti Nevalainen.

The championships were first held in 1996. Their organizers state that “according to the competition ideology, wars will end, climate change will stop and all bad things will vanish when all the people in the world play the air guitar.”

Variety

WASHINGTON: With National Guard troops in the streets and federal agents at the door of his former adviser, President Donald Trump spent a heavy dose of his Friday channeling his inner tourist and reliving his bygone days as a sports team owner and construction mogul.

He stopped by a gift shop near the White House, visited the Kennedy Center that he now chairs and returned to his increasingly gilded Oval Office to trumpet the US cohosting next year’s World Cup.

“We have a lot of fun,” Trump said. “We’re fixing up the whole world.”

The president’s stops around the city came as the nation’s capital is increasingly on edge amid Trump’s deployment of the National Guard and federalization of Washington’s police force in an effort to better curb crime. (AP)

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.: Police in Florida are still investigating the death last month of professional wrestling icon Hulk Hogan from what the medical examiner concluded was a heart attack.

The Clearwater Police Department said in a statement Thursday that the “unique nature of this case has required us to interview multiple witnesses and seek medical records from a variety of providers, and our detectives continue to do that.”

Hogan, whose real name was Terry Bollea, died July 24 at age 71 at a hospital after paramedics and police rushed to his beachfront home in Clearwater following a 911 call. That call, and police body camera video of the scene, has not yet been released as the investigation continues. (AP)

NEW YORK: Aubrey Plaza has described her grief over husband Jeff Baena’s death, likening it to “a giant ocean of awfulness.”

The actor spoke on the podcast “Good Hang with Amy Poehler,” telling her former “Parks and Recreation” costar in her most detailed public remarks to date that it’s been a daily struggle to overcome her grief. Writer-director Baena’s January death at age 47 was ruled a suicide.

“Overall, I’m here and I’m functioning,” Plaza tells Poehler at the outset of their interview after being asked how she is coping. “I feel really grateful to be moving through the world. I think I’m OK. But it’s like a daily struggle, obviously.”

She likens her grief to an image from an Apple TV+ horror movie starring Miles Teller and Anya Taylor-Joy.

Plaza adds: “And sometimes I just want to dive into it, and just be in it, and sometimes I just look at it. And then sometimes I try to get away from it. But it’s just always there, and the monster people are trying to get me, like Miles Teller and Anya Taylor-Joy.” (AP)



This image provided by Pop Mart shows Pop Mart’s Labubu Rock The Universe. (AP)

Music



Mariah the Scientist poses for a portrait on Tuesday, Aug. 5, in New York. (AP)

Singer reflects on fame, finding her rhythm

Mariah mixes love potions, pensive emotions in ‘Hearts Sold Separately’

NEW YORK, Aug 23, (AP): If you were surprised when Mariah the Scientist’s “Burning Blue” hit No. 1 on Billboard’s rhythmic airplay chart, you weren’t alone.

“It’s shocking. It’s almost like impostor syndrome, feeling, ‘I have a number one song on the radio? This is crazy,’” said the 27-year-old with a bright smile. “It makes me feel like somebody - multiple people - like my music, I guess. It’s flattering.”

Reaching No. 25 on the Billboard 200 and named by Rihanna as her go-to karaoke song, “Burning Blue” has created high anticipation for Mariah’s new album, “Hearts Sold Separately.” Available now, it’s the fourth album from the R&B singer-songwriter who’s crafted huge records like “From a Woman” and “Spread Thin,” which has more than 190 million Spotify plays.

Following 2023’s “To Be Eaten Alive,” the 10-track project, with Kali Uchis as the sole feature and new age 80s R&B synth sonics, pensively explores love and relationships, themes synonymous with the former St. John’s University scholarship student. Her stage name was first a nickname earned when studying biology before dropping out her junior year to pursue music.

While she’s attracted dedicated fans with her alternative R&B sounds and unapologetic vulnerability, she’s also the girlfriend of rapper Young Thug. The Grammy winner was indicted in a sprawling Georgia gang and racketeering case in 2022. He pleaded guilty in October 2024 to gang, drug and gun charges. He also entered a no contest plea to other charges. He was sentenced to time served and 15 years of

probation.

Mariah did not know Young Thug during the time of the accused crimes.

“There’s just so many different facets to love. I feel like it’s so romanticized, which is cute - I wish it was that great every single day, but that’s not the case. Most days it is great, but it is really the collective journey,” said Mariah. “Everybody has their own individual growing and evolution and journey, and then it’s a totally separate thing where you’re doing it together. Most people will grow apart, so, it’s like an active effort grow with somebody.”

Mariah spoke with The Associated Press about creating another No. 1 hit, love and facing persistent relationship criticism. Answers have been edited for brevity and clarity.

AP: How does it feel to be one of the bright stars of R&B?

Mariah: I feel like it’s paying off ... I do feel justified in some areas now.

Just people appreciating the art I make, not on just an acknowledgment level, but actually digesting it and appreciating it. ... It’s really not necessarily about the accolades, but I feel like accolades are indicative of the exposure and being perceived in a flattering way.

AP: Would you describe your career as a slow burn?

Mariah: I think that a lot of people, as children, want to do certain things like, oh, they do want to be an actress or they do wanna be a singer. And I feel like I didn’t necessarily have that ambition.

I felt a little reluctant at first ... maybe almost a little shameful. Like, I just tried something - I just created something and then people took to it.

Pop Mart rolling out mini and long-fur Labubus

NEW YORK, Aug 23, (AP): China’s Pop Mart says it is rolling out a mini version of its popular Labubu plush toys this month, along with a new long-fur version of the toothy little monster.

The Labubu, by artist and illustrator Kasing Lung, first appeared with pointed ears and pointy teeth, in three picture books inspired by Nordic mythology in 2015.

In 2019 Lung struck a deal with Pop Mart, a company that caters to toy connoisseurs and influencers, to sell Labubu figurines, but it wasn’t until Pop Mart started selling Labubu plush toys on key rings in 2023 that the toothy monsters suddenly seemed

to be everywhere.

Pop Mart said Friday that the mini-sized Labubu vinyl plush pendant, which is part of The Monsters Pin For Love series, will be available in various colors corresponding to letters of the alphabet. They will cost \$22.99 each.

The series also includes 30 letter pendant blind boxes, each with a unique pattern and Monsters charm. They will be priced at \$18.99 a piece.

In addition, Pop Mart is launching the Rock the Universe vinyl plush doll, which is part of The Monsters Big Into Energy Series. The plush, which will have a pearl-and-alloy heart necklace, will be the first of the Monsters to have long fur and uses a specialized dyeing

technique that ensures no two figures are exactly alike. The dolls will cost \$114.99 each.

All of the new products will be available starting Aug. 29 on Pop Mart’s website either for in-store pickup or shipping. They will also be available on the company’s app and its official TikTok accounts.

