



First Deputy PM outlines framework for husseiniyas, mosques construction



KUNA photo
Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah chairs the first meeting of a team tasked with organizing the construction of husseiniyas and mosques.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25, (KUNA): Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah on Monday chaired the first meeting of a team tasked with organizing the construction of husseiniyas and mosques.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef emphasized that these efforts reflect the country's vision to improve religious action while ensuring adherence to laws and regulations, said Interior ministry in a statement.

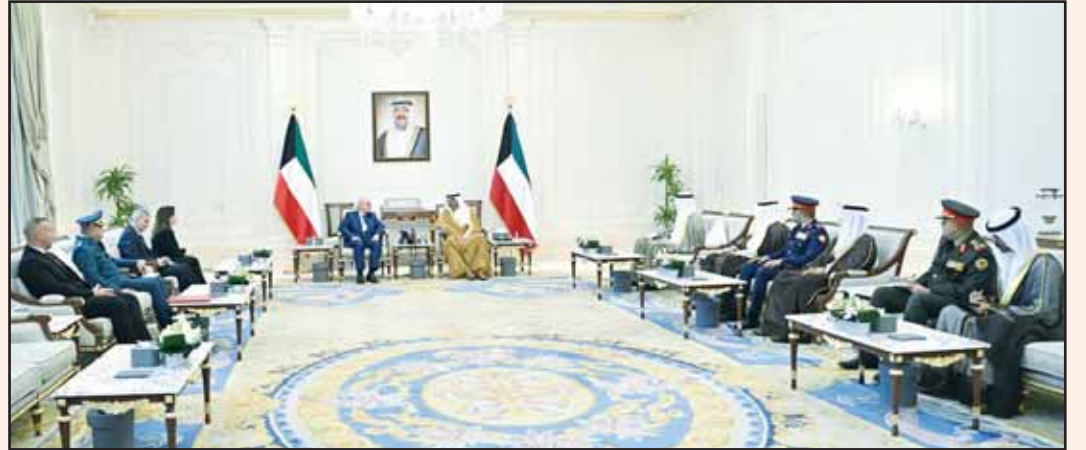
In addition, it will also help uphold religious and human values and maintain Kuwait's esteemed position regionally and internationally.

The statement noted that the meeting follows the guidance of Kuwait's wise leadership, aiming to establish

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Kuwait Crown Prince receives Lebanese DM

— Details Page 5 —



Crown Prince Diwan photo
His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace, Lebanon's Minister of National Defense Major General Michel Menassa on his official visit to Kuwait.

Tenants decry harassment in Muthanna eviction row

'Final notice' sparks final stand

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: In the heart of Kuwait City, Muthanna building stands witness to decades of commercial and residential activities, yet its residents are now experiencing a new chapter of forced eviction, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Within walls bearing the stories of families who have lived there for more than 30 years, the air conditioning units and elevators have stopped working, and the cold water has dried up.

Daily life has become a series of mounting pressure, which the building's tenants described as a systematic attempt to push them to leave before the legal deadline of Aug 31.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Authority for Public-Private Partnership (KAPP), in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, announced an extension until Oct 28 for the purchase of documents and the submission of bids for Public Auction No. 2/2025 for the renovation, development, repair, major maintenance, management, operation and periodic maintenance of the Muthanna building project.

On the other hand, accusations against the leasing company of harassing tenants continue.

Al-Seyassah received a new cry for help from the tenants of the Muthanna property, who confirmed that the leasing company is deliberately harassing them to force them to evacuate, despite holding leases valid until 2028 and not having reached the eviction deadline of Aug 31.

The tenants indicated that those affected include 205 residential apartments and 53 commercial stores.

The tenants explained that they are ready to cooperate with the new investor, KAPP and the Ministry of Finance, provided they continue to occupy their apartments and stores under mutually agreeable terms that satisfy all parties.

One of the affected people told Al-Seyassah "the crisis began when we were surprised by a poster on the building's wall titled, 'Final Notice to Evacuate the Rented Property — Al-Muthanna Complex,' which included KAPP decision No. 2-6-2025 regarding the approval to put the project up for public auction in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 116/2016, and considering that the Ministry of Finance — in its capacity as the owner — and pursuant to Decree-Law No. 105/1980 regarding the State Property System, warns us to vacate the rented property and hand it over to the ministry by Aug 31, 2025 at the latest.

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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Hezbollah is over ... the rest is just rant

IN an ancient city, someone claimed that something momentous was about to happen.

At first, the people believed him, but the more he repeated it, the more they shook off the threat.

So, the man tried to suggest that the event was imminent in order to restore some credibility.

One day, while he was with some of the town residents, a storm blew, carrying dust with it.

He said, "this is the momentous event I was telling you about."

The people dispersed. Since then, they did not believe him because he was always telling lies.

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Arab Times Editor-in-Chief, Capital Governor discuss media's role in development



Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali receives Al-Seyassah and Arab Times Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah during an open council meeting to discuss development and citizen engagement in the governorate. Ahmed Al-Oqab and Director of the Public Relations and Citizen Service Department Lieutenant Colonel Turki Al-Bidan also attended the meeting.



Photos by Mohammad Morsi

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: Governor of the Capital Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali on Monday met with Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah.

This meeting is part of the open council that the Governor dedicates to communicating directly with those residing in the Capital Governorate to listen to their opinions and suggestions regarding the development of the governorate and the services provided to the public.

Ahmed Al-Oqab and Director of the Public Relations and Citizen Service Department Lieutenant Colonel Turki Al-Bidan also attended the meeting, during which the importance of

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New legal reform era

Justice Minister pledges court modernization, lawyer support

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait confirmed that the country has entered a new phase of reform, and that "shortcomings will be addressed, not overlooked."

He said his ministry has been given the green light to move forward with a comprehensive development project that will put Kuwait at the forefront of countries in terms of the legal field.

Al-Sumait made the statement in a meeting at the Kuwait Lawyers Society on Monday, with dozens of professionals in attendance.

He added "I always emphasize that there is a main triangle for reform consisting of the Public Prosecution, the judiciary, and Kuwait Lawyers Society, and no reform can be completed without activating this integration. All laws being reviewed now should ease people's lives, not complicate them."

He pointed out that lawyers face difficulties, asserting that the complex procedures in some courts make practicing the profession a daily challenge.

He gave an example, stating that "in

the Farwaniya Courts Complex and elsewhere, there is overcrowding and slowness, and in Hawalli courts, some lawyers are assigned to complete one or two transactions. This is an unsuitable work environment. We must change it."

He stressed that the protocol signed with Kuwait Lawyers Society is not just formal, as it is a roadmap for co-operation, disclosing that the association has been actively involved in three committees reviewing laws, and that no new draft law will be proposed in the future without the participation of the Society.

He asserted "lawyers are our partners in uncovering legislative and regulatory loopholes, and the legacy of outdated legislation they bear must be addressed with modern amendments that keep pace with developments and benefit from the experiences of our brothers in the Gulf."

He revealed that the ministry has begun the first contract with Microsoft for digital transformation, stressing "the electronic transformation is progressing as planned despite some technical issues that we are working hard to resolve."

He also announced a comprehensive review of all laws, article by article, and a review of the working mechanism of the complaints committee at the Public Prosecution, indicating that the number of cases in the prosecution has tripled within three years.

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KNG Chief hosts Bangladesh envoy

Chief of Kuwait's National Guard (KNG), Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, discussed with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to Kuwait, Major General Syed Tareq Hussain, ways to strengthen relations between the two friendly

countries.

In a press statement, the National Guard stated that the Chief received Ambassador Hussain at his office at the National Guard headquarters, stressing keenness to continue coordination and cooperation between the two sides. (KUNA)



KNG photo
KNG Chief receives the Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to Kuwait.

Newswatch

JERUSALEM: The Israeli military acknowledged targeting Nasser Hospital in Gaza on Monday and expressed regret that the strike resulted in civilian casualties.

"Earlier today, IDF (Israel Defense Forces) troops carried out a strike in the area of Nasser Hospital in Khan You-

nis," southern Gaza, the Israeli military said in a statement, without elaborating on the reason for the attack.

"The IDF regrets any harm to uninvolved individuals and does not target journalists as such," it said, adding that military chief Eyal Zamir had instructed an initial inquiry into the case. (Xinhua)

KPC, KIPIC, CAPT announce key tender changes, contracts

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: The Higher Purchasing Committee for Tenders at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) -- at the request of Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) -- cancelled a tender for the supply of 6,000 cages for 12-kilogram liquefied natural gas (LNG) cylinders and 750 for 25-kilogram LNG cylinders at the Shuaiba and Umm Al-Aish LNG filling branches.

In addition, KPC announced the

awarding of the contract for consultancy services to review and develop its current financial investment strategy and policy. The offer was submitted by a private company specializing in this field, as it was the only bidder and it passed the technical approval rate. The contract value is \$100,000.

Moreover, based on the approval of the Higher Procurement Committee for Tenders at KPC, Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) announced the awarding

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Day by Day

THE penguin's tricks regarding tenders for a ministry have been exposed.

These were hellish tricks, but they did not fool the officials of the ministry that issued the tenders.

The penguin thought people were asleep, and that no one was defending his rights and opportunities.

For nearly 20 years, this penguin controlled and manipulated, yet no one stopped him.

He would say to those who tried to stop him: "I am up there and my friends are up there."

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Palestinian cause, rising Israeli aggression in Gaza Strip discussed at OIC meet



Enhancing the purpose of innovation: Zain Great Idea (ZGI 2025) Accelerator program expands across the region

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:58	Asr	15:25
Sunrise ..	05:21	Maghrib ..	18:18
Zohr	11:50	Isha	19:39

Local

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-50 km/h with a chance for rising dust.			
By Night: Hot to rather hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 12-38 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	47	36	Abdaly 48
Kuwait Airport	47	30	Bubyan 42
			Jahra 48
			Salmiyah 44
			Ahmadi 44
			Nuwaisib 46
			Wafra 46
			Salmi 47
			29
			33
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			32
			31
			26

THE SWORD OF LAW DID NOT SPARE ONES WHO THRIVED ON LOOTING, BRIBES

Anti-graft war: Ministers, bosses behind bars

Justice basis of good governance

“No one is above the law, no matter his status”... The slogan of the era of firmness and reform in the face of corruption

‘The Army Fund’ closed the bars on Al-Jarrah and five other defendants with seven years of hard labor

Profiting from tenders brought down Al-Arou ... and the exploitation of influence by ousted former MP Mubarak Al-Harees

The conviction of former Minister of Health Ali Al-Obaidi, Al-Sahlawi and Abdulhadi for negligence in the ‘Atina’ contract for treatment

Seven judges, businessmen and lawyers were sentenced to seven and 10 years in prison and millions of Kuwaiti dinars of bribery were returned

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: In a practical application of the wise meaning intended by the Arab poet in his question: “When will the building reach its completion, if you are building it and others are demolishing it?” Kuwait realized that the true reform and development it seeks will not be established unless it eliminates its greatest enemy — ‘corruption’, which previously reached all the joints of the State until Allah prepared a ‘leadership of the day’ for the homeland.

A wise woman set the course of action to eradicate this scourge, regardless of its size or the size of its perpetrator, raising the slogan, “No one is above the law, regardless of their status, and justice is the basis of good governance.”

Kuwait’s battle against corruption left no stone unturned after it put its just judiciary in action, supported by the political leadership and relevant agencies, to recover the people’s looted funds and bring every accused or suspected person in the circle of corruption to trial with complete transparency and clarity, so that those involved in these crimes receive their punishment and serve as an example to anyone who dares to follow in their footsteps.

Kuwait has thus consolidated its reform approach by digging up corruption and removing its remnants from all ministries and State institutions.

The fierce war has reached leaders who ripened with corruption and thought they were immune from accountability and protected from the law, but the hand of firmness and justice was lying in wait for them.

Tomorrow “everyone will be held accountable for what he has earned,” and everyone will be imprisoned for what his hands have committed.

The hour of reckoning, although delayed, is inevitably coming.

The elders, or those who thought they were elders and far from the guillotine of the law and the authority of accountability from the top of the leadership pyramid, including ministers, officials and some members of the ruling family, were the first to be subjected to the era of firmness, the Charter of Justice and the ‘Kuwait and its interest above all considerations’ approach in the courts, so that the law remains the impregnable fortress of the homeland and society.

Al-Seyassah, which has always contributed to exposing many crimes of corruption and encroachment on public funds throughout its long history, prepared the following report on the most prominent anti-corruption trials to show the extent of the great war that the country has led and continues to lead against this crime and its henchmen.

Following are the details:

1- The Army Fund... Hundreds of millions under accountability

The Court of Cassation, headed by Judge Sultan Buresli, closed the ‘Army Fund’ case with a deterrent ruling, considered a turning point in the history of the Kuwaiti judiciary.

The court ruled to imprison former Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah and five other defendants for seven years with hard labor, and obligated them to pay fines exceeding KD290 million including more than KD250 million that Al-Jarrah and some of the defendants owed.

The court decided to refrain from sentencing former Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and others, in exchange for a bail of KD10,000 and a pledge of good behavior for two years, with a joint fine of KD8 million. It established that holding senior officials accountable has become a reality, with no exceptions.

2- Mubarak Al-Arou... Profiting from tenders

The Court of Cassation upheld the conviction of former Minister Mubarak Al-Arou and sentenced him to seven years in prison along with three other leaders, after it was proven that they profited from a government tender that was awarded through crooked means.

The court considered what happened a blatant example of influence peddling and violating the law, shaking society’s confidence in the integrity of public service.

3- Mubarak Al-Harees... Exploiting influence

The Court of Cassation issued a final ruling sentencing former Minister and MP Mubarak Al-Harees to two years in prison with hard labor and a fine of KD566,000 after he was convicted of influence peddling in an industrial plots case.

He is the first sitting minister in the National Assembly to be imprisoned by a final court ruling.

4- Ministers of Health ... Gross neglect of public funds

In the first judicial conviction of its kind against health ministers, the Court of Cassation convicted former Minister Dr. Ali Al-Obaidi, former Undersecretary Khaled Al-Sahlawi, and former Assistant Undersecretary Mahmoud Abdulhadi of gross negligence in relation to the ‘Atina Company’ contract for the treatment of Kuwaitis in the United States.

The Court ruled to fine each of them KD20,000, dismiss them from their jobs, and bar them from holding government positions in the future.

This ruling was described as historic as it is the first judicial precedent affecting health ministers.

5- The Judges’ Bribery Case... A Shock to the Judiciary

The judiciary was not spared from accountability, as the Court of Cassation upheld the sentence imposed on judges — prison terms of up to seven years, with dismissal and confiscation of their assets.

In addition, the Court of Cassation upheld varying prison sentences of up to 10 years imposed on businesspersons, lawyers and expatriates, with fines of millions of Kuwaiti dinars.

The court emphasized in its reasoning that “bribery undermines the prestige of the judiciary and the confidence of society.”

6 - ‘Interior Ministry Hospitality’... Life Sentences and Millions

The Court of Cassation increased the penalties regarding the ‘Interior Ministry Hospitality’ case, imposing life sentence on the main defendant and prison terms ranging from seven to 15 years for military personnel and businessmen, obligating them to repay tens of millions of Kuwaiti dinars and fine them double the embezzled amounts.

It also ordered the dismissal of the leaders and the deportation of the convicted expatriates, thus, closing one of the largest financial corruption cases in the history of the Ministry of Interior.

7 - Pending cases... Talal Al-Khaled and Ahmad Al-Fahad

In parallel with the previous rulings, other corruption cases remain pending in the judiciary, most notably the expenses case involving former Interior and Defense Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled.

He faces a preliminary sentence of 14 years in prison and the repayment of fines amounting to tens of millions of Kuwaiti dinars.

The Ministers Court is also considering the case of former Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad in the ‘secret expenses’ case, related to invoices for spending approximately KD400,000 to purchase vehicles and other belongings.

Ministers Court ... Adjudicator

- The Ministers Court was established pursuant to Law No. 88/1995, based on Article 132 of the Constitution, to try ministers for crimes related to public funds and corruption.
- It consists of five advisors from the Court of Appeals to ensure impartiality.
- Despite its historical infrequency, in recent years it has become an effective tool for holding senior officials accountable, establishing the principle of transparency and confirming that there are no exceptions before the law.

Five Prominent Cases that Shook Public Opinion

- **Army Fund (2019-2023):** A historic trial involving a former prime minister and defense ministers accused of embezzling hundreds of millions of Kuwaiti dinars.
- **Mubarak Al-Harees (2023):** He was sentenced to two years in prison with hard labor and a fine of half a million Kuwaiti dinars in an influence-peddling case.
- **Mubarak Al-Arou (2024):** The Court of Cassation sentenced him to seven years in prison on charges of profiting from tenders.
- **Ali Al-Obaidi (2023):** The first final conviction against a former health minister in the Ministers Court on charges of gross negligence of public funds.
- **Talal Al-Khaled (case pending):** Initial verdict of 14 years in prison and the return of millions of Kuwaiti dinars.

Three ministers and a security leader ... behind bars

- **Former Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah:** Sentenced to seven years in prison in the Army Fund case.
- **Former Minister Mubarak Al-Arou:** Sentenced to seven years in prison in the tenders profiteering case.
- **Former Minister and MP Mubarak Al-Harees:** Sentenced to two years in prison with hard labor in the influence peddling case.
- **Security leader Adel Al-Hashash:** Sentenced to life imprisonment in the Interior Ministry hospitality case.
- **Seven judges:** Sentenced to prison terms of up to seven years in the judges bribery case.



Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya in talks with the Tunisian delegation.



Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya meets his Mauritian counterpart Dhananjay Ramful.



KUNA photos
Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya meets his Algerian counterpart Ahmad Attaf.

Palestinian cause, rising Israeli aggression in Gaza Strip discussed at OIC meet

JEDDAH, Aug 25, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya led the country’s delegation to the extraordinary session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers, held Monday at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah.

The meeting reviewed the latest developments of the Palestinian cause and the continuous violations in the Gaza Strip, and addressed the Israeli occupation’s escalating aggression against the Palestinian people.

It also discussed ways to bolster joint positions in confronting Israeli occupation plans to occupy the Gaza Strip and impose policies to displace its residents, which poses serious threats to security and stability in the region.