Labubu has been a bonanza for Pop Mart. Its revenue more than doubled in 2024 to 13.04 billion yuan (\$1.81 billion), thanks in part to its elvish monster. Revenue from Pop Mart’s plush toys soared more than 1,200% in 2024, nearly 22% of its overall revenue, according to the company’s annual report.



More frozen shrimp recalled for possible radioactive contamination

Calif restaurants may soon list food allergens on menus

SAN JOSE, Calif., Aug 23, (AP): Braxton Kimura dreads eating at restaurants. The California teenager is severely allergic to peanuts, shellfish and most tree nuts. Consuming even a tiny amount could send him to the emergency room.

“Eating out is definitely really dangerous. It’s something that I try to avoid,” Kimura, 17, said at his home in San Jose. “When dining out, obviously I always bring my EpiPens, and I’m really nervous all the time.”

Restaurant dining in California could soon become a little less stressful for Braxton and the growing number of Americans with severe food allergies.

State lawmakers are set to vote on legislation that would make California the first U.S. state to require restaurants to disclose whether a menu item contains any of the nine most common food allergens: milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, sesame and soybeans.

Restaurants could post the allergen information on physical menus, an allergen chart, allergen-specific menu or other printed materials. They can also post a QR code to access a digital menu that lists allergens. Food trucks and carts wouldn’t be required to make changes.

In September, the Legislature is expected to vote on Senate Bill 68, known as the Allergen Disclosure for Dining Experiences Act (ADDE). If approved and signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom, the new law would take effect on July 1, 2026.

“It’s really to protect the millions of people in California who have allergies like me,” said Democratic state Sen. Caroline Menjivar of the San Fernando Valley, who introduced the bill earlier this year.

Menjivar, who is severely allergic to most nuts and fruits, said she’s had to go to the hospital multiple times for anaphylaxis - a life-threatening allergic reaction - to something she accidentally consumed.

The Southern California lawmaker got the idea for the legislation last year while traveling in Europe, which has required restaurants to disclose food allergens since 2014.

Soon after Menjivar returned to the U.S., she was approached about sponsoring legislation by parents whose daughter has severe allergies.

Since then 9-year-old Addie Lao has become the bill’s most visible advocate, appearing in social media videos, news interviews and legislative hearings.

“I want to be able to eat out with my friends and family like everyone else,” the third grader told state senators in Sacramento in April. “I have to avoid the foods I’m allergic to since it’s like poison to my body and can harm me.”

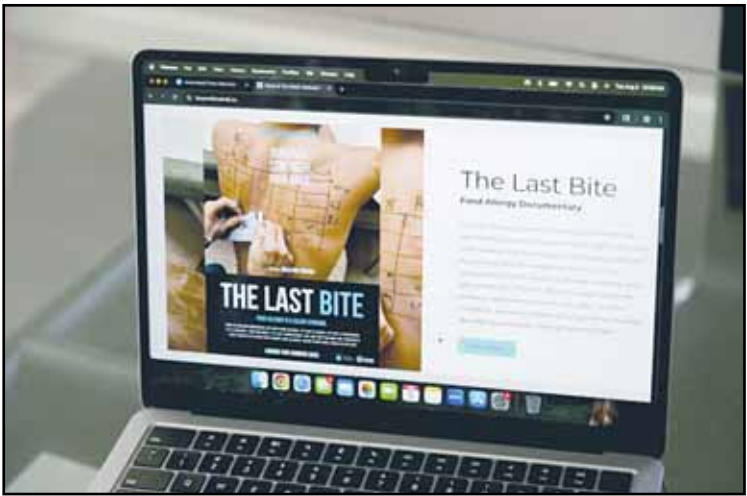
The bill has the backing of numerous groups representing medical practitioners and people who suffer from asthma and allergies.

But the California Restaurant Association opposes the legislation. The group says the law would increase costs and burdens on restaurants that are already struggling with rising food prices, tariffs, labor shortages and cost-conscious consumers.

The restaurant industry wants more flexibility in how allergen information is posted as well as more liability protections.

“You get into a situation where the menu becomes unwieldy and it becomes incredibly impractical and expensive to be constantly converting menus out with each ingredient shift that may occur and the need to do a new allergy notification,” said Matthew Sutton, senior vice president at the California Restaurant Association.

Some restaurant chains - such as Chipotle Mexican Grill, Red Robin Gourmet Burgers and Olive Garden -



Braxton Kimura watches a food allergy documentary on Wednesday, Aug. 13, in San Jose, Calif. (AP)

already post allergen information on their menus.

Brian Hom, who owns two Vitality Bowl restaurants in San Jose, is one of the bill’s biggest backers. His oldest son died on his 18th birthday in 2008 after he accidentally ate peanuts at a resort in Mexico.

This legislation “is going to save lives,” Hom said. “I don’t want to see anybody suffer what my wife and I are suffering.”

An estimated 33 million Americans, including nearly 4 million in California, have at least one food allergy, according to the nonprofit Food Allergy

Research and Education (FARE). And the numbers are rising.

**Also:**

**CALIFORNIA:** More packages of frozen shrimp potentially affected by radioactive contamination have been recalled, federal officials said Thursday.

California-based Southwind Foods recalled frozen shrimp sold under the brands Sand Bar, Arctic Shores, Best Yet, Great American and First Street. The bagged products were distributed between July 17 and Aug. 8 to stores and wholesalers in nine states: Alabama, Arizona, California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Utah, Virginia, and Washington state.

The products have the potential to be contaminated with Cesium-137, a radioactive isotope that is a byproduct of nuclear reactions.

Walmart stores this week recalled packages of Great Value frozen raw shrimp sold in 13 states because of potential radioactive contamination.

The US Food and Drug Administration issued a safety alert after federal officials detected Cesium-137 in shipping containers sent to four US ports and in a sample of frozen breaded shrimp imported by BMS Foods of Indonesia.

Heat takes a toll on health and finances

Green spaces key to fighting record heat in ‘marginalized communities’

NEW YORK, Aug 23, (AP): Keith Lambert and his family cope with the extreme heat of summertime Chicago by going in and out of their house as quickly as possible and making sure their insulated shades are always drawn.

“It’s really just minimizing the exposure,” Lambert said. “It’s about doing your best to manage your cooling touch points.”

Lambert is like tens of millions of Americans navigating major heat waves, with temperatures consistently exceeding 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius). More often than not, the heat hits hardest for people of color and low-income residents, although Lambert and his family consider themselves middle class.

“The reality is there is a financial tie as to your comfort level and your well-being when it comes to extreme heat conditions,” Lambert said. “If you don’t have the means and or effort to cool, you have three choices: You bake, you’re suffering and dealing with it, or do the best to go out and find places that have air conditioning.”