The meeting discussed efforts to bolster unwavering support for the Palestinian people to establish their independent state on the June 4, 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Algeria

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met Monday with his Algerian counterpart Ahmad Attaf on the sidelines of the extraordinary session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at the ministerial level, held in Jeddah.

During the meeting, the two ministers tackled bilateral relations and means of promoting and developing them across

various domains, along with the latest regional and international developments, mainly the current situation in occupied Palestinian territories.

Mauritius

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met Monday with his Mauritian counterpart Dhananjay Ramful on the sidelines of the extraordinary session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at the ministerial level, held in Jeddah.

During the meeting, the two ministers tackled bilateral relations and means of promoting and developing them across various domains, along with the latest regional and international developments, mainly the current situation in occupied Palestinian territories.

Tunisia

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya met Monday with his Tunisian counterpart Mohammad Nefti on the sidelines of the extraordinary session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at the ministerial level, held in Jeddah. During the meeting, the two ministers reviewed bilateral relations and ways to strengthen and develop them across various fields, as well as the latest regional and international developments, with a focus on the current events in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Other Voices

A series of deceptions, trickery and false claims

By Ahmad alsarraf

Despite all the uproar and grumbling or even the veiled rejection of a minority over what happened in recent months regarding the revocation of the citizenship of tens of thousands of people and their return to their previous status before they obtained State citizenship, this uproar was put to rest, albeit temporarily, once the discovery of fraud and corruption involving large numbers was announced.

No sane person would accept the status quo under any circumstances. How could one accept the existence of a family with 20, 30 or 40 children, some of whom are older than or near the age of their mothers?

What is this audacity in forging and manipulating people? How did this citizen, and before him, that ‘senior official’, allow themselves to put their recommendations, seals, signatures and final approval on such people obtaining State citizenship — the foundation and symbol of its pride?!

Despite all the good qualities we are fond of attributing to our society and our nostalgia over the beautiful past, we are, in reality, not much different from other societies, even the advanced ones.

A single observation of the receptions and banquets held for the ‘figures’ of society reveals that the majority of those invited, if not all, do not truly care to investigate the background of the inviter, even if they are among those who ‘miss their face in the seat and

their face on the bed’.

They ignore all the doubts surrounding the academic degrees they claim to hold, the source of the millions they derive from their wealth, and the truth behind the ‘scholarly’ titles they insist on bestowing upon themselves.



alsarraf

such activities, including cultural, educational and personal qualifications, integrity, and a good reputation!

The State recently revoked the citizenship of an individual and all of his children. Among them are those who owned several busi-

nesses, including an educational institution, whose management we previously criticized, as well as the programs, events and lavish academic awards and titles that accompanied its activities through fabricated and cheap ‘international’ hosting.

The fall was inevitable, but, unfortunately, it was long overdue. It did not come as a result of the efforts of the relevant authorities in higher education and the Secretariat General of Private Universities. It rather came as an inevitable consequence of the revocation of the citizenship. If there had been a proper oversight system in place for educational institutions, the future of many who enrolled would have been saved, given their trust in the oversight agencies.

However, the security decision ‘ruined the situation’ and indirectly led to the government halting scholarships, severing its lifeline.

Note that the decision to ‘suspend scholarships’ was issued by the Secretariat General of Private Universities which, along with the Ministry of Higher Education, bears the full burden of these institutions.

So who will compensate the students for the precious years of their lives that have been lost?!

□ □ □

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Uphold rights of inmates: official

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: In line with the commitment of the Ministry of Interior to improve performance and security preparedness, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Affairs Major General Hamed Al-Dawas on Monday conducted an inspection tour at the Private Security Sector and correctional institutions, accompanied by the head of the sector Brigadier General Dakhil Al-Dakhil.

Al-Dawas started his inspection visit at the Special Forces General Department, where he checked the training fields and halls, and reviewed modern training programs designed to raise the efficiency of the sector’s personnel. He praised the advanced level of combat readiness and discipline.

He also visited the Special Forces Museum, which documents the history and achievements of this vital sector.

diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Stop imagining ... who do you think is real enemy ?

“ARE we searching for imaginary enemies, or do we imagine that there is an enemy lurking behind our doors? Before if we are certain who our enemy is, we must investigate and assess the situation to know who is really our enemy and who is our friend,” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.



Hassan Ali Karam

“We — here I mean Kuwait — have gone through an unprecedented tragic experience, not only for the countries in the region, but also the entire world in modern history. When an invasion is carried out without justification by a neighbor, its certainty and decisiveness is barbaric and animalistic. It is a test of the strength of this enemy who invaded us. Iraq is preparing for a new invasion.

“A few days ago, a senior officer from the Ministry of Interior appeared on television and social media, explaining the recent decisions regarding foreigners visiting Kuwait. Among his statements was on exclusion of ‘Israelis’ from visiting Kuwait. Why is Israel still an enemy? Is it an enemy of Kuwait, an enemy of the Palestinians, an enemy of all Arabs, or an enemy of all Muslims? Explain to us, what is the story with the Israeli enemy in Kuwait? When Saddam Hussein invaded us with his barbaric and backward army, the Israeli government directed its official and private media to the Kuwaiti issue.

“Until the last hours of the night, I listened to Arab radio stations and ‘Israel Radio’, which dedicated its airwaves to relaying news on the invasion live — as heard over the radio.

“We did not hear from the Israelis about Iraq’s right to invade Kuwait. They merely talked about the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. At the same time, our Arab brothers and sisters were singing, dancing and reveling on the streets over the blood from our martyrs’ bodies, praying for victory of the occupier. Who do you think the real enemy is? We are creating an imaginary enemy for ourselves and forgetting that our real enemy is lurking behind our doors.

“Allowing all nationalities to visit Kuwait is a good and unprecedented decision, but Israelis are not just those who hold Israeli passports or reside in Israel.

“Israelis, like all other people, reside outside Israel and hold passports issued by the countries where they reside. Are they subject to the visit ban as well? How can they be identified?

“It is really astonishing that while the Palestinians are licking the ‘Israeli honey’, we are paying the price for an imaginary enemy, or fabricating enemies, without justification.

“It is more astonishing that three-quarters of Arabs sit and chat with Israelis, drink to the tune of friendship and love, and exchange gifts with them. What is this contradiction, hypocrisy and duplicity that we are living in?”

Also:

“How did the Minister of Education confront administrative and financial corruption and enforce the rule of law?” **Salman Al-Onayzaan** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“In recent years, the ministry has become a place of chaos, infiltrated by administrative and financial corruption.

“The weak-willed dared to tamper with our children’s future, up to the point of forging certificates, leaking tests and selling the conscience at the expense of education.

“Trust in the educational institution was at stake, and hope for reform was virtually lost.

“But with His Excellency Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaei taking over the ministerial portfolio, the landscape changed completely.

“The man came in without empty slogans, but rather with a firm stance that blocked the path of every manipulator and corrupt person. He began by addressing the heavy files that many before him had evaded.

“He neither flattered nor compromised, and sent a clear message: No one is immune from the law.

“He confronted the networks of vested interests that exploited the ministry for decades and succeeded in uprooting the roots of corruption — from appointments based on favoritism to committees that became dens of abuse.

“He tightened oversight of exams, closed the avenues for leaks, and restored the prestige of the Kuwaiti certificate, which the saboteurs sought to distort.

“He did not just fight corruption, but also treated employees, teachers and female teachers in supervisory positions fairly.

“He is committed to implementing the fingerprint law to ensure fairness in annual evaluations and awarding outstanding work, ensuring equality for all, free from favoritism or discrimination.

“The reform led by Al-Tabtabaei is not just about decisions on paper, it is a real battle against corruption, fought with courage and awareness, putting the nation’s interests above all else.

“He restored confidence that the ministry could be a beacon of knowledge and values, not a breeding ground for corruption and personal gain.

“Today, we can confidently say that Jalal Al-Tabtabaei is the linchpin of reform, and that his presence at the head of the ministry saved the future of generations and proved that Kuwait does not lack dedicated officials, but only needs someone with the courage to say ‘enough is enough.’”

“The decision of the Cabinet to dispose off used tyres is a good and pioneering step in the environmental reform process. Kuwait suffers a lot due to this issue, considering the occurrence of arson, the area occupied by these tyres or the resulting pollution,” Sheikh Eng. **Fahad Dawood Al-Sabah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“There have been many decisions and opinions on this matter, but they faced several obstacles due to the lack of agreement on a specific mechanism. Today, there is a determination to solve this dilemma, which has long troubled Kuwait.

“In the spirit of participation, there are many ideas on this matter, the most important of which are utilizing the granules resulting from the recycling process in various fields like mixing them with asphalt for modern roads, as done in some countries around the world, as well as using them in playgrounds, especially in schools and nurseries.

“Kuwait produces around 1.5 million used tyres annually. This quantity is sufficient for local recycling plants and serves many purposes. However, they are not used properly. Instead, they are recycled and then exported as raw materials. This is just one aspect of the uses and economic cycle.

“Despite the measures taken in recent years, the indiscriminate disposal of tyres remains an environmental challenge. Many are dumped in landfills or desert areas, leading to recurring fires, the emission of toxic fumes, and increased environmental pollution. Environmental reform is essential for Kuwait, given its harsh weather, which poses a major obstacle to any attempt to utilize this large quantity of used tyres produced annually if it is not properly treated.

“It is then imperative that investment in this wasted resource not only serves the environment, but also diversifies sources of income, creates job opportunities, reduces dependence on natural resources, and mitigates toxic emissions and environmental risks.

“Recycling has become a purely economic issue worldwide, not just for tyres, but for waste as well. While tyres are one of the means used today on roads, other waste serves other purposes. Environmental treatment should not end with tyres, but extend to other waste and debris. In India, for example, the State uses rubber asphalt to pave roads, while in other countries, some waste is converted into energy through fermentation and the resulting gases are treated by converting them into electricity.

“For decades, this waste has been left to the elements, causing numerous disasters and costing the State dearly. Therefore, the strategy must be based on the principle of maximizing the use of waste in general, not just tyres. The Council of Ministers, headed by His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, has taken a successful step in this direction, as environmental reform is one of the most important steps towards the advancement of the nation.”

□ □ □

“In recent years, a striking phenomenon has been observed -- the exaggeration or formality of dowries. Some marriage contracts include figures that do not reflect the actual dowry,” **Dalal Al-Mullah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“This phenomenon might be used as a means of social pretense, and sometimes it is exploited to circumvent the wife or the law. It may even be used as a tool for laundering illicit funds.

“This behavior directly impacts the family, threatening its stability and opening the way for legal disputes, which have often been repeated before the courts. Hence, there is a need to regulate and document the dowry, which is considered a legal pillar of the marriage contract and a fundamental right of the wife.

“However, the absence of a system for documenting it through official means has resulted in family problems, including difficulty proving rights in the event of a dispute or delaying its fulfillment. It is therefore necessary to reconsider the method of documenting it to ensure the wife’s protection from deprivation or delay, enhance the husband’s seriousness, ensure the availability of the amount, and reduce the negative social phenomena associated with exaggerated dowries.

“Given these negative aspects, I see the need to submit a proposal to His Excellency the Minister of Justice requiring the documentation of the dowry by means of a certified cheque, such that the marriage registrar verifies its issuance and validity when drafting the contract. The registrar is also required to record the full details of the cheque in the marriage contract.

“This simple procedure achieves several goals as follows:

- * Ensure the wife’s entitlement to her legally prescribed dowry in a documented manner.
- * Establish the seriousness and transparency in marriage contracts.
- * Prevent legal disputes related to the dowry, given that the proof is present and clear.
- * Reduce the formality and exaggeration that burden families and young people.

“Such an approach instills a culture of moderation and restores the dowry to its true legal meaning, far removed from false appearances. Its impact is not limited to the legal aspect only, as it is reflected in society as a whole.

— Compiled by **Mohammad Wangengi**



Municipality inspectors during their visit to a construction site.

KUNA photos

Municipality enforces strategy for building safety nationwide

Four warnings issued in Sabahiya

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25, (KUNA): Kuwait Municipality has reaffirmed its commitment to a comprehensive strategy aimed at ensuring strict compliance with construction and building safety regulations across the country’s six governorates.

Speaking during a recent field inspection in the Al-Sabahiya residential area, Head of the Emergency Team in Ahmadi Governorate, Khalid Al-Fadhli, highlighted the vital

role the Municipality plays—beginning with the issuance of various permits such as building, demolition, maintenance, and temporary permits, as well as relevant certificates.

Al-Fadhli explained that the Municipality continues to monitor construction sites throughout the execution phase, ensuring compliance with safety standards and preventing harm to neighboring properties. These efforts are part of the Municipality’s broader goal to protect the well-being of both citizens and residents.

He also noted that the Municipality actively collaborates with property owners and contrac-

tors to overcome obstacles by raising awareness about building codes and safety procedures.

During the inspection tour in Al-Sabahiya, the team issued more than four warnings for violations. Al-Fadhli emphasized that enforcement actions will be taken without hesitation against any violations of the building regulations.

He urged all stakeholders to strictly adhere to the Municipality’s laws and regulations, pointing out that inspection teams from the safety departments in all six governorates are dedicated to upholding these standards through regular field campaigns.

Jail inmate confesses role in crime

Jobless Bedoun caught with drugs and guns

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: The Drug Control General Department (DCGD) at the Criminal Security Sector in the Interior Ministry confiscated 34 kilograms of various narcotics, 10,000 Lyrica capsules, unlicensed firearms and ammunition in Al-Oyoun, Jahra Governorate, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, the ministry disclosed that the attempt to smuggle drugs into the local market was foiled when an unemployed Bedoun, identified as M.S., was arrested in possession of the abovementioned narcotic substances, which he stored inside a vehicle he was using as a secret warehouse.

During interrogation, he confessed to the crime and told the authorities about his accomplice – a Bedoun inmate at the Central Prison. The inmate was summoned for questioning and he admitted to his involvement in the acquisition of the seized items for the purpose of trafficking.

The ministry indicated that the seized items included 30 kilograms of chemicals, three kilograms of shabu, one kilogram of hashish, 10,000 Lyrica capsules, two unlicensed firearms, ammunition, and two weighing scales.

It affirmed that this operation is part of its



Mol photo

The suspects with the hashish and shabu seized by the police.

resolute efforts to combat all forms of drug trafficking and distribution, stressing that the anti-drug officers do not tolerate any attempt

to tamper with national security or threaten the health and safety of citizens and expatriates.

Egyptian jailed two years for seducing friend’s wife

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 24: In a series of judicial rulings that reflect the diversity of cases filed in courts, the Criminal Court announced different verdicts on Sunday for various cases, including embezzlement of public funds through forgery, cyber-extortion, and fraud in the recruitment of domestic workers.

In the first case, the court overturned a previous ruling -- the four-year imprisonment with hard labor imposed on a citizen for allegedly embezzling KD48,000 social assistance funds from the Ministry of Social Affairs for eight years by falsifying her information, claiming she was ‘single or divorced’.

The court affirmed that the accused took the initiative to repay the entire embezzled amount, hence, the decision to refrain from imposing punishment, as the measures taken are deemed sufficient to deter the defendant.

In the second case, the Criminal Court sentenced an Egyptian to two years in prison with hard labor and deportation for betraying his friend and stealing the latter’s Facebook account. He resorted to blackmailing and threatening his friend’s wife in exchange for illicit benefits. Investigations by the cybercrime officer proved that the accused was the actual user of the account, and he was confronted with compelling evidence that led to his conviction.

In the third case, the court convicted a Bedoun of fraud as he misled a citizen into believing the procedures for recruiting a domestic worker were valid and extorted KD400 from him.

The court sentenced the Bedoun to one year in prison with hard labor and deportation, stating in its reasoning that the defendant’s actions constituted blatant fraud and harmed the rights of the victim.

□ □ □

Club head released: The detention renewal judge on Monday decided to release the former president of Jahra Sports Club on KD2,000 bail, after deliberations on whether to continue his detention or release him.

The Public Prosecution previously issued a decision to detain the president and secretary of the club, in addition to an investor and five other defendants, for 21 days pending investigation.

The prosecution ordered their detention in the Central Prison, in view of the complaint filed by the Board of Directors of a club in Jahra Governorate about the forgery of official documents and misappropriation of public funds.

Investigation documents indicate suspicions of financial and administrative violations committed during a previous period of club management, including the forgery of official documents and the concealment of accounting data, which resulted in enormous financial losses.

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State authorities post spending gaps in FY 2024/2025 accounts

Gazette highlights budget shortfalls

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: The Official Gazette, ‘Kuwait Al-Youm’, published several decrees approving the final accounts of various State agencies and bodies for fiscal 2024/2025.

The approved final account of the Medical Responsibility Authority showed an increase

in expenditures amounting to KD2.7 million, as the expenditures of the authority amounted to KD2.9 million, compared to revenues of KD139,600. This increase was covered from the budgets of ministries and government departments at the Ministry of Finance and the general accounts.

The expenditures of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) are KD111.8 million higher than its revenues. The expenditures of the authority reached KD117 million, compared to revenues

of KD5.3 million. This increase was covered from the budgets of ministries and government departments at the Ministry of Finance and the general accounts.

The expenditures of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) are KD20.7 million higher than its revenues. Its expenditures amounted to KD23 million, compared to revenues of KD2.6 million. This increase was covered from the budgets of ministries and government departments at the Ministry of Finance and the general accounts.



Mohammad Al-Sanousi addresses the Summer Volunteer Program.



Deputy Director General Mohammad Al-Sanousi joins young volunteers in a group photo following the recognition ceremony.



TSC photos
Youth volunteer shares inspiring words.

Scientific Center honors young volunteers for summer contributions

The Scientific Center, a subsidiary of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), honored the participants in its Summer Volunteer Program on Sunday, in recognition of their distinguished contributions during the program.

This is part of the commitment of the center to support young national talent and highlight their role in spreading scientific culture and promoting the values of giving and volunteering in the Kuwaiti society.

The program included training volunteers on public communication skills, interacting with children at the summer camp, serving the visitors at the

center, and participating in organizing educational programs for children. These experiences contributed to the development of the skills of volunteers, and nurturing their sense of taking the initiative and social responsibility.

Deputy Director General for Visitor Experience Mohammad Al-Sanousi said “we are proud of our young volunteers who have shown their commitment and enthusiasm through their participation in serving visitors and organizing educational programs. Their efforts reflect the awareness and responsibility of the new generation, and underscore the role of the center

in empowering youths and enhancing their contributions to society.”

He revealed they were also given the opportunity to learn about the scientific activities offered by the Education and Programs Department, as well as to participate with the Aquarium Department in learning about marine organisms and their natural environments, and to raise awareness on the importance of protecting wildlife and preserving ecosystems. “These experiences contributed to developing the volunteers’ skills, raising their environmental awareness, and fostering their sense of responsibility towards both society and the environment,” he added.

MoF steps in to bridge the gap

Revenue of Holy Quran printing authority lags behind expenses

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: The final account of the Public Authority for the Care and Publishing of the Holy Quran, the Sunnah and their Sciences for fiscal 2024/2025 revealed that the revenues of the authority did not exceed one percent of its expenses, recording only about KD27,300 revenues compared to expenses of KD2.934 million.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the final account of the authority, indicating that employee compensation accounted for the largest share of spending --more than KD2 million or about 70 percent of total expenses.

It stated that the expenses are covered from the budgets of ministries and govern-

ment departments by the Ministry of Finance and general accounts, given the minimal internal revenues, which are limited to goods and services.

It is worth mentioning that a decree was issued on Jan 20 to repeal Law No. 10/2011 regarding the establishment of the authority. The decree stipulated that “all the rights and obligations of the authority shall be transferred to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. The employees working at the authority will be transferred to the ministry with the same grades, while retaining their salaries and financial benefits.”

Article Three prohibits any official or private body from printing the Holy Qur’an or importing any edition of it unless a permit is obtained from the ministry.

MoHE OK’s new UK academic programs

By Abdul-Rahman Al-Shammari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal issued a ministerial decision on adding academic programs and degrees to the list of higher education institutions in the United Kingdom, recommended by the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education.

Al-Jalal stressed that this decision is in line with the commitment of the Ministry of Higher Education to provide quality academic programs that keep pace with the requirements of national development and the labor market.

He pointed out that the ministry will

continue to update the lists of accredited universities and specializations to ensure the quality of higher education outputs.

The decision includes the accreditation of new programs at prestigious British universities as follows:

- Master’s in Biomedical Sciences at the University of Cambridge
- Master’s and PhD in Economics at the University of Aberdeen
- PhD in Education at the University of Exeter

The decision stated that enrollment in these academic programs requires adherence to the traditional education system and regular attendance throughout the study period.

The academic degree must be higher than the previous degree obtained by the student.

Australian Consul bids farewell

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: Australian Deputy Head of Mission and Consul Natassia Kaufman bid farewell, as her three-year diplomatic tenure in Kuwait ended, affirming that Kuwait will always hold a special place in her heart thanks to the generosity, hospitality, humanitarian spirit and distinguished relationships she encountered, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a recorded message posted on the embassy’s Instagram account, Kaufman revealed she will really miss the warm welcome she received from Kuwaitis, and sharing their traditions and customs that made her feel like she was part of the community. She pointed out that invitations to Iftar tables during Ramadan will remain one of her most unforgettable memories, as well as the special evenings in Souq Mubarakia, the scent of incense that fills the space, and the morning strolls through The Avenues Mall before the rush of shoppers that were part of her daily life in Kuwait.

She pointed out that one of the highlights of her career was contributing to the completion of the street mural project with the participation of two artists from Australia (Sophi Odling) and Kuwait (Sheikha Al-Otaibi) to celebrate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

She emphasized that this artwork, which brought together elements of culture and heritage, will remain a symbol of the creativity and cooperation that characterize the Australian-Kuwaiti partnership.

She added “the spirit of exchange has also been felt in my daily life, whether through



Natassia Kaufman, Australian Deputy Head of Mission and Consul

shared conversations, shared customs or even Kuwaiti cuisine,” which she described as “underrated.”

She emphasized that she enjoyed trying a variety of meals, from international restaurants to traditional Kuwaiti dishes. Kaufman continued “what I will miss most are the people, from talented graduates to creatives and artists, to inspiring women working to make a difference.”

She added “thank you for the friendship and memories. My three years in Kuwait were exceptional, and thanks to you, I leave grateful, knowing that a part of my heart will always be here.”



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WAMD users targeted

Central Bank cautions public against money transfer fraud

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: The Central Bank of Kuwait has warned about fraud attempts that may be carried out through WAMD, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an awareness post on its official account on the X platform, the Central Bank of Kuwait stated that fraudsters are attempting to send money through WAMD service, which allows you to send and request money through mobile phone numbers between local bank

customers.

They claim that the transfer was made in error, then ask you to send the money directly to another number.

In the post, which is part of its ‘Let’s Be Aware’ campaign, the Central Bank stressed the need to refuse to send money to any account you do not know, as the number may be part of a money laundering network, thus, helping the fraudster stay above suspicion.

Kuwait champions anti-corruption strategies in GCC

Nazaha chairman highlights national, regional anti-corruption achievements

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: Chairman of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim said there are multiple methods of combating corruption, some of which focus on prevention before it occurs, and others on monitoring and evaluation, indicating that prevention is a fundamental pillar of the work of the authority and Kuwait is among the leading countries in this field, thanks to the concerted efforts of all ministries and institutions.

Al-Ibrahim made the statement Monday on the sidelines of the launch of the annual event of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Anti-Corruption Expert Committee with the theme, “Mechanisms for Measuring Corruption: International Experiences and National Applications.”

Present at the event were Gulf officials and experts from agencies concerned with promoting integrity and combating corruption in GCC countries. It was held within the framework of Kuwait’s presidency – represented by Nazaha -- of the GCC Ministerial Committee for Combating Corruption.

Al-Ibrahim pointed that combating corruption is not solely the responsibility of the Integrity Commission, but rather a comprehensive societal responsibility requiring clear laws, regulations and procedures. He explained that the member states of the Convention against Corruption undergo annual reviews, and international recom-

mendations often call for amendments to legislation in order to strengthen governance and transparency.

He highlighted one of Kuwait’s most notable successes—the Sahel application—which has become a model referenced in regional and international conferences. He stated the application contributed to reducing paperwork and direct contact between clients and employees by more than 98 percent, thereby, closing the doors to bribery and other forms of corruption.

He stressed the importance of cooperation with international organizations and GCC states to unify visions and positions, confirming that Kuwait will raise this issue at a meeting scheduled for December in Qatar, based on the influential role played by GCC countries in this field.

In his speech at the event, Al-Ibrahim underscored Kuwait’s awareness that systems and tools for measuring corruption and assessing its risks is a primary and pivotal objective in reinforcing integrity and consolidating transparency within societies. He stressed that serious work to prevent and combat corruption requires a clear strategic and procedural vision—one



Leaders in integrity and transparency from across the Gulf exchange knowledge at the GCC Anti-Corruption Experts Forum.



Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim, Chairman of the General Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha)

that should not rely on mere impressions or abstract societal assessments, as it must be supported by accurate data and reliable indicators that can significantly contribute to developing legislation and procedures, strengthening and correcting policies, and overcoming the challenges in combating corruption, both nationally and internationally.

Meanwhile, Anwar Al-Qadeeri, Director of the International Cooperation Department at Nazaha and Chairperson of the GCC Anti-Corruption Experts Committee, affirmed the commitment



Anwar Al-Qadeeri, Director of the International Cooperation Department at the Authority

of the authority to strengthen international cooperation among agencies in charge of promoting integrity and combating corruption. She stressed the importance of showcasing national and regional efforts, and of exchanging best practices and expertise among GCC countries.

She also praised the role of the Ministerial Committee on Combating Corruption and its subcommittees in strengthening Gulf systems to combat corruption and in showcasing GCC countries’ efforts at regional and international levels. She reaffirmed



Photos by Mohammad Morsi

Nazaha’s commitment to achieve tangible outcomes during Kuwait’s chairmanship of the Ministerial Committee on Combating Corruption, within the framework of its presidency of the 2024 Gulf Cooperation Council Summit and its subcommittees.

The event’s program included specialized presentations on mechanisms and methodologies for measuring corruption, as well as on measuring community awareness in the areas of integrity, accountability and transparency.

These presentations focused on the experiences of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar and State of Kuwait.

The event took place amid growing international interest in developing scientific tools and indicators to measure corruption. Recent initiatives include the Statistical Framework for Measuring Corruption issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Global Initiative to Measure Corruption (GIMC) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Global Programme to Measure Corruption

(GPMC) of the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA).

This is in addition to two United Nations resolutions adopted by the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (COP), focusing on methodologies and indicators for measuring corruption and evaluating the effectiveness of anti-corruption mechanisms. These developments are relevant as the issue of corruption measurement will be featured at the 11th session of COP that will be held in Doha, Qatar in December 2025.

At the conclusion of its meeting, the Committee of Experts on Combating Corruption recommended the development of scientific frameworks and methodologies for measuring corruption. Such frameworks should be comprehensive, transparent and aligned with international standards, while ensuring a balance between perceptions and objective data to achieve more accurate and reliable assessments.

The recommendations also called for evaluating the effectiveness of national measures to combat corruption, strengthening Gulf and international cooperation in this field, exchanging expertise and best practices, and benefiting from programs and tools developed by the United Nations and specialized international organizations. These efforts aim to improve data collection, monitor trends, and enhance the effectiveness of initiatives promoting integrity.

The recommendations included active participation in international conferences and forums on improving methods for measuring corruption, as well as supporting national initiatives through strategies, periodic surveys, statistical indicators, and databases in line with international standards. They stressed the need to monitor international indicators concerned with promoting integrity and combating corruption in order to analyze the position of GCC states and to lay down executive plans for improving performance.

Continued from Page 1

Hezbollah is

The same applies to Hezbollah, which has been described in the Lebanese proverb: Like the story of the jug of oil. It repeatedly threatened not to surrender its weapons, but to no avail, because it will eventually yield.

Thus, whenever Naim Qassem emerges from hiding, he threatens and vows. For about five months, he has been claiming that he will not surrender his party’s weapons, threatening civil war.

Every time the Lebanese come out to tell him that his weapons no longer serve a purpose, and that Lebanon has benefited from defending them in the wars he caused, he repeats the ‘oil jug’ story.

On the other hand, it seems that Qassem and his party leaders are deaf. They do not listen to reason, as they rather listen only to those outside the country. They are being intimidated by threats from within.

Anyone who knows the Lebanese people has long realized that they will do everything possible to prevent a return to civil war, for which they have paid so much and continue to pay.

They are taking things in stride, because the government and the president are working hard to prevent tension, so as not to provide an excuse for this party’s madmen.

Meanwhile, the so-called ‘Shiite duo’ is trying to pressure the street to meet Tehran’s demand not to give up their weapons, which have become a source of strife rather than a deterrent force, as the so-called ‘resistance alliance’ portrayed them.

Today, Lebanon is at a crossroads – either it will recover and return to the Arab fold and the international community, or it will continue its isolation, which will exacerbate its poverty and living crises. President Joseph Aoun is trying to prevent this, with minimal losses.

Indeed, all the capitals that send envoys to Beirut daily have warned against this.

Beirut must make a quick decision, because it does not have the luxury of playing for time, especially since the region is facing major changes that will not be halted by rhetoric and slogans of resistance.

The Lebanese people, with all their

sects and parties, have long been convinced that the only solution to the crisis is to end the myth of Iranian influence, and to eliminate it once and for all, so that it no longer remains a mere ‘tool’ whenever Tehran intends to blackmail any capital that uses Lebanon as an outlet.

After the last war, a belief was crystallized among the majority of Lebanese, including most of the Shiite community – that the only way out of the crisis tunnel is to return to Lebanon, not to rely on foreign powers, particularly those who caused several wars and worked to perpetuate sectarian divisions, even after the country recovered from them in the decades following the end of the civil war.

Therefore, if Hezbollah wants to deviate from the provisions of the Nov 27, 2024 agreement and harass any State or group, it knows in advance that suppressing it will be much easier than in previous instances.

Hence, its attempt, along with the Amal Movement, to incite the street by calling for a strike and sit-in tomorrow, is nothing but a storm in a teacup.

What has been written has been written. Seeking support from Iran is like seeking support from someone who needs help to repel the blows they receive daily.

Tenants decry

He added “the notice also stipulates that failure to comply after the specified date will prompt the ministry to take eviction enforcement measures, including the complete suspension of services to the building, and taking all administrative measures for public interest. Although the deadline has yet to end, the rental company is committing daily violations against us. They turned off the air conditioning units in this hot weather, closed some elevators, stopped the cold water supply and provided hot water only. They also prevented us from using parking spaces despite our payment of subscriptions in advance until October.”

He pointed out that the rental contracts of some residents are more than 30 years old, and that the contract period is five years and automatically

renewed.

He disclosed that he renewed his contract in 2023 and it is valid until 2028.

He continued “I invested more than KD20,000 in my apartment to maintain it for 23 years, and I am committed to paying KD450 rent in advance every six months. I and the rest of the tenants are prepared for any rent increase or any adjustment requested by the new investor, but we reject forced eviction.”

KPC, KIPIC,

of the tender for the maintenance of buildings and civil works at Al-Zour Refinery and natural gas facilities to a private company. The tender is valued at KD 4,034,935.539.

Meanwhile, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) launched a tender for the installation of a condensate stabilization unit at the BS-171 gas booster station. The tender opening date was Aug 24 and the closing date is on Nov 25.

CAPT announced the postponement of the deadline for submitting bids for the installation of crude oil pipelines and related works for Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) until Sept 9, instead of Aug 26.

The Central Bank of Kuwait also announced the postponement of the tender for the flowline group for manifold assembly lines in North Kuwait until Sept 9, instead of Aug 26.

Justice Minister

He affirmed “we support the abolition of the detention of lawyers, such that their detention should not continue for more than 24 hours. This is a basic requirement that must be met.”

He added that the more than one million cases heard by the courts annually is a huge number, which requires a review of court fees to sort out serious cases from non-serious ones.

He explained that if it turns out that the rate of reluctance to take up cases after the fees are imposed exceeds 40 percent, the law will be amended again.

First Deputy

clear procedures and high standards for licensing and organizing these religious institutions.

The goal is to maximize their positive impact and enhance their role in serving the community, it added.

The meeting underscores Kuwait’s commitment to organizing religious and charitable work, safeguarding the country’s leadership role and protecting its distinguished reputation, according to the statement.

Arab Times

strengthening cooperation between various parties to better serve the governorate’s residents was discussed.

The Governor welcomed Al-Jarallah and praised the role of the national media in supporting development efforts and highlighting the needs of citizens. He affirmed that “continuous communication with the people of the governorate is a fundamental pillar of work and a vital means of monitoring their priorities and demands.”

Sheikh Abdullah explained that “the open council allows citizens and expatriates residing in the governorate to express their opinions and suggestions on greening public streets and squares, maintaining and developing infrastructure networks, and enhancing services in residential areas.” He stressed that “all these suggestions are receiving attention, are followed up and are being incorporated into the development plans of the governorate in cooperation with the concerned authorities.”

He asserted that his office “remains open to everyone in order to strengthen community partnership and achieve whatever benefits the public.”

He added that “the governorate always strives to operate transparently and listen to diverse opinions to achieve the highest level of services.”

At the conclusion of the meeting, Al-Jarallah expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Governor for this “positive approach that provides citizens with direct channels of communication with officials.” He emphasized that “this initiative reflects the governorate’s commitment to involve the community in local decision-making and in meeting the aspirations of those residing in various areas of the governorate.”

Information Minister reviews projects with ministry leaders

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi met ministry leaders to review projects that will be announced in mid-September.

The meeting discussed the national “Leadership by Will” project to highlight Kuwait’s heritage and achievements across past, present, and future, the Ministry of Information said in a statement to KUNA.

It also covered a new brand and pro-

gram lineup for the news channel, set to launch in early October, to strengthen professionalism and TV content quality, the statement pointed out.

Officials reviewed the Visit Kuwait platform’s plans to boost tourism and cultural entertainment, coordinate with agencies, and encourage activities through social media, it mentioned.

The ministry stressed partnering with the private sector to upgrade media infrastructure, raise output quality, create opportunities for Kuwaiti youth, and support Kuwait Vision 2035.

Gazette issues 2 decrees revoking citizenship of 11

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: Two decrees were published Sunday in the Official Gazette -- Kuwait Al-Youm -- revoking the Kuwaiti citizenship of 11 individuals and those who acquired citizenship through affiliation, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Decree No. 157/2025 and Decree No. 158/2025 stipulates the revocation of the citizenship of seven and four individuals respectively, as well as those who acquired citizenship through affiliation with them.

Kuwait revises public place names

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: The decision to name roads and other public places only after the rulers of Kuwait, heads of State, historical figures and some Sheikhs took effect upon its publication in the Official Gazette (‘Kuwait Al-Youm’) on Sunday, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The decision stipulates the rules and regulations for naming cities, suburbs, regions, roads, streets and squares.

Article One of the decision states that articles Four and Five of Resolution No. 507/2023 referred to shall be replaced as follows:

Article Four

1. It is not permissible to name cities, suburbs and areas after individuals, except those who assumed the position of Amir or Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait.

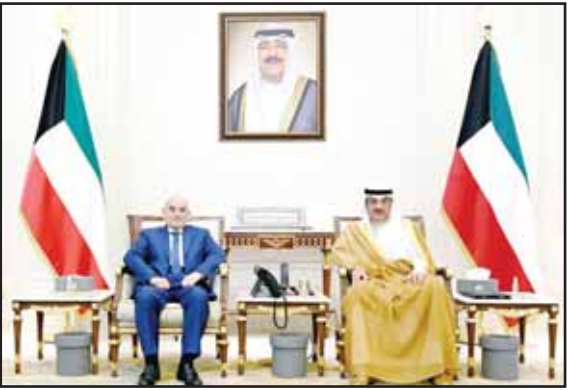
2. It is permissible to name roads, streets and squares after the rulers of the State of Kuwait, kings, sultans, princes, heads of sisterly and friendly

states, historical figures and some members of the ruling family. Names may also be given to them after countries, cities and capitals, based on the principle of reciprocity.