Mortality records from cities across the country have shown that heat kills along socioeconomic and racial lines.

Environmental justice advocates trace this inequality back to decades of discriminatory housing policy, especially redlining - the 1930s government practice of rating neighborhoods’ investment worthiness using race as a determining factor and denying mortgages to minority buyers.

“The redlining and all of the historic environmental injustices that happens to Black and brown communities in this country are now coming to a head because it’s impacting everyone,” said Alicia White, founder of Project Petals, an environmental nonprofit focusing on those communities.

“It’s impacting our communities the most,” White said.

The extreme heat isn’t just uncomfortable; it’s the top cause of weather-related fatalities nationwide. According to a New York City mortality report, extreme heat kills an average of 350 New Yorkers each year. While heatwaves are “incredibly deadly,” according to Eric Klinenberg, a sociology professor at New York University, they are also “largely ignored.” Heat is invisible and makes for less spectacular imagery than hurricanes or floods.

“But also the people heatwaves affect are often made invisible in our public life,” said Klinenberg, the author of “Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago.” “They’re disproportionately poor, Black and elderly. They often live in segregated neighborhoods.”

Alicia White, president and founder of the Project Petals, (right), and her sister, Tiffany White, work at Paradise Community Garden, Friday, Aug. 8, in Inwood, N.Y. (AP)



China doctors perform rare ‘head-body separation’ surgery

Chinese experts achieve world-first deep-brain multicolor imaging feat

BEIJING, Aug. 23, (Xinhua): Chinese scientists have, for the first time in the world, achieved high-resolution deep-brain multicolor two-photon imaging in freely moving mice using a newly developed miniature two-photon microscope.

The study, which provides a new tool for decoding complex brain function mechanisms, was published online in the journal Nature Methods on Thursday.

The brain operates through the coordinated efforts of tens of billions of neurons and hundreds of trillions of synapses. Accurately capturing the dynamic changes in neuronal and synaptic activity has long been a major challenge in brain science research.

Two-photon microscopic imaging, a nonlinear optical imaging technique based on two-photon absorption and fluorescence excitation, offers high resolution and deep imaging capabilities.

In 2017, a research team led by Cheng Heping, director of the National Biomedical Imaging Center at Peking University (PKU), successfully developed China’s first-generation miniature two-photon microscope, achieving for the first time clear and stable functional imaging of synapses in freely moving mice.

One of the key components of the miniature two-photon microscope is a hollow-core fiber. Previously, hollow-core fiber could only transmit ultrafast laser pulses at a single wavelength, limiting its multicolor imaging capabilities.

A PKU research team led by Cheng and Wang Aimin, in collaboration with a research team led by Wu Runlong from Beijing Information Science and Technology University, developed a novel ultra-broadband hollow-core fiber.

This fiber, characterized by low loss and low dispersion, allows the transmission of femtosecond pulsed lasers at multiple wavelengths ranging from 700 to 1,060 nanometers. This innovation led to the creation of the multicolor miniature two-photon microscope weighing only 2.6 grams.

By placing this microscope on the heads of mice with Alzheimer’s disease, researchers simultaneously captured dynamic three-color images -- red, green and blue -- of neuronal calcium signals, mitochondrial calcium signals and plaque deposits. They observed abnormal cellular and mitochondrial activities near plaques even in the early stages of the disease.

“This is like a live color broadcast of the dynamic activities of neurons and organelles in the brain,” Wu said. In the past, due to the limitations of hollow-core fiber, microscopes could only observe single cell types. Now, with different cell types labeled with fluorescent markers of different colors, researchers can clearly observe complex interactions among multiple cell types and study how they coordinate and interact.

China has successfully performed a rare surgery on a patient whose neck was hit by a mechanical arm so severely that his cervical spine was almost completely dislocated, meaning his head was almost separated from his body.

The injured patient, initially given almost no chance of survival, is now on a promising path to recovery.

**Chen Huajiang**, director of the cervical spine surgery ward at the Shanghai Changzheng Hospital, who has over three decades of experience, has encountered numerous critical cervical spine injuries, but none was so extreme like this case.

The patient was admitted to the hospital in June. The devastating impact of the incident resulted in immediate high-level paralysis and cardiac arrest. Emergency cardiopulmonary resuscitation restored faint signs of life.

“We scoured domestic and international literature and found no documented cases of cervical spine separation this severe -- let alone any survivors post-treatment,” Chen recalled. In this case, surgery was the only hope, yet it was extremely perilous. “Even if there’s only a sliver of hope, we are willing to try.”

After nearly three hours of high-risk effort, a critical breakthrough was achieved. The team not only accurately reduced the fully dislocated cervical spine but also pioneered a “satellite plate” technique -- a method using an additional small plate for enhanced reinforcement.

A team at a Shanghai hospital in east

Value-based care delivers higher quality care for heart failure patients

LOUISVILLE, Ky., Aug 23, (AP): Value-based care delivers a higher quality of care and better medication prescription adherence to evidence-based medicine for Medicare Advantage patients diagnosed with heart failure, according to findings released by leading health and well-being company Humana Inc. in its latest Value-Based Care Issue Brief.

Heart failure continues to affect a growing number of Americans, with 11.4 million expected to be diagnosed by 2050. Patients with heart failure experience a higher likelihood of hospitalizations and visit the emergency department twice as often. The guideline-directed medical therapy is quadruple therapy, however, less than one in five patients hospitalized with heart failure with HFrEF receive this therapy within six months of discharge.

Data analyzed in Humana’s Value-Based Care Issue Brief compares patients diagnosed with heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF) after a hospitalization who receive care from value-based clinicians and those who do not. Patients treated by value-based care clinicians were nearly 28% more likely to receive full quadruple therapy, the gold standard evidence-based medical treatment.

“Coordinated care impacts the quality of care, particularly for seniors post-hospitalization. A care team who holistically sees a patient’s needs and relies on their collective expertise to provide the highest quality of care is the value-based care

model,” said Dr. Kate Goodrich, Chief Medical Officer at Humana. “Value-based care depends on primary care physicians (PCP), specialists, care teams, and patients working together to achieve better health outcomes.”

Humana’s newest Value-Based Care Issue Brief reinforces that the value-based care model is the meaningful difference for patients with heart failure with HFrEF. Those receiving care from value-based primary care clinicians experienced better medical management.

Clinicians under value-based care deliver proactive care and are incentivized to provide high-value interventions. The traditional fee-for-service model is a fragmented experience for clinicians and patients with no incentives to reduce low-value care. In addition, patients aligned with value-based care practices better manage chronic diseases, according to Humana’s Value-Based Care Report.

These findings affirm more than a decade of Humana’s research advancing value-based care that concludes patients aligned with value-based care see their primary care physician more often, are more satisfied with the quality of care, and have better management of chronic diseases.