3. The names of some roads, streets and squares that do not bear the names of individuals will be retained.

Article Five: With the exception of the names of the rulers of the State of Kuwait, kings, sultans, princes, heads of sisterly and friendly countries, historical figures, some members of the ruling family, and the names of countries, cities and capitals, in accordance with the previous article, the naming of roads, streets and squares will be discontinued, and only numbering will be implemented.

Article Two of the decision mandates the competent authorities -- each within its jurisdiction -- to implement this decision from the date of its issuance and publication in the Official Gazette.



Crown Prince Diwan photo
His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives Lebanon’s Minister of National Defense Major General Michel Menassa.

‘We’re using every single lever of power we have to take the fight to Trump’

‘No magic fixes’ for Democrats as party confronts internal, fundraising struggles

MINNEAPOLIS, Aug 25, (AP): Ken Martin is in the fight of his life.

The low-profile political operative from Minnesota, just six months on the job as chairman of the Democratic National Committee, is charged with leading his party’s formal resistance to President Donald Trump and fixing the Democratic brand.

“I think the greatest divide right now in our party, frankly, is not ideological,” Martin told The Associated Press. “The greatest divide is those people who are standing up and fighting and those who are sitting on the sidelines.”

“We’re using every single lever of power we have to take the fight to Donald Trump,” he said of the DNC.

And yet, as hundreds of Democratic officials gather in Martin’s Minneapolis hometown on Monday for the first official DNC meeting since he became chair, there is evidence that Martin’s fight may extend well beyond the current occupant of the Oval Office.

Big Democratic donors are unhappy with the direction of their own party and not writing checks. Political factions are fragmented over issues such as the Israel-Hamas war. The party’s message is murky. Key segments of the Democratic base - working-class voters and young people, among them - have drifted away.

And there is deep frustration that the Democratic Party under Martin’s lead-

ership is not doing enough to stop the Republican president - no matter how tough his rhetoric may be.

“There are no magic fixes,” said Jeanna Repass, the chair of the Kansas Democratic Party, who praised Martin’s performance so far. “He is trying to lead at a time where everyone wants it to be fixed right now. And it’s just not going to happen.”

At this week’s three-day summer meeting, DNC officials hope to make real progress in reversing the sense of pessimism and frustration that has consumed Democrats since Republicans seized the White House and control of Congress last fall.

It may not be so easy.

At least a couple of DNC members privately considered bringing a vote of no confidence against Martin this week in part because of the committee’s underwhelming fundraising, according to a person with direct knowledge of the situation who was granted anonymity to share internal discussions. Ultimately, the no confidence vote will not move forward because Martin’s critics couldn’t get sufficient support from the party’s broader membership, which includes more than 400 elected officials from every state and several territories.

Still, the committee’s financial situation is weak compared with the opposition’s.

The most recent federal filings re-



DNC Chairman Ken Martin speaks during a news conference in Aurora, Illinois on Aug 5. (AP)

veal that the DNC has \$14 million in the bank at the end of July compared with the Republican National Committee’s \$84 million. The Democrats’ figure represents its lowest level of cash on hand in at least the last five years.

Martin and his allies, including his predecessor Jaime Harrison, insist it’s not fair to compare the party’s current financial health with recent years, when Democratic President Joe Biden was in the White House.

Harrison pointed to 2017 as a more accurate comparison. That year, the committee struggled to raise money in the months after losing to Trump the first time. And in the 2018 mid-term elections that followed, Harrison noted, Democrats overcame their fundraising problems and won the House majority and several Senate seats.

“These are just the normal pains of being a Democrat when we don’t have the White House,” Harrison said. “Ken

is finding his footing.”

Martin acknowledged that big donors are burnt out after the last election, which has forced the committee to turn to smaller-dollar donors, who have responded well.

“Money will not be the ultimate determinant in this (midterm) election,” Martin said. “We’ve been making investments, record investments, in our state parties. ... We have the money to operate. We’re not in a bad position.”

While Martin is broadly popular among the DNC’s rank and file, internal divisions may flare publicly this week when the committee considers competing resolutions about the Israel-Hamas war.

One proposed resolution would have the DNC encourage Democratic members of Congress to suspend military aid to Israel, establish an arms embargo and recognize Palestine as a country, according to draft language reviewed by the AP. The measure also states that the crisis in Gaza has resulted in the loss of over 60,000 lives and the displacement of 1.7 million Palestinians “at the hands of the Israeli government.”

The DNC leadership, led by Martin, introduced a competing resolution that adds more context about Israel’s challenges.

One line, for example, refers to “the suffering of both Palestinians and Is-

raelis” and notes the number of Israelis killed in Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack on Israel. Martin’s version calls for a two-state solution, but there is no reference to the number of Palestinians killed or displaced, nor is there a call for an end to military aid or an arms embargo.

Meanwhile, another proposed resolution would reaffirm the DNC’s commitment to “diversity, equity and inclusion.” Many Democrats, businesses and educational institutions have distanced themselves from DEI programs after Trump and other Republicans attacked them as Democrats’ “woke” policies.

Ultimately, Martin said the party needs to focus its message on the economy.

“There’s no doubt we have to get back to a message that resonates with voters,” he said. “And focusing on an economic agenda is the thing that brings all parts of our coalition and Americans into the conversation.”

“We have work to do for sure,” he added.

The DNC is years away from deciding which states vote first on the 2028 presidential primary calendar, but that discussion will begin in earnest at the Minneapolis gathering, where at least three presidential prospects will be featured speakers: Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz and Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar.



A firefighter battles the Pickett Fire burning in the Aetna Springs area of Napa County, Calif on Aug 23. (AP)

Wildfires threaten homes in Oregon and Calif, prompting evacuations

Thousands of homes in Northern California country and central Oregon were under evacuation orders and warnings Sunday as firefighting crews battled wildfires in dry, hot weather.

The Pickett Fire, which had charred about 10 square miles (26 square kilometers) of Napa County, was just 11% contained by Sunday evening, according to the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection, or Cal Fire.

About 150 people were ordered to leave their homes, while another 360 were under evacuation warnings as the fire threatened 500 structures near Aetna Springs and Pope Valley, 80 miles (127 kilometers) north of San Francisco, said Cal Fire spokesperson Jason Clay. Some evacuation orders were later lifted.

In Oregon, the 29-square-mile (75-square-kilometer) Flat Fire in Deschutes and Jefferson counties

had about 4,000 homes under various levels of evacuation notice, including 1,000 with orders to leave immediately, according to the state Fire Marshal’s Office.

Firefighters were able to cut containment lines and continued to suppress fires in some residential areas. However, they faced significant challenges with difficult terrain, low humidity and triple-digit temperatures in some areas, officials said. (AP)

Some National Guard units patrolling in Washington now carrying firearms

WASHINGTON, Aug 25, (AP): Some National Guard units patrolling the nation’s capital at the direction of President Donald Trump have started carrying firearms, an escalation of his military deployment that makes good on a directive issued late last week by his defense secretary.

A Defense Department official who was not authorized to speak publicly said some units on certain missions would be armed - some with handguns and others with rifles. The spokesperson said that all units with firearms have been trained and are operating under strict rules for use of force.

An Associated Press photographer on Sunday saw members of the South Carolina National Guard outside Union Station with holstered handguns.

A statement from the joint task force that has taken over policing in the nation’s capital said units began carrying their service weapons on Sunday and that the military’s rules say force should be used “only as a last resort and solely in response to an imminent threat of death or serious bodily harm.” It said the force is committed to protecting “the safety and wellbeing” of Washington’s residents.

The defense official who spoke to The Associated Press said only troops on certain missions would carry guns, and that would include those patrolling to establish a law enforcement presence throughout the capital.



Members of the South Carolina National Guard patrol the platform of the Washington Metro Gallery Place station in Washington on Aug 24. (AP)

Those working in transportation or administration would likely remain unarmed.

Thousands of National Guard and federal law enforcement officers are now patrolling the district’s streets, drawing sporadic protests from local residents.

The development in Trump’s extraordinary effort to override the law enforcement authority of state and local governments comes as he is considering expanding the deployments to

other Democratic-led cities, including Baltimore, Chicago and New York.

Earlier Sunday, the president responded to an offer by Maryland’s governor to join him in a tour of Baltimore by saying he might instead “send in the troops.”

Gov. Wes Moore, a Democrat, has criticized Trump’s unprecedented flex of federal power aimed at combatting crime and homelessness in Washington. Moore last week invited Trump to visit his state to discuss public safety and walk the streets.

Officials ‘working very, very hard’ on ending Russia-Ukraine war: Kellogg

KYIV, Ukraine, Aug 25, (AP): US President Donald Trump’s special envoy Keith Kellogg said in Kyiv on Monday that officials are “working very, very hard” on efforts to end the three-year war between Russia and Ukraine, as a lack of progress fuels doubts about whether a peace settlement could be on the horizon.

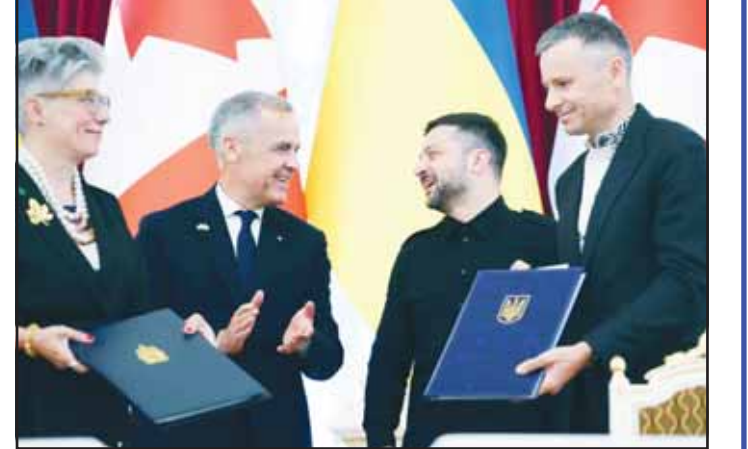
Officials are “hoping to get to a position where, in the near term, we have, with a lack of a better term, security guarantees” that address Ukraine’s fears of another invasion by Russia in the future, Kellogg said.

“That’s a work in progress,” Kellogg said of the potential security guarantees after attending Ukraine’s annual National Prayer Breakfast along with politicians, business leaders and diplomats.

A week ago, Trump said he had set in motion arrangements for direct peace talks between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Zelenskyy. But Russian officials have signaled that such a summit won’t happen any time soon.

Trump said Friday he expects to decide on next steps in two weeks if direct talks aren’t scheduled.

A stream of high-ranking visitors to Kyiv in recent days reflects



concerns around the US-led peace drive.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney visited Kyiv on Sunday for meetings with Zelenskyy, pledging 2 billion Canadian dollars in aid, and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte was in the Ukrainian capital on Friday. Germany’s vice chancellor and finance minister, Lars Klingbeil, arrived in Kyiv on Monday to discuss “how Germany can best support Ukraine in a possible peace process.”

Putin spoke on the phone with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday, the Kremlin said. Russia and Iran have close relations, and Putin has also deepened ties with China, India and North Korea as Western countries have sided with Ukraine in the war.

Government scrambles to respond UK migrant protests spark angry confrontations

LONDON, Aug 25, (AP): Opponents and supporters of migrants faced off in angry confrontations at demonstrations held around Britain over the holiday weekend as the government scrambled to deal with fallout from a court order that will force a hotel in a London suburb to evict asylum-seekers.

The ruling has created a headache for the government, which has struggled to curb unauthorized migration and fulfill its responsibility to accommodate those seeking refuge.

Immigration has become a political flashpoint as countries across the West try to cope with an influx of migrants seeking a better life as they flee war-torn countries, poverty, regions wracked by climate change or political persecution. The debate in the UK has focused on migrants crossing the English Channel in overloaded boats run by smugglers, as well as escalating tensions over housing tens of thousands of asylum-seekers at public expense.

To help resolve the crisis, the government announced Sunday that it would speed up asylum appeals that could lead to more deportations and clear a backlog of cases.

Here’s a look at the issue:

The latest round of demonstrations followed weeks of protests outside the Bell Hotel in Epping, on the outskirts



Mounted police officers scuffle with demonstrators during a protest by anti-migrant Abolish Asylum System and counter protesters at Castle Park in Bristol, England on Aug 23. (AP)

of London, after a hotel resident allegedly tried to kiss a 14-year-old girl and was charged with assault. The man has denied the accusation and is due to stand trial later this month.

Epping Forest District Council won a temporary injunction to shut down the hotel because of “unprecedented levels of protest and disruption,” which had led to several arrests.

The High Court decision Tuesday in favor of the council - which the

government wants to appeal - inspired anti-migrant demonstrators gathering under the banner of Abolish Asylum System to protest over the weekend. The group Stand up to Racism rallied counterprotesters.

The two groups hurled insults at each other in several communities Saturday as police struggled in places like Bristol to keep them apart. There were more than a dozen arrests, but no serious violence reported.

Europe

France summons US Ambassador Kushner: France has summoned the American ambassador to Paris after the diplomat, **Charles Kushner**, wrote a letter to French President Emmanuel Macron alleging the country did not do enough to combat anti-Semitism.



Kushner

The White House did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment. State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott on Sunday evening said it stood by Kushner’s comments, adding: “Ambassador Kushner is our US government representative in France and is doing a great job advancing our national interests in that role.”

The summoning of the ambassador is a formal and public notice of displeasure.

Kushner, a real-estate developer, is the father of President Donald Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner.

Kushner urges Macron “to act decisively: enforce hate-crime laws without exception, ensure the safety of schools and businesses.”

Kushner’s allegations violate international law and the obligation not to interfere with the internal affairs of another country, the French ministry said, and, “They also fall short of the quality of the transatlantic partnership between France and the United States and of the trust that must prevail between allies.” (AP)

5 killed in Portugal car crash: Five people were killed on Sunday when a light vehicle crashed on a road in Monchique, Faro district, according to Portugal’s civil protection command.

Lusa News Agency reported that the victims were found burned inside the vehicle. The crash also triggered a forest fire, which was quickly brought under control.

Authorities said the road remained closed as of 2:30 p.m. local time while recovery and cleanup operations were underway. (Xinhua)

Norwegian prime minister condemns murder at rehabilitation center in Oslo

OSLO, Aug 25, (Xinhua): Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store on Sunday described the fatal stabbing of a rehabilitation center employee in Oslo as “deeply tragic” and urged a thorough police investigation.

An 18-year-old man has been charged with murder following the attack on Sunday morning at a rehabilitation center in Oslo’s Sanden district. Police said the suspect has previously expressed right-wing extremist views and claimed the attack was politically motivated.

In a statement on Facebook, Store expressed his condolences to the victim’s family. “We should not have this in Norway,” he said, stressing that “any form of politically motivated violence is completely unacceptable.”

He added that police must “get to the bottom of the matter,” and “all facts must be on the table.”

Authorities have launched a full investigation, noting there is currently no indication that more people are involved. The suspect will be arraigned on Monday.



Norway’s Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store speaks during his arrival at NATO summit on July 10, 2024 in Washington. (AP)



An aerial drone photo taken on Aug. 23, 2025 shows yachts returning to a dock in Sanya, south China’s Hainan Province. (Xinhua)

Vietnam evacuates hundreds of thousands as Kajiki nears landfall

Vietnam has evacuated hundreds of thousands of people and closed schools and airports as it braces for Typhoon Kajiki, its strongest storm of the year so far.

Forecasters said the typhoon had winds of up to 166 kilometers (103 miles) per hour at 10 a.m. Monday but is expected to weaken slightly before making landfall between central Vietnam’s Thanh Hoa and Ha Tinh provinces later in

the afternoon.

The typhoon started as a weak tropical depression on Aug 22 but grew into a powerful storm in less than two days, matching last year’s Typhoon Yagi as one of the region’s fastest-growing, according to state media. Its rapid strengthening forced Vietnamese authorities to rush emergency measures as strong winds and heavy rain hit the region.

Last year, Typhoon Yagi killed about 300 people and caused \$3.3 billion in damage.

Kajiki has already caused devastation in China, with strong winds and heavy rain whipping Hainan Island and nearby parts of Guangdong province on Sunday. About 20,000 people were evacuated from high-risk areas, China’s official Xinhua News Agency reported. (AP)

Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh camps demand safe return to Myanmar

COX’S BAZAR, Bangladesh, Aug 25, (AP): Tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar living in dozens of camps in Bangladesh marked the eighth anniversary of their mass exodus, demanding a safe return to their previous home in Rakhine state.

The refugees gathered Monday in an open field at a camp in Kutupalong, in the Cox’s Bazar district in southeastern Bangladesh, the site of a large refugee camp. They carried banners reading “No more refugee life” and “Repatriation the ultimate solution.” They were marking what they called “Rohingya Genocide Remembrance Day.”

“We want to go back to our country with equal rights like other ethnic groups in Myanmar,” one of the protesters, 19-year-old Nur Aziz, told The Associated Press. “The rights they are enjoying in Myanmar as citizens of the country, we too want to enjoy the same rights.”

Meanwhile, Bangladesh’s interim leader, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, urged the international community to facilitate a process for their safe return as he addressed a three-day conference on the Rohingya that began a day earlier in Cox’s Bazar.

International dignitaries, United Nations representatives, diplomats and Bangladesh’s interim government discussed supporting refugees with food and other amenities and how to speed up the repatriation process.

Yunus said that that the “relationship



Rohingya refugees gather as they hold placards and flags to demand safe return to Myanmar’s Rakhine state as they mark the eighth anniversary of their mass exodus at their refugee camp at Kutupalong in Cox’s Bazar district, Bangladesh on Aug 25. (AP)

of Rohingyas with their homeland cannot be severed.”

“Their right to return to their homeland has to be secured,” he said. “Therefore, we urge all parties and partners to work hard for charting a practical roadmap for their speedy, safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable return to their homes in Rakhine as soon as possible.”

Myanmar launched a brutal crackdown in August 2017 following insurgent attacks on guard posts in Rakhine

state. The scale, organization and ferocity of the operation led to accusations of ethnic cleansing and genocide from the international community, including the U.N. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims began leaving Myanmar then. They traveled by foot and boats during shelling, indiscriminate killings and other violence in Rakhine state, which was captured by the Arakan Army insurgent group that has battled against Myanmar government forces.

Police fire tear gas at students protesting parliament allowances

Indonesia hosts annual United States-led combat exercises with Indo-Pacific allies

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Aug 25, (AP): Indonesia and the United States began annual joint military exercises on Monday together with forces from a dozen other countries, as the US pushes its allies to take threats from China more seriously.

Hosted by the Indonesian National Armed Forces, this year’s Super Garuda Shield focused on strengthening regional ties in an increasingly unstable global landscape, said Gen. Tandyo Budi Revita, the military’s Deputy Commander.

“It serves as a joint exercise where we stand together to respond every challenge quickly and precisely,” he said in his speech at kick-off ceremony along with Admiral Samuel Paparo, the Commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command.

The exercise has been held annually in Jakarta by US and Indonesian soldiers since 2009. The list of participants expanded since 2022 to include Australia, Japan, Singapore, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Brazil and South Korea, bringing the total number of troops taking part in the drill to 6,500.

Paparo said the expanded participants symbolizes a commitment to partnership and to the sovereignty of each country through mutual respect.

“It represents deterring anyone that would hope to change the facts on the ground using violence with the collective determination of all participants to uphold the principles of sovereignty,” Paparo said.

Jakarta has expressed concern about what it sees as Chinese encroachment on its exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea, while maintaining generally positive ties with Beijing.

Several Asian countries also sent observers to the 11-day combat exercise in Jakarta and on Sumatra island. They will end on Sept 4 with a combined live-fire drill.

The expanded drills have sparked concern from China, which accused the US of trying to build an “Asian NATO” to limit China’s growing military and diplomatic influence in the region.

During a recent speech in Singapore, US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth cautioned that seeking US military support while relying on Chinese economic sup-



From left: Commander of US Indo-Pacific Command Adm Samuel Paparo, Deputy Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces Gen Tandyo Budi Revita, and Canada’s Chief of the Defence Staff Gen Jennie Carignan, pose for photographers during the opening ceremony of Super Garuda Shield 2025, an Indonesia-US annual large-scale joint military exercise that brings together forces from multiple countries, in Jakarta, Indonesia on Aug 25. (AP)

port carries risk.

Hegseth said Washington has been strengthening an arc of military alliances in the Indo-Pacific to reassure allies alarmed by Beijing’s increasing military and economic pressure from China and provocative actions in the disputed South China Sea.

Despite increased activities by Chinese coast guard vessels and fishing boats in the area have unnerved Jakarta, Indonesia has sought to avoid confrontation and continued economic initiatives with China.

Jakarta’s decision to sidestep the issue is consistent with its longstanding policy of keeping friction with Beijing behind closed doors, especially given the scale of Chinese trade and investment in the Indonesian economy, said Muhammad Zulfikar Rakhmat and Yeta Purnama, researchers at the Center of Economic and Law Studies or CELIOS.

Also:

JAKARTA, Indonesia: Riot police shot multiple rounds of tear gas at thousands of stone-throwing students who attempted to reach Parliament in Indonesia ‘s capital to protest the lavish allowances of parliament members.

The demonstrators are enraged by recent reports that 580 members of the House of Representatives had been receiving a housing allowance of 50 million rupiah (\$3,075) per month since September 2024. They view the allowances as unjust due to the economic hardship faced by most citizens.

Police fired tear gas as the protesters approached Parliament, turning nearby roads into a smoke-filled battleground. Protesters fought back, hurling rocks and bottles at riot police and setting fires under a flyover near the heavily guarded parliament compound.

Authorities blocked streets leading to the Parliament building, including several toll roads, causing severe traffic jams in the city. More than 1,200 security personnel were deployed to secure the compound. There were no immediate reports of injuries from Monday’s clash.

Deadly attacks in Colombia cast shadow on leader’s peace-with-guerrillas policy

BOGOTA, Colombia, Aug 25, (AP): Colombia’s anti-government guerrillas have grown stronger under President Gustavo Petro’s three years in office. That strength was on display in brazen attacks last week that included a car bombing and the downing of a police helicopter - violence that left at least 19 people dead.

Authorities blamed both attacks on renegade factions of the now-defunct Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the notorious FARC rebel group that for decades fought the government, carrying out assassinations, hijackings and bombings to undermine authorities in Bogota.

And while FARC struck a peace deal with the government in 2016 and some members transitioned into a political party, rebels who split from the mainstream have carried on with a terror campaign.

The attacks underscore the failures of Petro’s signature policy of negotiating simultaneously with multiple illegal groups, analysts say, a strategy that has allowed the renegade rebel groups to gain territory and power in areas with historically limited state presence.

The rebels are likely to step up their attacks in attempts to assert their power in the lead-up to Colombia’s presidential election next May, the analysts



Colombia’s President Gustavo Petro speaks during a meeting of leaders of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization in Bogota, Colombia on Aug 22. (AP)

predict.

The police helicopter was transporting personnel to an area in the northern Antioquia region to help with efforts to eradicate coca leaf crops, the raw material for cocaine, when it was brought down. Thirteen police officers died.

Colombia’s police director, Maj. Gen. Carlos Fernando Triana, told

reporters on Friday that the rebels used explosive devices, such as homemade dynamite rocket launchers, as well as drones in the attack. But he did not confirm that a drone was solely responsible for downing the helicopter.

The use of the drone showcases not only the insurgents’ access to more modern warfare technology but also their new ability to disrupt the country’s airspace, long dominated by the Colombian military.

“The use of drones is a worrying and important change in the way insurgent groups are attacking the state,” said Cynthia Amson, an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.

“They don’t need shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles” anymore, she added.

Petro, who in his youth was also in a rebel group, launched negotiations with nine separate insurgent groups and drug trafficking gangs since taking office in 2022 under his “total peace” strategy. But so far, only one small group has agreed to begin a transition toward civilian life.

By 2018, dissidents from FARC and other illegal groups began fighting for the territories the state had failed to protect after FARC disarmed and abandoned the land.



A member of the presidential guard shows weapons to people who signed up to join the civil militias during a national enlistment campaign called by the government of President Nicolas Maduro, at the military museum in Caracas, Venezuela on Aug 23. (AP)

Venezuelan opposition says government freed 13 people jailed in post-election crackdown

CARACAS, Venezuela, Aug 25, (AP): Venezuelan opposition leaders and civil society groups said on Sunday that the government released 13 people jailed in a crackdown by the government of President Nicolás Maduro following last year’s disputed elections.

Venezuelan authorities did not immediately confirm the releases, but opposition leaders like Henrique Capriles celebrated on social media, calling it a “step forward for those behind bars.” He said eight people were freed, while five more were released under house arrest.

“Today, several families have been

reunited with their loved ones. We know that many remain, and we will not forget them; we continue fighting for them all,” he wrote in a post on the social media platform X, with a video of one of those released embracing their loved ones.

It comes more than a year after the tumultuous South American nation once again erupted following July presidential elections. Electoral authorities declared Maduro victor of the presidential elections, but refused to share key documents known as “actas” evidencing the count. The results were rejected by the international commu-

nity and opposition members.

In its wake, street protests erupted, leaving 28 dead, 220 injured and at least 2,000 detained, according to official figures.

The Venezuelan civil society organization Committee for the Freedom of Political Prisoners said those detained were release “as a result of pressure by victims, organizations, citizen campaigns and international institutions.” The organization wrote on social media that they had “physically and psychologically deteriorated” and that many were returning home with “open wounds.”

Sudan’s paramilitary forces kill 13 in Darfur, says group

CAIRO, Aug 25, (AP): Sudan’s notorious paramilitary forces attacked a group of people on a road in the country’s troubled Darfur region on Sunday, killing at least 13, mostly women and children, a medical group said.

The killings were the latest by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and came a day after the RSF shelled a hospital in the besieged city of el-Fasher in North Darfur. The road where the attack took place links el-Fasher to the nearby town of Tweila.

The Sudan Doctors Network, a group of medical professionals tracking the Sudanese civil war, said five children, four women and four older people were killed, claiming it was an ethnically motivated attack.

The killing was “another episode in the ongoing campaign of ethnic cleansing and genocide being perpetrated by the RSF against unarmed civilians in Darfur,” the doctors’ group said.

On Saturday, the RSF shelled a hospital in el-Fasher, wounding a healthcare worker and six patients, the doctors’ group said. Among the wounded patients were a child and a pregnant woman.



In this photo released by the NGO Mercy Corps, Sudanese families displaced by RSF attacks in Kordofan take shelter in a football stadium in Kadugli, South Kordofan province, Sudan on May 27. (AP)

The RSF didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment on the killing and the hospital shelling.

The attacks were part of RSF’s ongoing campaign to seize control of el-Fasher, the Sudanese military’s last stronghold in Darfur. The U.N. human rights office said it documented the RSF killing of at least 89 civilians,

including 16 who were “summarily executed” in el-Fasher and the nearby Abu Shouk displacement camp, in a span of 10 days this month.

The paramilitaries have bombed the city for more than a year, and last month it imposed a total blockade around its hundreds of thousands of people.

India warns Pakistan of flood threat in first known official contact for months

ISLAMABAD, Aug 25, (AP): India has alerted Pakistan about possible cross-border flooding after heavy monsoon rains in the South Asian region, Pakistan’s Foreign Ministry said on Monday, in what marks the first public official contact between the two nuclear-armed rivals in months.

The ministry said New Delhi conveyed the information through diplomatic channels instead of the Indus Waters Commission, the permanent mechanism created under the 1960 World Bank-brokered Indus Waters Treaty.

An Indian government official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said the warning was shared on “humanitarian grounds” and not under the treaty.

There was no immediate comment from New Delhi.

The communication marked the first known diplomatic-level contact since May, when India carried out missile strikes inside Pakistan in response to the April killing of 26 tourists in Kashmir.



Members of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) rescue students stranded in a hostel after floodwaters submerged the ground floor of the complex in Jammu, India on Aug 24. (AP)

Dollar steady at KD 0.305, says CBK

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25, (KUNA): The US dollar exchange rate against the Kuwaiti dinar stabilized at KD 0.305 on Monday, while the euro stood at KD 0.357, compared to yesterday's rates.

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said in its daily bulletin on its website that the British pound stood at KD 0.412, the Swiss franc at KD 0.380 and the Japanese yen at KD 0.002.

Business



Bader Al-Kharafi pictured with a group of ZGI entrepreneurs in a previous edition of the program.

From Kuwait to now include Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia & UAE, ZGI 2025 powered by Zain Ventures & ZainTECH

Enhancing the purpose of innovation: Zain Great Idea (ZGI 2025) Accelerator program expands across the region

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative ICT and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa announces the regional expansion of its award-winning startup accelerator program, Zain Great Idea (ZGI 2025), powered by Zain Ventures, the Group's venture capital arm, and ZainTECH, its regional digital solutions enterprise arm.

For the first time in the program's 15-year history, the 2025 edition will welcome applications from innovators in Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and UAE, offering unprecedented access to mentorship, capital, and global exposure including a trip to Silicon Valley for a two-week intensive program.

Zain Ventures is a key driver of ZGI's regional expansion, aiming to invest in and capitalize prime opportunities, while ZainTECH will cooperate with the ZGI team throughout the accelerator program, working closely with and providing the startups selected to visit Silicon Valley strategic advisory and identify technologies such as Cloud, AI, Analytics, Robotics and other emerging technologies that will further support their growth throughout the year.

This milestone marks a transformative leap from ZGI's Kuwait-centric roots to a Group-wide initiative, reinforcing Zain's commitment to nurturing innovation and entrepreneurship across the region.

A legacy of empowering entrepreneurs

Since 2010, ZGI has empowered over 7,000 entrepreneurs, facilitated 110+ bootcamps, that led to over USD 135 million funds raised from regional investors during the last 5 years alone. The ZGI 2025 program complements Zain's '4WARD - Progress with Purpose' strategy, which emphasizes meaningful innovation, inclusive growth, collaboration, and

- Bader Al-Kharafi: "Zain is profoundly committed to nurture and invest in regional talent to drive meaningful change"
- Zain Ventures aims to invest and capitalize on the most promising innovative startups
- ZGI has a rich 15-year legacy in Kuwait upskilling over 7,000 entrepreneurs, trips to Silicon Valley, that led to USD 135 million funds raised from regional investors

AI powered digital transformation with real societal impact. By backing the regional startup ecosystem, Zain reinforces its commitment to building a future where progress is fueled by purpose, and innovation is driven from the region for the region.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO said, "Zain Great Idea has become a beacon of innovation in Kuwait and beyond. Expanding ZGI across our footprint is a natural evolution of our commitment to nurturing regional talent and driving meaningful change. Through the collaborative efforts of ZGI, Zain Ventures and ZainTECH, we aim to support startups that have the potential to have a marked and lasting impact on technological innovation and job creation across the region, fulfilling our purpose of uplifting economies and societies"

Phases of ZGI 2025

The six phases of the ZGI Accelerator cover the following:

- Aspiring entrepreneurs can now register for ZGI 2025 at zaingreatidea.com. The program is open to any startup based in Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and UAE with an ambitious idea, project in its early stages, or startup operating in the market. Sectors of interest include fintech, e-commerce, AI, digital solutions, edtech, and more. The deadline for applications is September 20, 2025.
- Undergoing a series of workshops, mentorship sessions, coaching, and intense pitch training to improve their skills and create

market opportunities as part of the program's bootcamp.

- Participants pitch their startups to a panel of judges during Super Saturday for a chance to advance to the International Accelerator, with the potential for investment opportunities.

- A selected shortlist of up to 15 startups will be flown to Silicon Valley to take part in an intensive two-week international accelerator program, receiving expert guidance from mentors, industry moguls, and corporate leaders through workshops, events, and one-on-one mentoring.

- After Silicon Valley, entrepreneurs benefit from local and international mentors who guide them with valuable insights, helping them accelerate and refine their business strategies. Technical support will be powered by ZainTECH.

- At the ZGI Demo Day, entrepreneurs present their progress, growth, and regional expansion plans to venture capitalists and potential investors, including Zain Ventures, aiming for investment and partnerships.

- Partnership opportunities will also be explored by Zain operating market's technical, enterprise, and commercial departments

ZGI - 'Ecosystem Enabler of the Year' award

In recent years, ZGI was recognized with the E-Business Award as the 'Ecosystem Enabler of the Year' from the prestigious Entrepreneur Middle East magazine, acknowledging the Zain's ever-growing endeavors in acceler-



Scan to register

ating the regional tech startups ecosystem and empowering entrepreneurs in Kuwait and the region.

Zain Ventures key role in ZGI

ZGI 2025 is delivered in strategic cooperation with Zain Ventures, an entity established in 2021 to complement Zain's existing investment portfolio and open the door to future investment opportunities in venture capital, fintech, digital services, and e-commerce. The entity focuses on innovations in the fast-growing digital services and startup ecosystem. Selected ZGI participants will have the opportunity to pitch directly to Zain Ventures and access Zain's vast geographical and partner footprint, and progressive customer base.

ZainTECH powering ZGI 2025

An integral part of ZGI 2025 in supporting the startups on multiple levels, ZainTECH is a regional integrated digital solutions provider, unifying Zain Group's ICT assets to



offer a unique value proposition of comprehensive digital solutions and services under one roof. The company is positioned to drive the transformation of enterprise and government customers in the MENA region by providing a center of excellence and managed solutions across the ICT stack, including cloud, cybersecurity, big data, IoT, AI, smart cities, drones and robotics, and emerging technologies.

ZainTECH leverages Zain's global reach, unique regional footprint, and infrastructure across its operations in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates. ZainTECH forms a key pillar in the evolution of Zain's core telecom business to maximize value and build on the company's many strengths to selectively create and invest in growth verticals be-

yond standard mobile services. This supports Zain's vision of becoming a leading ICT and digital lifestyle provider.

15 years of supporting the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem

Apart from ZGI's establishment in 2010 and success to date, ZGI 2025 regional expansion also builds on Zain's historic involvement in the regional startup ecosystem, including its strategic partnership with the MIT Enterprise Forum Pan Arab Startup Competition from 2015 which trained over 2,480 entrepreneurs and helped launch 450 startups across MENA.

For more details, eligibility criteria, and to apply to participate in the 2025 edition of ZGI, visit zaingreatidea.com. Applications are open until September 20.

Private sector dinar deposits down

Broad money supply grows 0.5% to KD 42.1 bln in July

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) reported on Monday that the country's broad money supply (M2) grew by 0.5 percent in July, reaching KD 42.1 billion (USD 138.9 billion) on a monthly basis.

According to statistical tables released by the CBK's Economic Research Department, private sector deposits in Kuwaiti dinars declined by 0.6 percent to KD 38.2 billion (USD 126 billion). In contrast, private sector foreign currency deposits surged by 26.5 percent to KD 2.3 billion (USD 7.6 billion).

The data further showed that local banks' claims on the CBK in dinars — represented by CBK bonds — fell sharply by 33.3 percent to KD 803 million (USD 2.6 billion). Meanwhile, the total assets of local banks rose by 1.5 per-

cent to KD 98.7 billion (USD 325 billion), and their net foreign assets increased by 3.7 percent to KD 15 billion (USD 49.5 billion).

Time deposits with the CBK registered a 14.3 percent rise to KD 800 million (USD 2.6 billion), while cash credit facilities (loans) expanded by 2.2 percent to KD 61 billion (USD 201 billion). Financing of Kuwaiti imports also grew by 12.8 percent, reaching KD 829 million (USD 2.7 billion).

The report noted that the average US dollar exchange rate against the Kuwaiti dinar slipped by 0.4 percent in July, settling at 305.2 fils.

The CBK further explained that the narrow definition of money supply comprises cash in circulation along with demand deposits used for daily transactions, while the broad definition also includes time and savings deposits.

Moody's to increase ownership in MERIS ratings, deepening presence in the Middle East & Africa

NEW YORK, Aug 25, (BUSINESS WIRE): Moody's Corporation (NYSE:MCO) announced today that it intends to secure a majority equity stake in Middle East Rating & Investors Service (MERIS - an affiliate of Moody's), a domestic credit rating agency in Egypt. The transaction extends the long-established partnership between the companies and deepens Moody's presence in the Middle East and Africa, reaffirming its commitment to contribute to the ongoing development of local capital markets across the globe.