“Our commitment to furthering value-based care continues to accelerate for patients, primary care clinicians, and specialists. The health outcomes for patients continue to be clear,” said Goodrich. “A smarter, more coordinated health-care experience is necessary for patient-centered care.”

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## SPORTS

# England thrashes US in front of record crowd in Women's Rugby WCup opener



England's Jess Breach, left, and USA's McKenzie Hawkins in action during the group A match at the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup between England and the United States in Sunderland, England. (AP)

Host scores 11 tries to one for a 28th straight victory

**SUNDERLAND, England, Aug 23, (AP):** Red-hot trophy favorite England launched its home bid for the Women's Rugby World Cup crown by thrashing the United States 69-7 in front of a record-sized crowd.

England overcame early nerves and scored 11 tries to one for a 28th straight victory.

The effort by the world's best team was appreciated by a record women's rugby test attendance of 42,723, eclipsing by 144 tickets the previous high set at the 2022 World Cup final, where England suffered its only loss in the last six years.

The tournament-opening result ticked all of England's boxes.

The set-pieces were dominant, the collisions were aggressive, no injuries were suffered, no unnecessary energy was sapped, and a plucky Eagles side was overwhelmed for a 21st straight time. Coach John Mitchell said they happily relieved to finally get underway.

"We know that our game works," Mitchell said. "We'll get better and flow, and there were some really good signs tonight."

The result was in hand by halftime



United States' Lotte Sharp, front left, and Ilona Maher, center, pose for a photo with fans after the Women's Rugby World Cup Pool A match in Sunderland, England. (AP)

at 28-7, and England opened up in the second half. It showed off the power of its bench, including the appearance of center Emily Scarratt, the first Englishwoman to play in five World Cups.

England put on a seven-try show, including doubles for fullback Ellie Kildunne, wing Jess Breach and replacement hooker Lark Atkin-Davies.

The world's best player in 2024, Kildunne, was named the player of the match but forwards Sadia Kabeya and

Hannah Botterman were more deserving and center Megan Jones was arguably England's best back.

Kabeya scored the tournament's opening try in the seventh minute from a lineout drive, England's bread-and-butter try move. The U.S. had the ball for the first two minutes but England tackling sent the Eagles backwards into their own half. The Eagles also had the first scrum put-in and conceded a penalty that led to the Kabeya try.

## Tonga tops Samoa

# Canada stuns USA in Pacific Nations Cup opener

**CALGARY, Aug 23, (AP):** Backrower Tyler Ardron scored four tries to mark his return to test rugby from a four-year absence to lead Canada to a surprising 34-20 win over the United States in the opening match of the Pacific Nations Cup at Calgary, Alberta. Ardron led Canada to the 2015 and 2019 World Cups but has been absent from his national side since 2021, during which Canada missed out on the 2023 World Cup and dropped out of the top 20 world rankings for the first time.

With a new head coach in place - Australian-born Steve Meehan - the 34-year-old Ardron answered a call to return and on Friday secured his 39th cap as Canada began its campaign to qualify for the 2027 World Cup in Australia. Before Friday's win, Canada had lost 14 of its last 15 tests against the United States. Now, it has taken a major step towards World Cup qualification.

Later, Tonga led 20-6 at halftime and went on to beat Samoa 30-16 in the Tongan capital Nuku'alofa. The top three teams from the Pacific Nations Cup, apart from Fiji and Japan, who have already qualified, will advance to the next World Cup. The last-place team will go to a qualifying playoff.

The Pacific Nations Cup involves Fiji, Japan, Canada, the United States, Samoa, and Tonga. Ardron had a hat-trick by halftime Friday as Canada surprised the United States with its new fast-paced heads-up style based around an excellent lineout and tight-knit forward pack. Canada's phase play from quickly recycled ball and strong pick and go running was hard to counter. "We talked a lot in sport about finding things that matter," Canada captain Lucas Rumball said. "It really mattered to us today. "That was the focus of the game, just making it matter: every minute, every tackle, every pass, everything, and I think we really showed it out there today." Ardron's first try came after three minutes, another from a brilliant cross-kick by fullback Peter Nelson from a quick penalty, and a third in the 37th minute as the teams went to halftime locked at 17-17.

Canada outscored the United States 17-3 in the second half with Ardron's fourth try and another to Peter Nelson. The United States scored first-half tries through center Dominic Besag and Rufus McLean but was unable in the second to find a way around or through Canada's tough defense. Tonga's forward

pack was outstanding at both ends of the field in its win over Samoa. The home team had surpluses of both territory and possession and finished scoring chances with precision.

Siosila Moala and Sonatane Takulua scored first-half tries for Tonga while Patrick Pellegrini kicked two conversions and two penalties. AJ Alitimu kicked two penalties for Samoa. Tuni Tuitama scored a 60th-minute try for Samoa, which cut the lead to 20-11, but Tonga pulled away again with a try to Samiuela Moli. Samoa finished with a superb try to Melani Nanai.

Next weekend, in the second round of the tournament, Fiji hosts Tonga, and Canada travels to Sendai, Japan. In the third and final preliminary round on Sept. 6, Fiji and Samoa play at Rotorua, New Zealand, and the United States hosts Japan at Sacramento, California. The top four teams will advance to the semifinals, and the playoff rounds are set to be played in the United States. Denver is hosting the semifinals and fifth-place playoff on Sept. 14, and Salt Lake City is hosting the third-place playoff and final on Sept. 20.

Kabeya was picked as the onside flanker ahead of former captain Marlie Packer and was a standout.

Botterman, the loosehead prop, wasn't contained in the scrum or open play. She scored England's second try running a perfect line after Jones tore open the U.S. by running over flanker Georgie Perris-Redding, who left the field.

The Americans replied when Erica Jarrell-Searcy busted two tackles and speared to the try-line. Jarrell-Searcy went to the 2022 World Cup as a prop but never played and has made it back as a lock.

Moments later, teammate Alev Kelter was sin-binned for a deliberate knock-on and England exploited her absence to score tries to prop Maud Muir from another lineout drive and, from the restart, Kildunne, who finished a sweeping move with Abby Dow.

The second half was also a potent show of England's defense. The U.S. strung 13 and 17 phases but couldn't sniff the try-line.

England will make wholesale changes for its second pool game against Samoa in Northampton next weekend, when the U.S. will play a crucial game against Australia in York.

Ilona Maher, the Olympic medalist who carried and tackled well in her World Cup debut, believed the Eagles will be better for the match, despite suffering their worst World Cup defeat.

## 'A phenomenal kickoff'

# 2026 World Cup draw to be held at Kennedy Center, Trump says

**WASHINGTON, Aug 23, (AP):** President Donald Trump said that the draw for the 2026 World Cup will take place on Dec. 5 at the Kennedy Center in Washington, and didn't rule out that he himself might oversee the event.