"We are excited to strengthen our relationship with MERIS, which has been an important provider of domestic credit ratings in Egypt for over two decades," said Monica Merli, Chief Operating Officer of Moody's Ratings. "We look forward to further sharing Moody's global best practices with MERIS as its experienced team and trusted local insights continue to serve market participants in Egypt."

The transaction builds on a longstanding relationship between the two companies. Founded in 2003 as a joint venture between Moody's and FinBi, a local Egyptian consulting firm, MERIS is a pioneer in Egypt's domestic capital markets. MERIS provides national scale credit ratings for a diverse range of sectors, including financial institutions, corporates, and structured finance transactions.

"Today marks an important milestone in MERIS's history," said Dr. Amr Hassanein, Managing Director and Founder of MERIS. "By deep-

ening our association with Moody's global network and leveraging its expertise alongside our established local presence, we can further enhance our offerings and contribute to the continued growth and development of Egypt's financial markets."

The transaction is subject to regulatory approvals. Following the transaction, MERIS will continue to operate as an independent affiliate of Moody's while developing its own rating methodologies, issuing its own credit ratings, and maintaining a separate management team. The terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

In a world shaped by increasingly interconnected risks, Moody's (NYSE: MCO) data, insights, and innovative technologies help customers develop a holistic view of their world and unlock opportunities. With a rich history of experience in global markets and a diverse workforce of approximately 16,000 across more than 40 countries, Moody's gives customers the comprehensive perspective needed to act with confidence and thrive. Learn more at moody.com.

Certain statements contained in this document are forward-looking statements and are based on future expectations, plans and prospects for Moody's business and operations that involve a number of risks and uncertainties. Such statements involve estimates, projections, goals, forecasts, assumptions and uncertainties that could cause actual results or outcomes to differ materially from those con-

templated, expressed, projected, anticipated or implied in the forward-looking statements. Stockholders and investors are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. The forward-looking statements and other information in this document are made as of the date hereof, and Moody's undertakes no obligation (nor does it intend) to publicly supplement, update or revise such statements on a going-forward basis, whether as a result of subsequent developments, changed expectations or otherwise, except as required by applicable law or regulation. Factors, risks and uncertainties as well as other risks and uncertainties that could cause Moody's actual results to differ materially from those contemplated, expressed, projected, anticipated or implied in the forward-looking statements are described in greater detail under "Risk Factors" in Part I, Item 1A of Moody's annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2024, and in other filings made by the Company from time to time with the SEC or in materials incorporated herein or therein. Stockholders and investors are cautioned that the occurrence of any of these factors, risks and uncertainties may cause the Company's actual results to differ materially from those contemplated, expressed, projected, anticipated or implied in the forward-looking statements, which could have a material and adverse effect on the Company's business, results of operations and financial condition.

Award underscores Weyay’s innovation and youth-focused services

Weyay wins Global Finance Award for Best Digital Bank

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: In a new milestone that reinforces its leadership in digital banking, Weyay has been named Best Digital Bank in Kuwait for 2025 by Global Finance magazine. This recognition highlights Weyay’s role in redefining the banking experience and its position as Kuwait’s first fully digital bank.

Since its launch, Weyay has set a new standard in the market by offering banking services through its smart app empowering customers to manage their finances easily, securely, and without the need to visit

a branch. From opening accounts and managing savings to local and international transfers, loans, and more, Weyay delivers a seamless and intuitive digital experience.

This global recognition reflects Weyay’s commitment to innovation, simplicity, and flexibility — values that resonate with the new generation in Kuwait. It also reinforces Weyay’s position as a regional leader in digital financial services.

With this achievement, Weyay continues to lead the digital transformation of banking in Kuwait — offer-

ing smart, secure, and user-friendly services that meet the expectations of today’s youth and pave the way for a more advanced financial future.

Weyay Bank is the first digital bank in Kuwait, designed with the unique needs of the youth in mind. It provides a range of financial services that combine innovation and flexibility. With an emphasis on simplicity, accessibility, and empowerment, Weyay Bank constantly aims to revolutionize how customers manage their finances and live a financially secure future.



Consumer discretionary, financials, industrial, education & IT sectors witness the highest number of transactions

Markaz: Coinbase secures the leading M&A transaction in H1 2025

Top 5 M&A Deals by Reported Value* – H1 2025						
Target Company	Target Country	Buyer	Buyer Country	Percent Sought	Deal Value (USDmn)	Status
Deribit FZE	United Arab Emirates	Coinbase Global, Inc.	United States	100	2,900	Announced
Khazna Data Center Limited	United Arab Emirates	Group 42 Holding Limited	United Arab Emirates	40	2,200	Closed
Gulf Bank**	Kuwait	Warba Bank	Kuwait	33	1,615	Closed
PAL Cooling Holding L.L.C.	United Arab Emirates	CVC DIF; National Central Cooling Company	United Arab Emirates	100	1,030	Announced
ENGIE's shares in Oil Fields in Bahrain & Kuwait	Bahrain***	ACWA Power Company	Saudi Arabia	100	693	Closed

Source: S&P Capital IQ, GCC Stock Exchanges, Local Newspapers, Markaz Analysis

*Top deals were chosen based on transactions, which had all necessary information provided.

**Warba Bank acquired 100% of Alghanim Trading Company which owns 33% in Gulf Bank.

***The target includes assets in Kuwait

Classification of Deals by Sector – H1 2025					
Sector	GCC Acquirers	Foreign Acquirers	Other*	Grand Total	%**
Consumer Discretionary	6	4	0	10	14%
Financials	6	4	0	10	14%
Industrials	3	5	0	8	11%
Education	5	2	0	7	10%
Information Technology	5	2	0	7	10%
Energy	5	0	1	6	8%
Healthcare	4	0	0	4	6%
Insurance	3	1	0	4	6%
Consumer Staples	1	2	0	3	4%
Real Estate	3	0	0	3	4%
Communication Services	2	0	0	2	3%
Materials	1	1	0	2	3%
Media & Entertainment	0	2	0	2	3%
Professional Services	1	1	0	2	3%
Utilities	2	0	0	2	3%
Total	47	24	1	72	100%

*Other refers to deals where buyer information is not available.

**Totals may exceed 100% due to rounding.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: Coinbase Global, Inc. (Coinbase) leads the top GCC M&A transactions during H1 2025 as per a report recently issued by the Investment Banking Department at Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz”. The report highlights the USD 2.9 billion transaction that was announced by the American company whereby it revealed its plans to fully acquire Deribit FZE, the Dubai-based crypto derivatives exchange. The transaction marks the largest deal in the crypto industry to date.

In the second position, Group 42 Holding (G42) secured the second-largest transaction by finalizing its acquisition of the remaining 40% stake in Khazna Data Center Holdings Limited (Khazna) from Emirates Telecommunications Group Company (e&), valued at USD 2.2 billion. Established in 2022 by G42 and e&, Khazna is a leading developer and operator of wholesale data centers. Warba Bank took on the following transaction, acquiring 33% of Gulf Bank through the full acquisition of Alghanim Trading Company for a total transaction value of USD 1.6 billion. After the acquisition, Warba Bank and Gulf Bank have begun assessing a potential merger between the two banks to establish a larger shariah-compliant financial institution. Moreover, CVC DIF and National Central Cooling Company have formed a 50:50 joint venture to acquire 100% of PAL Cooling Holding L.L.C. (PAL) for a total consideration of approximately USD 1.0 billion. PAL is a leading district cooling provider in the UAE that delivers services to residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments. Lastly, ACWA Power has acquired stakes in power generation and water desalination assets in Kuwait and Bahrain from ENGIE for a total consideration of USD 693.0 million. The assets include stakes in Az-Zour North (Kuwait), Al Ezzel (Bahrain), Al Durr (Bahrain), and Al Hidd (Bahrain). The target entities own and operate gas-fired power plants with a combined capacity of 4.6 GW and water desalination facilities with a combined capacity of 1,114 thousand cubic meters per day.

GCC M&A Decline

According to Markaz’s report, the GCC market sealed a

Number of Closed GCC M&A Transactions*			
Country	H1 2025	H1 2024	% Change (YoY)
Bahrain	4	4	-
Kuwait	1	4	-75%
Oman	4	1	300%
Qatar	5	2	150%
Saudi Arabia	15	28	-46%
United Arab Emirates	43	53	-19%
Total	72	92	-22%

Source: S&P Capital IQ, GCC Stock Exchanges, Local Newspapers, Markaz Analysis

total of 72 transactions throughout H1 2025, which implies a decline of 22% year over year. United Arab Emirates claimed the lion’s share with 43 closed transactions, followed by Saudi Arabia closing a total of 15 transactions. Apart from Qatar and Oman, all other markets in the region saw a substantial year-over-year decline in their M&A activities.

Acquirers and Targets

Consistent with historical trends, most transactions completed in the first half of 2025 and 2024 were carried out by acquirers from the GCC. Specifically, during H1 2025, GCC acquirers took the lead, being responsible for a substantial 65% of the total completed transactions, leaving foreign acquirers with a 33% share. GCC acquirers also dominated the market during H1 2024 as they accounted for 66% of the total number of closed transactions with foreign counterparts contributing a noteworthy 33%. The residual shares in H1 2025 and H1 2024 represents transactions where buyer information was not disclosed.

Furthermore, GCC acquirers primarily invested in compa-

nies within their local markets and in international markets, and targeted regional companies to a lesser extent. Throughout H1 2025, GCC acquirers closed a total of 41 transactions within their local markets, compared to 54 transactions in H1 2024. In addition, GCC acquirers sealed 39 cross-border transactions throughout H1 2025, matching the cross-border transactions recorded in H1 2024. It’s noteworthy that UAE buyers spearheaded the cross-border activity, representing approximately 71% of the total number of closed cross-border transactions, while Saudi Arabia and Kuwait followed, contributing 13% and 8%, respectively.

Foreign Buyers

Shifting focus, it is worth mentioning that GCC targets experienced a slight decrease in foreign buyer interest during this period. They concluded a total of 24 transactions, which was marginally lower than the 30 transactions in the preceding year, marking a 20% year-over-year decline. Notably, UAE targets continued to be the prime attraction for foreign buyers, finalizing 19 transactions in the first half

of 2025.

Sectorial View

Moreover, the deals concluded in the first half of 2025 were directed towards companies spanning diverse sectors, emphasizing a consistent trend observed in recent periods. That said, the Consumer Discretionary, Financials, Industrials, Education, and Information Technology sectors stood out as the most active, collectively contributing to 58% of the transactions completed during this period.

Deals in the Pipeline

By the end of H1 2025, there were a total of 40 announced transactions in the pipeline, marking a substantial reduction compared to the preceding year when the pipeline saw a total of 55 announced transactions. The majority of these transactions involved United Arab Emirates targets, who accounted for 55% of the total number of announced deals, followed by Saudi Arabia and Bahrain at 23% and 10%, respectively. The remaining transactions involved Kuwaiti, Qatari, and Omani targets. All regions witnessed zero to negative growth in H1 2025 compared to the prior year.

About Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz”

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

Malabar Gold & Diamonds launches gold rate protection scheme for festive season

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: Malabar Gold & Diamond, the 5th largest jewellery retailer globally with over 400 showrooms across 13 countries, has unveiled their much-awaited Gold rate protection offers, providing customers with the golden opportunity to block the prevailing gold rates by paying just 10% as an advance.

The gold rate protection offer enables customers to purchase their favorite jewellery without having to worry about gold rate fluctuations and this much awaited facility has been unveiled by Malabar Gold & Diamonds taking into account the jewellery purchase its immense customer base is expected to indulge in during the upcoming festive season. Customers can block the gold rate till 19th October 2025 by paying just 10% as an advance. If gold rate increases at the time of purchase, customers can avail the blocked rate and if it reduces they can still draw mileage of the reduced rate i.e. a customer intending to buy gold jewellery worth KWD1000 just needs to pay KWD100 to avail the Gold Rate Protection offer and in turn get protected from the increasing gold rates. Customers can also avail a complimentary diamond voucher for first advance bookings made on or before 28th September 2025. The offer will be valid across all Malabar Gold & Diamonds showrooms. Customers can either pay the advance directly at the showroom or online, via Malabar Gold & Diamonds’ mobile app.

“The Gold Rate Protection scheme has consistently been a customer favorite, offering peace of mind in times of unpredictable gold prices. Especially now, with the festive season approaching and market rates fluctuating, this initiative empowers customers to secure their jewellery at the prevailing price with just a 10% advance, ensuring that their festive purchases remain unaffected by future price movements. What makes the process even simpler is our mobile app, which allows customers to make an advance with complete ease and security,” said Mr. Shamlal Ahmed, MD – International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

In addition to the 10% advance option, customers can also pay 50% and 100% of the amount as advance to get gold rate protection for 90 days and 180 days respectively. This option will be available to customers throughout the year across all showrooms of Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

Editor’s Note

Malabar Gold & Diamonds was established in 1993 and is the flagship company of Malabar Group, a leading diversified Indian business conglomerate.

With an annual turnover of \$7.36 billion, the company currently ranks as the 5th largest jewellery retailer globally and today has a strong retail network of over 400 outlets spread across 13 countries in addition to multiple offices, design centres, wholesale units, and factories spread across

- Pay just 10% advance and block the Gold Rate
- Get benefit of the booked rate if price increases during the purchase
- Get the lower Gold Rate if the price goes down during the purchase

India, Middle East, Far East, the USA, the UK, Canada & Australia. The group, owned by more than 4,000 shareholders, has more than 25,000 professionals from over 26 countries working towards its continued success.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds also features an online store www.malabargoldanddiamonds.com providing customers the opportunity to purchase their favorite jewellery at any time and on any day from the comfort of their homes.

ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) has been the primary commitment of the group since its inception. The key ESG focus areas of Malabar Group are Health, Housing, Hunger Free World, Education, Environment and Women empowerment. Integrating the principles of responsibility and sustainability into its core business, Malabar Group periodically strengthens its ESG goals to remain a socially conscious and responsible organization. The group contributes 5% of its profit to such initiatives in the same country of operation.

Awareness drive reinforces financial security measures

KIB warns customers of rising real estate fraud via social media & apps

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has issued a warning to its customers about fraud schemes targeting individuals seeking properties for sale, rent, and investment through widely used social media platforms and advertisement applications. The Bank explained that many people have fallen victim to these types of scams, noting that it is cooperating with relevant authorities to mitigate these incidents and identify those responsible. This step is part of KIB’s commitment to monitoring all developments related to digital and traditional financial fraud. It also underlines the Bank’s continuous support for the “Let’s Be Aware” (Diraya) banking awareness campaign, dedicated to promoting financial and banking literacy among all segments of society.

Commenting on the occasion, Dawood Behbehani, Assistant General Manager - Information Security, Privacy and Anti-Fraud Department at KIB,said: “Our efforts continue to yield positive results in combating all fraud trends targeting our customers and community members who use various digital applications and platforms. We have seen a significant increase in attempts to devise new methods for breaching individuals’ financial and personal data and stealing their money through dubious and unauthorized means.”

Behbehani added: “At KIB, we always urge our customers not to trust unknown sources claiming to specialize in renting or selling properties and apartments, particularly those who offer unrealistic prices. We are committed to our awareness strategy, which focuses on disseminating specific educational materials and content to protect our customers from falling victim to fraud schemes, especially those carried out through social media or digital applications.”



KIB's Dawood Behbehani

Behbehani advised all customers to verify the reliability of companies they communicate with through social media applications regarding renting or selling properties. He emphasized not sharing any personal payment links or making payments for booking apartments or various real estate spaces without official documents or proof.

It is worth noting that KIB spares no effort in initiating awareness campaigns to educate customers and community members about the importance of maintaining financial security, avoiding fraud, and protecting their money from theft. This includes advising against disclosing any banking or personal confidential information. KIB disseminates educational content across all its social media pages, participates in relevant events and activities, and keeps up with banking awareness campaigns, foremost among them is the Diraya campaign. These efforts underscore the Bank’s commitment to its comprehensive social responsibility strategy, embodied in its main slogan, “Bank for Life.”

About KIB

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari’ah, based in the State



'Let's Be Aware' campaign.

of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: “Bank for Life”.

Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait,KIBoffers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards. As part of its duty towards the community, the Bank also encompasses a leading social responsibility program that aims at positively impacting all members of the community through a wide range of impactful initiatives and activities.

Today, KIB has taken concrete steps in implementing its new strategic objectives. The Bank has cemented its role as a key player in the local banking industry and has continued to maintain its strong financial performance; enabling it to be globally recognized for its strong credit rating and financial position.

July trade agreement set tariffs at 15%

Trump hosts South Korea’s President Lee at White House for trade & defense talks

WASHINGTON, Aug 25, (AP): President Donald Trump was hosting Lee Jae Myung, the new president of South Korea, at the White House on Monday for talks expected to center on trade and defense.

The first in-person meeting between the two leaders could help flesh out details of a July trade deal between the two countries that has Seoul investing hundreds of billions of dollars in the U.S. The agreement set tariffs on South Korean goods at 15% after Trump threatened rates as high as 25%.

Trump declared at the time that South Korea would be “completely OPEN TO TRADE” with the U.S. and accept goods such as cars and agricultural products. Automobiles are South Korea’s top export to the U.S.

Seoul has one of the largest trade surpluses among Washington’s NATO and Indo-Pacific allies, and countries where the U.S. holds a trade deficit has drawn particular ire from

Trump, who wants to eliminate such trade imbalances.

Lee’s office said in announcing the visit that the two leaders plan to discuss cooperating on key manufacturing sectors such as semiconductors, batteries and shipbuilding. The latter has been a particular area of focus for the U.S. president.

On defense, one potential topic is the continued presence of U.S. troops in South Korea and concerns in Seoul that the U.S. will seek higher payments in return.

Ahead of his visit to Washington, Lee traveled to Tokyo for his first bilateral visit as president in a hugely symbolic trip for the two nations that hold longstanding historical wounds. The summit with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba was interpreted by analysts as a way to show unity and potential leverage as Japan and South Korea face new challenges from the Trump administration.

Lee was the first South Korean president

to choose Japan for the inaugural bilateral visit since the two nations normalized ties in 1965.