"It's the biggest, probably the biggest event in sports, I guess," said Trump, who made the announcement in an Oval Office event where he was joined by FIFA President Gianni Infantino and Vice President JD Vance.

The U.S. is co-hosting next year's tournament - which for the first time will feature 48 national teams up from 32 - with Canada and Mexico. The draw event will determine the World Cup's groups, and the games each team plays in the opening round.

Infantino said the 48 teams will play "104 matches in one month" and likened it to "104 Super Bowls." Trump picked up on that theme, saying, "It's like having many Super Bowls in a short period of time, because each one of these games, essentially, is a Super Bowl. Some of them are bigger than Super Bowls, actually."

The World Cup kicks off June 11 at the Azteca Stadium in Mexico City and runs through the final on July 19 at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Games will be played in 16 cities across the three countries. Washington, D.C., is not among the host cities.

Trump said that the Kennedy Center "will give a phenomenal kickoff and we'll be involved." Asked if he'd be the one actually drawing the team names, Trump didn't answer directly but deferred to Infantino, saying the FIFA chief "was the boss."

Infantino said, "It's a very interesting proposal," and he indicated that he and Trump would discuss the matter further.

The choice of venue is interesting because Trump has taken over the Kennedy Center, installing himself as chair and replacing the board of trustees with loyalists. He's also hinted he'd like to see the venue renamed the Trump/Kennedy Center.

There had been speculation for months that the draw would be held in Las Vegas. The event is traditionally a mix of entertainment and the business of dividing the teams into 12 groups of four for the opening stage of the tournament. When the United States held the World Cup in 1994, the draw was held at the Las Vegas Convention Center and Stevie Wonder was among the performers.

In December when the draw is held, 42 of the 48 teams will be known, including the automatic berths given to the United States, Mexico and Canada as hosts. The remaining six teams will be determined by playoffs in March.

The president also used Friday's FIFA announcement to boast about his deploying the National Guard and fed-



President Donald Trump holds the FIFA World Cup Winners Trophy during an announcement in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington. (AP)

eralizing Washington's police force.

"So now, when we have this beautiful event in December, it's going to be very safe," Trump said. He added that the FIFA chief "can walk down the street with your beautiful wife. You can take her to dinner, if you can get a reservation."

Asked about fans overseas obtaining U.S. visas to come watch their teams in the World Cup, Trump at first said the process would be a smooth one, but then added, "Certain countries are going to be very, very easy, and other countries are going to be obviously a little bit more difficult."

A travel ban that the Trump administration imposed in June includes Iran, which has qualified for the World Cup. The policy makes exceptions for "any athlete or member of an athletic team, including coaches, persons performing a necessary support role, and immediate relatives, traveling for the World Cup, Olympics, or other major sporting event as determined by the secretary of state." It does not include an exemption for fans.

In an unusual move, Infantino also brought the World Cup trophy with him to the Oval Office. It's a superstition nearly as old as the World Cup itself: players on national teams around the globe believe that touching the trophy before their team actually wins the tournament on the field can spark bad luck.

Even Infantino noted that the trophy is "for winners only," but then he added to Trump, "And, since you are a winner, of course you can as well."

The president did just that, calling the trophy "a beautiful piece of gold" and joking about keeping it and displaying it in the Oval Office, which Trump has redone in a gaudy, gold-hued decor.

"It fits very well right on the wall over there," Trump said.

## Storm dominates Wings

# Thomas secures 6th triple-double of season as Mercury sinks Valkyries

**PHOENIX, Aug 23, (AP):** Alyssa Thomas had 13 points, 12 rebounds and a career-high-tying 16 assists for her 17th career triple-double, and the Phoenix Mercury beat the Golden State Valkyries 81-72.

Thomas secured her sixth triple-double of the season on a rebound with 8:59 remaining in the fourth quarter, and she assisted on Monique Akoa Makani's 3-pointer at the other end for a 71-56 lead. Thomas tied her 2023 record for the most triple-doubles by a WNBA player during a single season.

Akoa Makani had a team-high 18 points with four 3-pointers for Phoenix (22-14). DeWanna Bonner also made four of the Mercury's 14 3s and scored 14 points. The Mercury were coming off an 83-61 loss at Las Vegas on Thursday - its lowest scoring game of the season.

Janelle Salaun led Golden State (18-18) with 15 points and Veronica Burton had 11 points and eight assists. Tiffany Hayes had a violent collision with Kahleah Copper with 7:17 left in the third quarter and did not return.

Salaun scored 13 points on 6-of-7 shooting in the first half, but the rest of her Golden State teammates combined to go 6 for 26 to trail 41-31.

Thomas made a shot in the lane to cap a 9-1 run for a 64-50 lead with 1:33 left in the third. Thomas found Bonner alone in the corner for a 3-pointer with 1.2 seconds left in the frame for a 67-54 advantage.

## Storm 95, Wings 60

In Arlington, Rookie Dominique Malonga had 22 points and nine rebounds, Erica Wheeler added 17 points and the Seattle Storm routed the Dallas Wings.

It was Malonga's fourth game of at least 15 points and five rebounds off the bench, the most by a WNBA reserve this season.

Tiffany Mitchell added 11 points off the bench for Seattle (19-18). Ezi Magbegor grabbed her 1,200th career rebound, the fourth most in franchise history. Nneka Ogwumike made two steals in the first half for her 200th career multi-steal game, the fourth most in WNBA history behind Tamika Catchings, Ticha Penicheiro and Sue Bird.

Maddy Siegrist led Dallas (9-28) with 12 points. Paige Bueckers scored eight of Dallas' first 12 points but finished with just 11 - all in the first half.

Bueckers was coming off a WNBA rookie record 44 points on Wednesday. She became the first player in league history to score more than 40 points while shooting 80% from the field. But Dallas lost 81-80 on a buzzer-beater by Kelsey Plum and was eliminated from playoff contention.

Malonga made a reverse layup with 2.6 seconds left in the first half to give Seattle a 48-34 lead. The Wings fell to 1-23 when trailing at halftime this season.

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# Madagascar advances to CHAN semifinals

**NAIROBI, Aug 23, (Xinhua):** Kenya's dream debut at the 2024 African Nations Championship (CHAN) ended in heartbreak as plucky Madagascar held its nerve in a dramatic penalty shoot-out to reach the semifinals.

Roared on by a passionate crowd at Kasarani Stadium in Nairobi, the Harambee

Stars aimed to advance to their first continental semifinal in 38 years.

The home crowd went wild two minutes after halftime when defender Alphonse Omija put Kenya ahead with a glancing header from a Boniface Muchiri freekick.

Moments later, Ryan

Ogam thought he had doubled the lead, but VAR ruled out the strike for a push on a defender in the build-up.

The visitor, who had squeezed into the last eight from Group B, fought back from the spot in the 69th minute. A long ball into the box saw Lewis Bandi handle

the ball under no pressure, and the referee awarded Madagascar a penalty. Fenoahina Razafimaro scored, sending Stars goalkeeper Boniface Omondi the wrong way for 1-1.

The match remained tied through regular and extra time, with tension mounting around Kasarani. A crucial moment came a minute before the break in first-half extra time when Mike Kibwage's effort was cleared off the line as Kenya nearly regained the lead.

With the score deadlocked at 1-1 after extra time, the match went to penalties. Kenya initially took the advantage when Omondi saved Madagascar's second spot kick, but the hopeful run ended when Kibwage's effort was saved by Madagascar's goalkeeper, Michel Ramandimbisoa.

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Kuwaiti clubs ramp up overseas training

Egypt's Kahraba on verge of joining Qadsia

**By Khaled Al-Enezi**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: Burgan will play its third warm-up match against Bosnian side Maglaj, runners-up in the domestic league last season.

Burgan is gearing up for both the Kuwait Premier League and, for the first time in its history, the Asian Club Championship after finishing second in the league last season. The camp, which concludes on August 26, is led by Kuwaiti coach Hussein Habib. The squad includes foreign professionals — Japanese player Kosuke Yasuhira, Croatian Stipe Mandalinic, and Serbian Jovica Nikolic — alongside local reinforcements such as Nasser Al-Faraj, Abdulaziz Al-Dosari, Mubarak Al-Randi, Hamad Al-Saqr, Ahmed Al-Qallaf, and Hussein Al-Mutawa.

Arabi's handball team, also under the guidance of Hussein Habib, is preparing for the Premier League as well. Its camp, which runs until August 30, features professional signings Tunisian Oussama Jaziri and Estonian Dener Jaanimaa.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club and Sulai-bikhat are holding training camps in Bosnia as well. Sulai-bikhat team manager Hussein Siwan confirmed that the



Burgan players tackle an opponent for the ball.

camp is progressing according to plan, noting the strong commitment from the players. Both clubs are preparing for the Arab Championship, which Kuwait Club will host from September 12 to 22. Kazma will also take part in the tournament and is currently training in Izmit, Turkey.

Separately, Kuwait's under-17 handball team departs today for a training camp in Slovenia and Croatia as it prepares for the Asian Championship,

set to begin on September 16 in Jordan. The competition also serves as a qualifier for next year's World Championship in Morocco.

The junior side will play two friendlies against Slovenia before moving to Croatia for a four-team mini-tournament. The team returns to Kuwait on September 9 and will depart again for Jordan on September 14. Kuwait has been drawn in Group A alongside Bahrain and Hong Kong.

**By Hassan Mosa**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23: Egyptian star Mahmoud Abdel-Moneim, famously known as Kahraba, is on the verge of joining Qadsia for the upcoming season. Sources say both parties have agreed on most contract terms, making his arrival at the Yellow Castle a matter of time.

Kahraba reportedly signed a one-season deal worth approximately \$1 million, coming from Libyan side Al-Ittihad, where he has played since January.

Qadsia stirred excitement on social media after posting a teaser video on its official X (formerly Twitter) account, hinting at Kahraba's imminent arrival. The clip featured lightning striking amidst electric poles — a symbolic nod to the player's nickname — prompting fans to speculate that the deal could be finalized in the coming hours or days.

Kahraba has enjoyed a decorated career, playing for top Egyptian clubs Al Ahly and Zamalek, as well as Enppi, Saudi Arabia's Al-Ittihad, Libyan Al-Ittihad, Turkey's Hatayspor, and Swiss Grasshoppers. He has also represented Egypt at all levels, from youth teams to the senior national team.

During his time at Al-Ittihad, Kahraba appeared in 18 matches, scoring six goals and providing four assists. His contract, initially renewed for the



A file photo of Mahmoud Abdel-Moneim celebrating with teammates.

new season, was mutually terminated last week.

Qadsia currently features Libyan Mohamed Soula, Algerian Sofiane Bouchar, and Moroccan Mehdi Rahma. Reports linked the club to Libyan international Hamdou El Houni, though he has not yet joined the team in Turkey, as his season with Al Ahly Tripoli recently concluded. Sources indicate El Houni will join Qadsia after representing Libya in the international

break from September 1 to 9.

Meanwhile, Rahma appears close to leaving Qadsia following tensions with the administrative staff during the Turkey camp. The Moroccan player has trained alone recently, signaling that the club may not wish to retain him, although discussions remain over the method of contract termination.

Qadsia has also been reviewing potential foreign signings, including Algerians Osama Chita and Andy Delort.

PSG extends home winning streak against Angers to 11



PSG players present the five cups the team won last season, after the League One soccer match Paris Saint-Germain against Angers at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. (AP)

**PARIS, Aug 23, (AP): Ousmane Dembélé missed a penalty but Fabián Ruiz scored to help Paris Saint-Germain edge Angers 1-0 in its first home game in Ligue 1.**

Dembélé, considered a potential Ballon d'Or winner when the award is announced next month, wasted the penalty earned by

Dembélé misses penalty

João Neves midway through the first half. The France winger blasted the ball well over the crossbar.

PSG, however, continued to control the game, and Fabián made good on the dominance when he right-footed the ball in from the center of the area in the 50th minute. That extended PSG's home winning run against Angers to 11 straight games.

After losing the Club World Cup final to Chel-

sea last month, Luis Enrique's team has won its first three games of this new season. The Champions League winners rallied to beat Tottenham on penalties to lift the European Super Cup last week. They also won at Nantes 1-0 in their French league opener.

Gianluigi Donnarumma was again left off PSG's squad with newcomer Lucas Chevalier in goal. Donnarumma said he was parting ways with the team ahead of the European Super Cup.

Fujairah beats Al-Nasr in preseason warm-up

ISTANBUL, Aug 23: Al-Nasr suffered a 1-3 defeat against UAE side Fujairah in its opening friendly of the preseason training camp in Turkey.

The team will play its second friendly against Saudi Arabia's Al-Raed in Turkey the day after tomorrow, before wrapping up their warm-up matches against Al-Orouba on August 29.

Al-Nasr is gearing up for the new Zain Premier League, which kicks off on September 12 with a season opener against defending champion Kuwait Club. The club has strengthened its squad with several local additions, including Mishal Khaled, Mohsen Falah, Mohammed Al-Rashed, Zaid Zakaria, Fawaz Al-Mubaileh, and goalkeeper Naif Al-Azmi.

Contracts were also renewed for the team's five foreign professionals: Hussam Al-Hab-basi, Tunisian Heikal Al-Sheikhawi, Libyan Moatasem Al-Lafi, French Haikel Jekhail, and Serbian Nemanja Kojzic.



Players warm up.

Best of the Rest

**China sweeps into semis:** China captured the mixed doubles title and saw one man and four women advance to the singles semifinals at the World Table Tennis (WTT) Europe Smash in Malmo, Sweden.