Elected in June, Lee was a former child laborer with an arm deformity who rose his way through South Korea’s political ranks to lead the liberal Democratic Party and win the presidency after multiple attempts. He succeeds the conservative Yoon Suk Yeol, whose brief imposition of martial law last December led to his stunning ouster from office.

Lee faced an assassination attempt in January 2024, when he was stabbed in the neck by a man saying he wanted Lee’s autograph and later told investigators that he intended to kill the politician.

Lee arrived in the U.S. on Sunday and will leave Tuesday. He headlined a dinner Sunday evening with roughly 200 local Korean-Americans in downtown Washington on Sunday night.

‘Agriculture should not be politicized’

China envoy urges strengthened US-China agricultural cooperation

WASHINGTON, Aug 25, (Xinhua): Chinese Ambassador to the United States Xie Feng recently said that as the world’s most important agricultural producers and consumers, China and the United States each have their own strengths in agriculture and can complement each other well.

“China and the U.S. together produce nearly 40 percent of global food and consume one-fourth of the total. China has comparative advantage in labor-intensive agricultural products, while the U.S. specializes in land-intensive agricultural commodities through mechanized, large-scale production,” Xie made the remarks at a U.S.-China soybean industry partner breakfast reception in Washington D.C.

This event was co-hosted by the U.S. Soybean Export Council and the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Foodstuffs, Native Produce and Animal By-Products, with participation from industry associations, agricultural enterprises, and scholars of both countries.

“Agricultural exchanges and cooperation have not only offered more choices for consumers in both our countries, but also put more money in the pockets of American farmers,” Xie said.

“They have provided impetus for agricultural transformation and upgrading in China and the U.S., and opened up a new path for securing global food security,” Xie continued.

The Chinese ambassador argued that agriculture should not be politicized, and “farmers should not pay the cost of trade war.”

“Restricting Chinese citizens and businesses from buying farmland is purely a move of political manipulation on the pretext of national security. It is completely unfounded, and is aimed to hijack China-U.S. agricultural cooperation for a few individuals’ own agenda,” Xie said.

“China is ready to work with the U.S. side to implement the important common understandings of the two leaders, make good use of the economic and trade consultation

mechanism, build consensus, clear up misunderstandings and strengthen cooperation, so as to jointly share the dividends of development and return to the right track of win-win cooperation,” Xie said.

Industry associations and enterprises in both countries serve as a bridge and shoulder a special mission, and need to continue playing a constructive role, Xie said. “I hope more friends will join in, and let’s together be ‘farmers’ who work hard to grow a steady, sound and sustainable China-U.S. relationship,” he said.

“We need to keep the ‘pests’ away from bilateral agricultural cooperation, say a loud no to any attempt to politicize trade and economic issues in the name of national security,” Xie said.

“We also need to sow more ‘seeds,’ work closely on trade, industry, business and research, and strive to achieve more results in restoring dialogue and cooperation mechanisms in the agricultural area,” Xie added.

Germany’s business confidence rises for 8th straight month

BERLIN, Aug 25, (Xinhua): Germany’s business confidence rose for the eighth consecutive month in August, a key survey showed Monday, as companies grew slightly more optimistic about the months ahead. Economists cautioned, however, that the recovery remains fragile amid external risks such as U.S. tariffs.

The ifo Business Climate Index, based on a survey of around 9,000 firms, edged up to 89 points from 88.6 in July, the Munich-based ifo Institute reported. The increase was driven by improved expectations, while assessments of current conditions worsened.

Sentiment declined across manufacturing, services, trade, and construction. In manu-

facturing, companies downgraded both their evaluation of present business and their outlook, with new industrial orders showing no signs of recovery.

“The German economy’s recovery remains weak,” said ifo President Clemens Fuest. Firms were more negative about current business, even as their expectations for the next six months improved slightly.

Carsten Brzeski, global head of macro at ING Research, suggested the modest improvement may reflect Germany’s recently announced fiscal stimulus measures.

The draft 2026 budget, approved by the federal cabinet in late July, foresees spending rising to 520.5 billion euros (608.9 bil-

lion U.S. dollars) next year. It allocates 126.7 billion euros for investment, a record high for the second year in a row, as Berlin seeks to upgrade infrastructure and strengthen defense.

Brzeski warned, however, that Germany’s growth prospects hinge heavily on external factors such as trade developments and the euro’s exchange rate, with U.S. tariffs continuing to weigh on the export-driven economy.

Germany’s Federal Statistical Office last week confirmed that GDP contracted by 0.3 percent in the second quarter compared with the previous three months - a sharper decline than the initially estimated 0.1 percent.

Pezeshkian hopes Russia-US summit supports Ukraine diplomacy

Russian, Iranian presidents rev up energy, transport co-op

MOSCOW, Aug 25, (KUNA): Russia’s President Vladimir Putin and Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian agreed on Monday to deepen cooperation in energy and transport to serve both countries’ strategic interests and strengthen their partnership.

According to Moscow’s Kremlin, their phone call focused on Iran’s nuclear program and developments in the South Caucasus.

Putin briefed Pezeshkian on the outcomes of the recent Russia-US summit held in Alaska, Kremlin added.

On his side, Pezeshkian said he hopes those results will help advance a diplomatic resolution to the Ukraine crisis.

He also called the “3+3” format - Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia plus Russia, Türkiye, and Iran - an effective



KUNA photo
Russia’s President Vladimir Putin and Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian.

way to confront South Caucasus issues and enhancing regional stability.

The two presidents agreed to meet in person during the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in China to maintain close coordination on key regional and international matters.

Separately, Russia’s Foreign Ministry said Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov discussed upcoming high-level contacts with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi and expressed Moscow’s readiness to help create conditions for resuming talks on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Araghchi updated Lavrov on his recent discussions with his British, German, and French counterparts about Iran’s nuclear program.

Entry-level job market remains challenging for recent graduates

NEW YORK, Aug 25, (AP): Growing up as the daughter of immigrants from Jamaica, Stacey Watson didn’t see herself in the characters of the books she read. Now 28, she wants to be a book editor who helps promote a more diverse range of story protagonists so her nieces and other young people feel represented.

But an entry-level job in publishing has proven elusive. Two years after earning her master’s degree, with four internships and several part-time jobs under her belt, Watson hasn’t landed a full-time staff position. She lives with her parents in Brooklyn to make ends meet.

Job

“You’re hoping every year is the year you can tell your parents, ‘I got the full-time job, you don’t have to worry about me anymore,’” she said.

Watson’s experience echoes the difficulties facing many job seekers who are trying to start their careers at a time when economic uncertainty has discouraged employers from adding staff and workers from leaving their jobs.

The U.S. unemployment rate for college graduates aged 22 to 27 has outpaced the joblessness rate for the general population since the coronavirus pandemic. Many degree-holders seeking their first jobs report spending months submitting applications.

In a tight job market, companies often choose more experienced candidates because they can, said Laura Ullrich, economic research director for job search website Indeed. “Quit rates are low ... and companies aren’t hiring many people. So it’s this stagnant environment where there’s not a lot of room being created for these new grads.”

Experts

Below, career experts and candidates who landed jobs share how to persevere in the search.

When some employers are using artificial intelligence to filter through hundreds of resumes, having a connection within a company can help candidates by providing an introduction, experts say.

An internship or part-time job can provide a starting point for building relationships with professionals in your chosen field. Alumni networks and professional organizations are other avenues for meeting people.

When Jennifer Moglia, 22, was interning in the music business, she made a spreadsheet to record the names of everyone she met during meetings, what they talked about and any interests she shared with them. She then looked them up on LinkedIn, the social networking platform, and requested time to meet one-on-one.

“I typically reached out to pretty much anyone that I had worked with, just to say, ‘Hi, I’m interning here. I would love to talk to you about your job if you have 30 minutes,’” Moglia said. “I would just try to make it as easy as possible for them,” saying, “‘If your calendar is up to date, I could find a day and time that works. I can book the room.’”

The networking paid off. In the months before her college graduation, Moglia applied for 70 jobs, reaching out to contacts she’d made to ask about vacancies. “Most of the interviews that I got were for companies that I had connections at,” she said.

After receiving two offers, Moglia now works as a venue marketing coordinator for Live Nation Entertainment in New York.

Consider looking for jobs outside your college major or ideal career path if there are way more than applicants than open positions in your area of choice. Your skills may be transferable to other fields and positions.

“If you ask a lot of 40-year-olds, they’re not working in the exact field they went to college for,” Ullrich said. “So casting a wide net is smart.”

Luke Sutton, 24, who graduated college in 2023 with a degree in dramatic writing, wanted to work in television, but a strike by Hollywood writers halted hiring at studios and production companies as he began his search. Sutton applied for more than 1,000 jobs before getting one as a creative assistant at healthcare advertising agency Patients & Purpose.

At times, he felt desperate. The hardest part was hearing nothing after filling out applications. “My head’s sort of like spinning, like I just want to be able to eat. Is that too much to ask?” Sutton recalled.

He worked part-time jobs and kept an open mind, putting himself forward for a wide range of positions that involved writing and focusing on jobs with assistant in the title. His current role is not his dream job, but “I’m one of the lucky ones because I’m doing at least something creative,” Sutton said.

Employers

As use of artificial intelligence grows, employers are looking for people who understand how to use the technology and incorporate it into workflows, said Efreem Bycer, LinkedIn’s head of workforce and climate policy partnerships. Because technology is shifting so rapidly, however, adaptability is also a sought-after skill.

“What employers are going to want to know is, can you work through that change?” Bycer said.

Some employers are holding off on hiring entry-level workers because they’re finding that some tasks can be done by artificial intelligence, said Betheny Gross, research director at WGU Labs, the innovation arm of Western Governors University, an online school based in Utah.

But AI can also be used to help bridge the experience gaps of entry-level candidates. The university is offering virtual internships and apprenticeships that simulate scenarios workers would encounter on a job.

“For the time being, the labor market is going to segment into people who understand what AI can do, are able to use it themselves, and understand the strengths and also limitations of it, and those who do not,” Gross said.

One of the most important things to remember in a prolonged job search is that you’re not necessarily the reason it’s taking a long time, said Peter Cappelli, a management professor at The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. If new would-be workers are feeling discouraged, “I think the big thing for them and for their parents is to recognize, this is not your kid’s fault.”

Organization

Securing a job since she was laid off from a nonprofit organization in May has been a brutal process for Aileen Ryan, 23, who has supported herself and helped her mother pay bills since she finished high school.

None of her 400 applications has brought an offer. Out of the 70 contacts Ryan sent messages to on LinkedIn, only three replied; one of them wrote, “I wish I could help, but my best recommendation is to pray.”

With her unemployment benefits and student loan deferment set to end in December, Ryan plans to move in with her mom, if she doesn’t have a job, ideally in the nonprofit sector, by then. Nevertheless, Ryan keeps going because she has to, she said.

“I know what I have to offer and I’ve worked really hard to get to this point,” Ryan said. “I also know what I want for myself, and I’m just going to keep going until I get to that.”

Liquidators report \$45 billion in debt claims, modest asset sales

Evergrande’s collapse continues to ripple through China’s property market

BANGKOK, Aug 25, (AP): Shares in China Evergrande were removed from the Hong Kong Stock Exchange on Monday, marking another step in the retreat of the giant real estate developer whose downfall contributed to a prolonged crisis in China’s property market.

Evergrande’s creditors are still working to wind up debts that amounted to more than \$340 billion. Once China’s second-largest developer, it ran into trouble when Chinese regulators cracked down several years ago on what they deemed to be excess borrowing by developers.

That caused dozens of property companies to default on their debts, triggering a downturn in the property market that is still dragging on the world’s second-largest economy.

Here’s what to know about Evergrande:

The Hong Kong Exchange said Monday that Evergrande’s shares were delisted as of Monday morning, as expected. The shares were last traded on January 29, 2024, and then suspended after a court in Hong Kong ordered liquidation of the company when it failed to provide a viable debt restructuring plan.

Rules of the exchange stipulate that a company’s share listing may be canceled if trading in its securities is suspended for 18 straight months.

After years of warnings that led to global rating agencies cutting the Chinese government’s credit rating in 2017, the ruling communist party cracked down on real estate debt in 2020. It imposed controls known as “three red lines” that prohibited heavily indebted developers like Evergrande from borrowing more to pay off bonds and bank loans as they matured.

Fears of a possible Evergrande default in 2021 rattled global markets, but

they eased after the Chinese central bank said its problems were contained and Beijing would keep credit markets functioning. Evergrande was one of the biggest of many developers that failed to repay their creditors.

Chinese home buyers often pay up front for apartments before they’re even built. The credit crunch for Evergrande and other developers led them to suspend construction, leaving many projects in limbo. The slowing of home purchases and building rippled throughout the economy, hitting demand for construction materials, appliances and even vehicles at a time when China was also contending with disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since most Chinese families have their wealth tied up in property, the anemic housing market has been a major factor crimping consumer spending.

There has been some recovery in the housing sector, but home prices and investment have continued to fall.

Before the crackdown on borrowing, real estate accounted for some 20% of China’s economy. When spending on steel and copper for construction, furniture and other related purchases was added in, estimates of its share of the economy rose to about a third.

China’s leaders have sought to get developers to finish projects and deliver apartments that already were paid for, providing billions in lending and subsidies. They’ve encouraged local governments to buy up excess apartments to serve as affordable housing, and relaxed down payment and mortgage requirements.

They’ve also lifted many restrictions on purchases of homes for invest-

ment purposes in major cities, a move that analysts at HSBC Global Investment Research described as “surprising” as they came earlier than expected.

Sales and home prices were expected to fall further in August, they said in a recent report.

“We think it’s a positive change showing government’s enhanced proactiveness in rolling out measures, which will help strengthen market confidence and address the concern on stimulus being too late,” it said.

Evergrande, headquartered in southern China’s Shenzhen, near Hong Kong, was founded by entrepreneur Hui Ka Yan, who is also known as Xu Jiayin, in 1996. Its ascent and decline have mirrored the boom and bust in China’s property market after housing reforms allotted apartments built by state-owned industries to employees, creating a nation of home owners.

The company’s shares were listed in Hong Kong in 2009.

Evergrande filed for Chapter 15 bankruptcy protection in New York City in 2023, but that case was later withdrawn. Although a Hong Kong court ordered a winding up of the company’s debts, more than 90 percent of its assets are on the Chinese mainland, making it difficult to enforce repayment to its creditors.

Its liquidators said in a recent progress report that they had received debt claims totaling \$45 billion as of Jul. 31, much higher than the some \$27.5 billion of liabilities disclosed in December 2022, and that the new figure was not final. They also had taken control of more than 100 companies within the group with collective assets valued at \$3.5 billion as of Jan. 29, 2024.

So far, about \$255 million worth of assets have been sold, the liquidators said, calling the realization “modest.”

‘Weapons’ continues strong run in third weekend

‘KPop Demon Hunters’ gives Netflix its first box-office win

LOS ANGELES, Aug 25, (AP): Netflix appears to have its first No. 1 box-office title in the streaming company’s 18-year history thanks to the sensation of “KPop Demon Hunters.”

Rival studios on Sunday estimated “KPop Demon Hunters” led all films over the weekend with \$16-18 million in ticket sales. Distribution executives from three studios shared their estimates for the Netflix phenomenon on condition of anonymity because the streaming company has a policy of not reporting ticket sales.

Following a dominating few weeks as one of the most popular Netflix releases ever, the streamer put the film into 1,750 theaters for sing-along screenings Saturday and Sunday. Studios are able to accurately estimate ticket sales for all releases on Sunday morning, though the uncommon nature of the “KPop Demon Hunters” releases means a wider variance. Some estimates were as high as \$20 million.

It amounted to a victory lap for

“KPop Demon Hunters,” arguably the biggest hit of Hollywood’s summer, and an ironic success for Netflix, whose emphasis on streaming, not theatrical release, upended the movie industry. Another sore spot for Hollywood: The film was developed and produced by Sony Pictures, which sold it to Netflix.

Not all exhibitors went along. AMC, the largest theater chain in North America, declined to show the movie. But that didn’t stop Netflix from claiming the box-office title its more traditional competitors typically own.

David A. Gross, who runs the movie consulting firm FranchiseRe, called it “a completely unique two-day musical event.”

“It may turn out to be higher,” said Gross. “Theater owners are quick on their feet and can add capacity according to demand.”

The theatrical release, though limited, is out of the ordinary for the streaming giant, which has long stressed a commitment to subscriber releases. The movie debuted on the



This image released by Netflix shows characters, (from left), Rumi, Mira, and Zoey in a scene from ‘KPop Demon Hunters.’ (AP)

platform in late June and is currently Netflix’s most-watched animated original film.

The film centers on Hunt/x, a KPop superstar trio who double as demon hunters. The members, Rumi (Arden Cho), Mira (May Hong) and

Zoey (Ji-young Yoo), must protect their fans and face their biggest enemy yet: a rival boy band made up of demons in disguise.

Zach Cregger’s horror hit “Weapons” maintained strength in the box

office during its third weekend, bringing in \$15.6 million domestically. The buzzy horror movie has proved its staying power, raking in over \$100 million globally since its release.

Disney’s “Freakier Friday” landed behind the horror movie once again, earning \$9.2 million in North American theaters.

The two films are “real bright spots” as the box office heads into a “rather quiet finish” for the summer, said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for the data firm Comscore. Both films, which premiered simultaneously earlier this month, had a minimal 36% drop from last weekend.

“I think we have to look at the currency of the goodwill generated by people having these great summer moviegoing experiences,” Dergarabedian said. “We have to look at that as a more important metric than just the bottom-line dollars and cents.”

“The Fantastic Four: First Steps” earned \$5.9 million domestically during its fifth weekend. The movie

enjoyed a strong \$118 million debut but has experienced a steady decline.

Newcomer “Honey Don’t!” opened in 1,317 North American theaters with a weekend gross estimate of \$3 million, in line with expectations. The movie made it to the top 10, right above “The Naked Gun.”

The dark comedy stars Margaret Qualley as Honey O’Donahue, a small-town private investigator who investigates a slew of strange deaths tied to a church in Bakersfield, California.