In the women's singles quarterfinals, top seed Sun Yingsha beat Japan's Mima Ito 4-1, while Chen Yi overcame Germany's Sabine Winter with the same score. Shi Xunyang swept Japan's Satsuki Odo 4-0, and Wang Manyu edged Japan's Honoka Hashimoto 4-2 after an intense six-game battle. All four advanced to the semifinals.

On the men's side, world No. 1 Lin Shidong cruised past Germany's Qiu Dang 4-0 to reach the semifinals.

Lin also teamed up with Kuai Man to claim the mixed doubles crown with a 3-0 win over South Korea's Lim Jong-hoon and Shin Yu-bin. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

**Tigre, Barracas grab late draws:** Braian Martinez struck a 102nd-minute equalizer as Tigre salvaged a 1-1 home draw with Independiente Rivadavia in Argentina's Primera Division.

Franco Amarfil put the visitors ahead by pouncing on a loose ball and lashing a powerful 12-yard effort that beat goalkeeper Felipe Zenobio at his near post.

Martinez then put his side on level terms as he converted a penalty after Jabes Saralegui was brought down by Thomas Ortega.

Tigre is now seventh in the Clausura tournament's 15-team Group A standings, three points ahead of 13th-placed Independiente Rivadavia. (Xinhua)

Host batters put up a below-par performance

Ngidi's 5-wicket haul leads South Africa to series-clinching win against Australia

MACKAY, Australia, Aug 23, (AP): Fast bowler Lungi Ngidi grabbed five wickets to set up South Africa's series-clinching 84-run win against Australia in the second one-day international.

Ngidi's haul of 5-42 helped see Australia bowled out for 193 with more than 12 overs to spare as Mitchell Marsh's team got dismissed for less than 200 runs for the fourth successive ODI at home.

Half centuries from Matthew Breetzke (88) and Tristan Stubbs (74) had earlier led South Africa to 277 all out after stand-in captain Aiden Markram won the toss and elected to bat.

Regular skipper Temba Bavuma was rested as part of his workload management and Cricket South Africa said he will be available to lead the side in the last game of the series on Sunday.

Bavuma sustained a hamstring injury during the World Test Championship final victory over Australia at Lord's in June, but recovered in time to lead the side in the ODI series opener against Australia.

For the second successive time in the three-match series, Australia's batters put up a below-par performance after losing the first game by



Matthew Breetzke of South Africa dives for the crease to survive a run out attempt during the one day international between Australia and South Africa at Cazaly's Stadium in Cairns, Australia. (AP)

98 runs at Cairns.

In the absence of injured Kagiso Rabada, who was ruled out of the series with an injury, the South Africa pacers jolted Australia's top order with Ngidi finding the outside edge of Marnus Labuschagne in his second over.

Nandre Burger also made an early impact when Travis Head (6) holed out at mid-on. The Australian batters continued to struggle against short deliveries when skipper Marsh

also fell inside the batting power-play and was caught at mid-on as the home team slumped to 38-3.

Josh Inglis (87) and Cameron Green (35) shared a 67-run stand and tried to put the chase on track, but not before Inglis got a lucky escape when Tony de Zorzi couldn't hold on to a sharp catch at short covers.

Left-arm spinner Senuran Muthusamy broke the stand in the 23rd over when he held on to a smart low

return catch to dismiss Green and Alex Carey was smartly caught by Dewald Brevis at point as Australia slipped to 133-5.

Ngidi then returned to tear through the lower order. He ended Inglis' aggressive knock, which featured 10 fours and two sixes, when he had him caught behind and went on to claim three more wickets to seal the series for the Proteas.

Earlier, Rickelton and Stubbs shared an 89-run fourth-wicket stand after Xavier Bartlett removed Ryan Rickelton for eight while Markram chipped an easy catch to square mid-wicket and was out without scoring.

Breetzke scored his fourth successive half century while Stubbs breached the fifty-run mark for the first time in his 16 ODIs to rebuild South Africa shaky start.

Breetzke was denied his second ODI century when he was caught at deep mid-wicket off Nathan Ellis and Brevis also perished for just 1 while trying to pull Ellis in his next over.

Despite the fall of two quick wickets, South Africa looked set to cross the 300-run mark when it reached 233-5 at the end of 40th over.

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NEWS





Cecilia Smith of Australia, center, is tackled by Sui Pauaraisa of Samoa during the Group A match at the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup between Australia and Samoa in Manchester, England. Australia won 73-0. (AP)

# Sports

## Kuwait U-23 ‘wraps up’ Asian Cup preparations

BANGKOK, Aug 23: Kuwait's Olympic soccer team secured a 1-0 victory over Malaysia in a friendly match the day before yesterday, part of their ongoing training camp in Bangkok, Thailand.

The decisive goal was scored by Moath Al-Osaimah, giving the team a morale-boosting win ahead of their upcoming qualifiers. Earlier in the week, Kuwait also defeated Thai side Nonthaburi 2-0 in its first friendly of the camp.

The Kuwaiti delegation is set to leave Thailand and travel to Myanmar to prepare for the AFC U-23 Asian Cup 2026 qualifiers in Saudi Arabia. Kuwait will compete in Group B alongside Myanmar, Japan, and Afghanistan. The qualifying matches are scheduled to take place from September 1 to 9.



Kuwaiti player controls the ball during the friendly match.

## Kuwait makes history with world wingsuit flying title



KUNA photo

The winners led by the Kuwaiti team display their national flags on the podium.

### Al-Mhaisen adds silver in time category

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 23, (KUNA):** Kuwait's wingsuit flying team captured first place at the 5th World Championship, held in the Czech Republic.

In a statement, the Kuwait Olympic Committee announced that the national squad became the first Arab team to participate in the prestigious event and claim the title.

Team members Ali Askar, Farhan Al-Mhaisen, and Faisal Al-Sharqawi secured

the gold medal in the national teams' category, while Askar also finished second overall among all competitors.

Al-Mhaisen added a silver medal in the time category, and Askar claimed bronze medals in both the speed and distance events.

## Mingyang loses to Walker

SHANGHAI, Aug 23, (Xinhua): China's Zhang Mingyang lost via technical knockout to Brazilian Johnny Walker in the second round of the main event at UFC Shanghai on Saturday.

Roared on by a deafening home crowd, Zhang entered as the favorite and made a fast start. In the opening round, Walker - despite saying pre-fight that he would not wrestle - shot immediately for a takedown. Zhang reversed the position on the Brazilian jiu-jitsu brown belt and landed hammerfists. Back on the feet, the Chinese light heavyweight connected with several clean strikes upstairs.

The second round began in similar fashion, with Zhang landing early. Walker then shifted momentum with a series of leg kicks - first checking Zhang's attempts with sharp counters, then attacking the lead leg directly. A heavy low kick sent Zhang to the canvas, and Walker followed with ground-and-pound. With his leg compromised, Zhang could not get back to his feet and was forced to cover up, prompting referee Mark Goddard to step in.

In the co-main event, Aljamain Sterling earned a unanimous 50-45 decision over Brian Ortega. The featherweights largely stayed at range in the early rounds, with Sterling controlling the center and forcing Ortega to circle. Exchanges increased in the third as Ortega moved forward, but Sterling's movement and counters proved effective.

The final two rounds saw more grappling exchanges, with Ortega hunting for submissions from his guard. Sterling, a black belt himself, avoided danger and closed the fight by posturing up inside Ortega's guard to land hard hammerfists.

Heavyweight Sergei Pavlovich won a tense three-round decision over Waldo Cortes-Acosta. Both men, known for knockout power, remained cautious for much of the fight, with Pavlovich gradually taking control to secure the win.

China's Taiyilake Nueraji made a successful UFC debut, stopping Ireland's Kiefer Crosbie in the first round. After early grappling exchanges, Nueraji landed an illegal knee to the head of a grounded Crosbie, drawing a two-point deduction from referee Mark Goddard. Once the action resumed, Nueraji poured on pressure and finished with a flurry of elbows on the ground.



Al Ahli's players celebrate with their trophy after winning the Saudi Super Cup final soccer match between Al Ahli and Al Nassr at the Hong Kong Stadium in Hong Kong. (AP)

## Ronaldo makes history with 100 goals for 4 clubs, but Al-Nassr loses Saudi Super Cup

HONG KONG, Aug 23, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo became the first player to score 100 competitive goals for four different clubs on Saturday, though Al-Nassr lost to Al-Ahli in a penalty shootout after the Saudi Super Cup final ended 2-2.

The first half strike at Hong Kong Stadium took the 40-year-old to his century for the Saudi Arabian club, which he joined in Dec.2022.

It adds to his 450 goals for Real

Madrid, 145 for Manchester United and 101 for Juventus and moves Ronaldo ahead of the three players who had scored 100 times for three clubs: Isidro Langara, who played in Spain from 1930 to 1948, as well as Brazilian stars Romario and Neymar.

Ronaldo, who has yet to win a major trophy in Saudi Arabia, is also the leading international goalscorer with 138 goals for Portugal.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner put Al-Nassr ahead after 41

minutes with a penalty, though Franck Kessie quickly equalized for Al-Ahli.

With seven minutes remaining, Marcelo Brozovic restored Al-Nassr's lead but there was still time for Brazilian defender Ibanez to head home a corner and take the game into a penalty shootout.

Ronaldo scored once more from the spot but his teammate Abdullah Al-Khaibari did not and Al-Ahli won 5-3 to lift the first trophy of the Saudi Arabian season.

### Chelsea hands out heavy beating to West Ham without injured Palmer

## Impressive Tottenham defeats Man City to continue flying start

LONDON, Aug 23, (AP): Tottenham continued its flying start to the Premier League season under new coach Thomas Frank as Brennan Johnson and Joao Palhinha secured an impressive 2-0 victory at Manchester City.

It was an afternoon to forget for City goalkeeper James Trafford.

Spurs scored four without reply at City last season and this time celebrated a 2-0 triumph as on-loan Palhinha capitalized on a mistake by home debutant Trafford shortly after Johnson had opened the scoring.

Tottenham deserve the plaudits but much of the post-match analysis will surround goalkeeper Trafford, who returned to the Etihad Stadium this summer in a £27million (\$36.5 million) move from Burnley.

Johnson's opener was hard to prevent but Trafford could have been sent off for a clumsy challenge on Mohammed Kudus before his huge error allowed Palhinha to score in first half stoppage time.

Ederson, back from illness, watched from the bench as speculation about his future and City's potential move for Paris St Germain star Gianluigi Donnarumma rumbles on.

In a difficult day for the home side, recent signing Rayan Ait-Nouri was injured and had to be replaced by Nathan Ake midway through the first half.

Shortly afterwards Tottenham found the net. Pape Matar Sarr's flicked header put through Richarlison, who burst free and sent across a low ball for Johnson to slam home.

Initially ruled out for offside against

the Brazil international, the goal was eventually awarded and the VAR's review sparked wild celebrations in the away end.

City spiralled from that point, with Trafford foolishly passing short in his own box to Nico Gonzalez, who had Sarr on his back.

The ball went loose to Richarlison and then reached Palhinha to drive home Spurs' second.

Chelsea piled on the early season misery for West Ham and its under-fire manager Graham Potter by handing out a 5-1 thrashing, all without injured star Cole Palmer.

Palmer pulled out of the team at the last minute after getting hurt in the warm-up, before Chelsea went a goal down in the sixth minute at the Olympic Stadium after a long-range piledriver from Lucas Paqueta.

It went quickly downhill from there for West Ham, which lost at promoted Sunderland 3-0 last weekend in the opening round and was beaten even more handsomely a week later.

Chelsea had five different scorers - in Joao Pedro, Pedro Neto, Enzo Fernandez, Moises Caicedo and Trevoh Chalobah. Three of the goals came at corners, where West Ham's marking was non-existent.

After Caicedo poked in the fourth goal in the 54th minute after West Ham goalkeeper Mads Hermansen flapped at an in-swinging corner, some home fans left the stadium.

A trickle of departing supporters turned into a flood from the 58th when



Aston Villa's Lucas Digne, right, and Brentford's Dango Ouattara in action during the English Premier League soccer match between Brentford and Aston Villa at the Gtech Community Stadium in London. (AP)

Chalobah hooked home a shot from close range for another goal from a corner.

Potter looked dejected on the sideline, with his position looking increasingly uncertain after a poor end to last season by West Ham when the team finished 14th in the 20-team league.

There were boos at halftime and fulltime for West Ham and Potter, who coached Chelsea for seven months during the 2022-23 season before getting fired, received some abuse from fans as he walked down the tunnel.

"I've got to do better, we've got to be better," Potter said. "I've got to take responsibility."

West Ham captain Jarrod Bowen said he was "fuming" about the performance as much as the result and said it's the "basic football I don't think we're doing well enough."

"Everyone has to look in the mirror and be brutally honest," Bowen added.

Replacing Palmer in the Chelsea team was Estevao, a highly rated 18-year-old Brazilian winger who was making his full debut after coming on as a substitute in the 0-0 draw against Crystal Palace last weekend.

The teenager was excellent, constantly getting in behind West Ham's defense and getting an assist when he crossed for Enzo to tap in from two meters out in the 34th minute.

By that time, Pedro nodded in the equalizer from close range in the 15th after Marc Cucurella glanced on a corner to the near post. Pedro then crossed for Neto to slot home in the 23rd.