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore:

1. “Weapons,” \$15.6 million;
2. “Freakier Friday,” \$9.2 million;
3. “The Fantastic Four: First Steps,” \$5.9 million;
4. “The Bad Guys 2,” \$5.1 million;
5. “Nobody 2,” \$3.7 million;
6. “Superman,” \$3.4 million;
7. “Honey Don’t!” \$3 million;
8. “The Naked Gun,” \$3 million;
9. “Jurassic World Rebirth,” \$2.1 million and
10. “Relay,” \$2 million.

Obituary

‘Broadway fixture’

Jerry Adler, veteran ‘Sopranos’ star, dies

NEW YORK, Aug 25, (AP): Jerry Adler, who spent decades behind the scenes of storied Broadway productions before pivoting to acting in his 60s, has died at 96.

Adler died Saturday, according to a brief family announcement confirmed by the Riverside Memorial Chapel in New York. Adler “passed peacefully in his sleep,” Paradigm Talent Agency’s Sarah Shulman said on behalf of his family. No immediate cause was given.

Among Adler’s acting credits are “The Sopranos,” on which he played Tony Soprano adviser Hesh Rabkin across all six seasons, and “The Good Wife,” where he played law partner Howard Lyman. But before Adler had ever stepped in front of a film or television camera, he had 53 Broadway productions to his name - all behind the scenes, serving as a stage manager, producer or director.

He hailed from an entertainment family with deep roots in theater. His father, Philip Adler, was a general manager for the famed Group Theatre and Broadway productions, and his cousin Stella Adler was a legendary acting teacher.

“I’m a creature of nepotism,” Adler told TheaterMania in 2015. “I got my first job when I was at Syracuse University and my father, the general manager of Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, called me (because) there was an opening for an assistant stage manager. I skipped school.”

After a long theater career, which included the original production of “My Fair Lady” and working with the likes of Marlene Dietrich, Julie Andrews and Richard Burton, among many others, Adler left Broadway during its 1980s slump. He moved to California, where he worked on television productions like the soap opera “Santa Barbara.”

Retirement

“I was really getting into the twilight of a mediocre career,” he told The New York Times in 1992.

But the retirement he was contemplating was staved off when Donna Isaacson, the casting director for “The Public Eye” and a longtime friend of one of Adler’s daughters, had a hunch about how to cast a hard-to-fill role, as The New York Times reported then. Adler had been on the other side of auditions, and, curious to experience how actors felt, agreed to try out. Director Howard Franklin, who auditioned dozens of actors for the role of a newspaper columnist in the Joe Pesci-starring film, had “chills” when Adler read for the part, the newspaper reported.

So began an acting career that had him working consistently in front of the camera for more than 30 years. An early role on the David Chase-written “Northern Exposure” paved the way for his time on a future Chase project, “The Sopranos.”

“When David was going to do the pilot for ‘The Sopranos’ he called and asked me if I would do a cameo of Hesh. It was just supposed to be a one-shot,” he told Forward in 2015. “But when they picked up the show they liked the character, and I would come on every fourth week.”

Films included Woody Allen’s “Manhattan Murder Mystery,” but Adler was perhaps best known for his television work. Those credits included stints on “Rescue Me,” “Mad About You,” “Transparent” and guest spots on shows ranging from “The West Wing” to “Broad City.”

He even returned to Broadway, this time onstage, in Elaine May’s “Taller Than a Dwarf” in 2000. In 2015, he appeared in Larry David’s writing and acting stage debut, “Fish in the Dark.”

“I do it because I really enjoy it. I think retirement is a road to nowhere,” Adler told Forward, on the subject of the play. “I wouldn’t know what to do if I were retired. I guess if nobody calls anymore, that’s when I’ll be retired. Meanwhile this is great.”

Adler published a memoir, “Too Funny for Words: Backstage Tales from Broadway, Television and the Movies,” last year. “I’m ready to go at a moment’s notice,” he told CT Insider then, when asked if he’d take more acting roles. In recent years, he and his wife, Joan Laxman, relocated from Connecticut back to his hometown of New York. Survivors include his four daughters, Shulman said.



Actor Jerry Adler arrives for the funeral service of James Gandolfini, star of ‘The Sopranos,’ in New York’s the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, June 27, 2013. (AP)

Film



George Clooney, (left), and Brad Pitt upon arrival for the press conference of the film ‘Wolfs’ during the 81st edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Sunday, Sept. 1, 2024. (AP)

Memorable moments from Venice festival and beyond

Clooney and Venice: A Hollywood love affair

VENICE, Italy, Aug 25, (AP): No Hollywood star seems as intrinsically tied to Venice as George Clooney.

Twenty-seven years ago he attended his first Venice Film Festival with the instant classic “Out of Sight”; 20 years ago, it’s where he debuted his sophomore film, “Good Night, and Good Luck,” which earned him his first best director nomination; and 11 years ago, it’s where he exchanged vows with then Amal Alamuddin, at the Aman Venice, a five-star hotel perched along the Grand Canal.

Venice is a city that he, like many, thinks is one of the most beautiful in the world. Unlike most people, he also owns 15-bedroom villa a few hours away on Lake Como that famously co-starred in “Ocean’s Twelve.”

This year he’ll be back on the Lido again with Noah Baumbach’s “Jay Kelly,” in which he plays a middle-aged movie star on a journey through Europe with his manager, played by Adam Sandler. And his longtime friend and oft co-star Julia Roberts is making her Venice debut this year with “After the Hunt.”

Here are some of Clooney’s most memorable Venice moments.

1998: ‘**Out of Sight**’

As legend has it, Clooney’s long term love affair with Venice may have begun with the festival’s premiere of Steven Soderbergh’s Elmore Leonard adaptation “Out of Sight.” Then 37 and doing press alongside Jennifer Lopez, the actor would also make another big jump soon: Leaving “ER” that February.

2003: ‘**Intolerable Cruelty**’

This Coen brothers joint, co-starring Catherine Zeta-Jones, premiered out of competition at the 60th Venice Film Festival, alongside titles like “Matchstick Men,” “Once Upon a Time in Mexico” and “The Dreamers.” Clooney’s nearby Italian residence was already as famous as him, and a stakeout spot for amateur and professional paparazzi.

In a profile that fall, while shooting “Ocean’s Twelve,” Vanity Fair writer Ned Zeman observed: “That an affable, self-effacing Kentucky-born Hollywood actor is fast becoming the most popular public figure in Italy says a little about Italy and a lot about Clooney, who isn’t Italian, doesn’t speak Italian, and lives here only in summertime.”

2005: ‘**Good Night and Good Luck**’

Clooney’s acclaimed black-and-white dramatization of journalist Edward R. Murrow’s clash with Joseph McCarthy began its successful run in competition at the 62nd Venice Film Festival. Though it lost the Golden Lion to Ang Lee’s “Brokeback Mountain,” it did go on to pick up six Oscar nominations including for Clooney’s directing.



This image released by Netflix shows George Clooney in a scene from ‘Jay Kelly.’ (AP)

During the trip, he also inspired a cocktail still served at the ritzy Belmond Hotel Cipriani on Giudecca. One night he retreated to the hotel’s Gabbiano Bar where his friend, the legendary bar manager Walter Bolzonella, mixed him a drink of lemon, sugar, cranberry juice and ginger and named it Buona Notte in honor of the film. The two would later name a prosecco, passionfruit and elderflower cocktail La Nina after Clooney’s mother, which was served at his wedding.

2007: ‘**Michael Clayton**’

Tony Gilroy’s “Michael Clayton,” which nabbed Clooney an Oscar nomination for his turn as the titular law firm fixer, played in competition at Venice. The top prize went again to an Ang Lee film: “Lust, Caution,” which also beat out the likes of “I’m Not There,” “Atonement” and “The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford.”

2008: ‘**Burn After Reading**’

This Coen brothers comedy featuring Clooney and Brad Pitt opted to debut out of competition in the opening night slot. He said it completed his “trilogy of idiots” that he’d played for the Coens, including “Intolerable Cruelty” and “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” “Looking at the parts we are playing, I’m very concerned about what you think of us,” Clooney said at the press conference. Pitt, who’d won the festival’s acting prize the year prior, added: “Like George ... I’m not sure if I should be flattered or insulted.”

2011: ‘**The Ides of March**’

Another opening night, out of competition slot debut for this Clooney-directed campaign thriller starring Ryan Gosling and Philip Seymour Hoffman. As usual, Clooney was peppered with political questions in which he observed that, “it’s a very difficult time to govern.”

2013: ‘**Gravity**’

Alfonso Cuarón’s “Gravity” opened the 70th edition of the Venice Film Festival before going on to win seven Oscars. Clooney, of course, attended the premiere alongside Sandra Bullock and he was self-deprecating about his role: “There were only two parts and Sandy had the other one, so I felt like this was the only one I could get away with.”

2014: **George and Amal get married**

The canals were packed with paparazzi for the nuptials of one of Hollywood’s favorite bachelors. On Sept. 27, Clooney, then 53, and Alamuddin, then 36, exchanged vows in front of 100 of their closest friends and family, including Bono and Matt Damon, at the luxury hotel Aman Grand Canal, originally a grand palazzo built in 1550. She wore a custom Oscar de la Renta dress, of French lace, pearls and diamanté accents. He wore a black wool/cashmere Giorgio Armani tuxedo.

2017: ‘**Suburbicon**’

Clooney returned to the festival with another of his directing projects, “Suburbicon,” a dark comedic satire about a seemingly idyllic 1950s community with Damon and Julianne Moore. This festival was especially notable for it being the Clooneys’ first public appearance since the birth of their twins, Alexander and Ella, a few months prior.

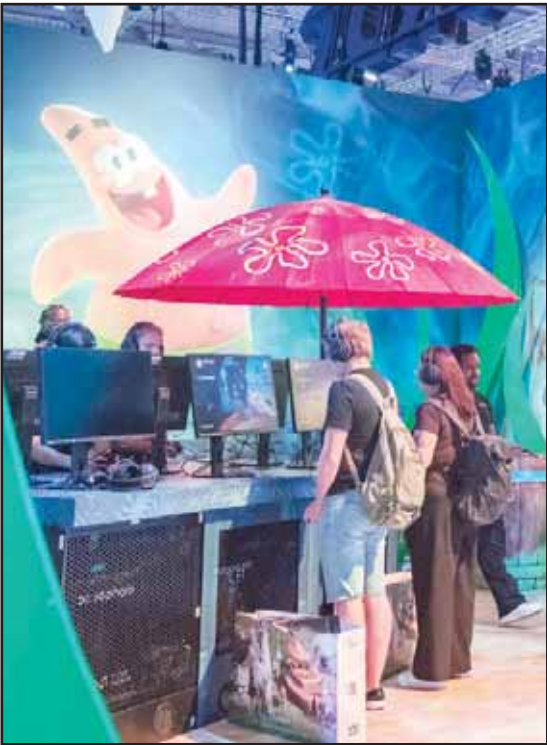
2023: **Spotlight on Amal**

This time George was the plus one to Amal, who was receiving an award from the Diane von Furstenberg and The Diller-von Furstenberg Family Foundation for her work as a human rights lawyer. The power couple gave the festival some much-needed star power amid the actors strike with an appearance at the adjacent DVF Awards. “I am here in Venice with my husband; he is a rising star,” she said that night. “I just wanted to say, you, my love, like this city, take my breath away.”

2024: ‘**Wolfs**’

Clooney and Pitt reunited for the Jon Watts action comedy “Wolfs,” that played out of competition. But the spotlight was less on the film and more on the off-screen drama of the AppleTV+ produced film only getting a limited theatrical release, and his then-recent New York Times op-ed urging President Joe Biden to end his reelection bid.

“The person who should be applauded is the president who did the most selfless thing anyone’s done since George Washington,” Clooney said. “All the machinations that got us there, none of that’s going to be remembered. And it shouldn’t be. What should be remembered is the selfless act.”



People try games at Gamescom 2025 in Cologne, Germany, on Aug. 20, 2025. (Xinhua)

Chinese games take spotlight at Gamescom

Wukong puts Chinese gaming on the global stage

COLOGNE, Germany, Aug 25, (Xinhua): Tim’s fingers tightened on his PS5 controller as the Chinese word for “death,” or “game over,” appeared again and again on the screen. The black-clad hero he was guiding carried the aura of Chinese martial-arts fantasy, drawing one of the longest queues at Gamescom 2025.

“The art style is really cool, and even the boss fight I just cleared looked great,” said the young gamer from Germany’s Harz after a one-hour demo. Titled “Phantom Blade Zero,” the upcoming action role-playing game has already notched up 6 million views for its latest gameplay video on YouTube.

More than halfway through the five-day event, a record 50 Chinese exhibitors made their presence impossible to miss, their booths among the busiest at the world’s largest games fair.

On Gamescom’s Opening Night Live showcase on Tuesday, Chinese studio Game Science closed the event with a flourish, unveiling its latest title “Black Myth: Zhong Kui.” Introduced by the host as “the last surprise before saying good night,” the two-minute trailer was met with thunderous cheers in Cologne and on the global livestream.

The studio had released “Black Myth: Wukong” exactly a year earlier, China’s first AAA game inspired by the classic novel “Journey to the West,” now a global hit. Its new title,

Zhong Kui, draws on Chinese folklore, bringing to life the legendary ghost catcher with fierce eyes and a thick beard.

Grace Pan, senior project manager at Cologne Exhibition Center (Koelnmesse), co-organizer of Gamescom (styled as “gamescom” by the organizers) alongside the German Games Industry Association, said Chinese game developers in recent years have emerged as “true content creators” and “peers of leading European, U.S. and Japanese studios.”

Variety

“Chinese developers are bringing a wide variety of new titles, advanced production techniques and distinctive elements such as Chinese martial arts and mythology,” Pan told Xinhua. Their original works, she added, stand out with strong visuals, storytelling, and gameplay.

A report released ahead of the fair by the German Games Industry Association showed the rising popularity of Chinese mobile titles in Germany. Four Chinese-developed products ranked among Germany’s 10 most-downloaded mobile games in 2024.

In Germany, home to 37.5 million players and Europe’s largest gaming market, smartphones remain the top platform, used by more than half of all gamers, with consoles such as PlayStation and Xbox close behind, the report noted.

That trend was also mirrored at this year’s Gamescom, where three Chinese titles were nominated among the five contenders for Best Mobile Game. The award went to “Love and Deepspace” on Friday, a romantic sci-fi title developed by Shanghai-based Infold Games.

The growing footprint of Chinese developers, coupled with the rise of China’s gaming ecosystem, is also opening doors for partnerships in Europe.

In a written interview with Xinhua, Felix Falk, managing director of the German Games Industry Association, said collaborations between Chinese studios and their counterparts in Germany and the wider Europe are becoming more frequent, enabling both sides to better understand and access each other’s markets.

Tencent, China’s gaming giant, offers a snapshot of that approach. The company brought more than 10 new titles to Gamescom, including projects built on international IPs or in partnerships with renowned European studios, such as yet-to-be-released “Dune: Awakening” and “Dying Light: The Beast.” Tencent also unveiled an AI-powered tool for game art production, positioned as a way to foster collaboration at the technical level.

“As the global games industry becomes increasingly interconnected, we will likely see even more cooperation in the future,” Falk said.

Travel



Dhofar’s autumn... a green carpet telling an Omani tale between natural beauty and historical heritage.

KUNA photos

Dhofar’s autumn showcases Oman’s blend of nature, heritage

The Governorate of Dhofar in Oman is welcoming visitors to its 2025 autumn season with mesmerizing natural beauty, where rainfall and mist embrace the mountains, creating enchanting scenes that attract tourists from across the globe.

Beyond its stunning landscapes, Dhofar tells an ancient story spanning thousands of years, rooted in the frankincense civilization, flowing springs, and fortified

castles, offering a rich cultural and historical backdrop alongside its breathtaking beaches and natural diversity.

From June to September, Dhofar transforms into a vibrant green paradise, blending lush nature with Oman’s deep heritage, where cool temperatures, light drizzle, and misty mountains make it an unrivaled seasonal attraction for international visitors.

Among the most visited destinations are Wadi Darbat, Ain Athum, Ain Jarziz, Ain Sahnoot, and Ain Razat, along with Ain Kour and Ain Hamran, surrounded by sidr and coconut trees, enhancing their natural charm.

Dhofar’s lagoons, including Khour Salalah, Khour Al-Baleed, Khour Dahariz, Khour Awqad, and Khour Al-Qurum, act as natural sanctuaries, teeming with wildlife, attracting flamingos, migratory birds, and bird

watchers eager to witness unique ecosystems flourish throughout the season.

Cultural landmarks enrich the journey, with Al-Husn Souq selling frankincense and crafts, complemented by Al-Haffa Souq, the Samharam archaeological site, Al-Baleed Archaeological Park, Beit Kofan, and Askar Tower, all reflecting Oman’s authenticity and cultural heritage. (KUNA)

Variety

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip: An Israeli strike on a hospital in southern Gaza killed four journalists on Monday, including a freelancer who worked for The Associated Press, according to health officials.

Mariam Dagga, 33, a visual journalist, freelanced for the AP since the Gaza war began, as well as other news outlets. The AP said in a statement that it was shocked and saddened to learn of Dagga’s death, along with several other journalists.

In all, 19 people were killed in the strike on Nasser Hospital, according to Zaher al-Waheidi, head of the Health Ministry’s records department. (AP)

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian premiere of “Dead To Rights,” a Chinese historical film about the 1937 Nanjing Massacre, was held Sunday in Kuala Lumpur, resonating strongly with the audience.

Based on verified photographic evidence of Japanese wartime atrocities, the film tells the story of a group of Chinese civilians who seek refuge in a photography studio during the brutal occupation of the Chinese city of Nanjing by Japanese aggressors. (Xinhua)

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GUANGZHOU: The simplified Chi-

nese edition of “A Memoir by Lt. Donald W. Kerr,” which recounts the story of a US pilot rescued during World War II (WWII), was released Friday in south China’s Guangdong Province.

The book details the story of Lieutenant Donald W. Kerr, a Flying Tiger veteran pilot whose aircraft was hit by Japanese forces over Hong Kong in 1944 during a mission to bomb Kai Tak airport. Kerr was rescued by local villagers and guerrilla fighters from the Dongjiang (East River) Column, a guerrilla force led by the Communist Party of China. (Xinhua)

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AMMAN: Two Chinese films won top awards at the fourth Jordan Children’s Film Festival, which concluded on Thursday here at the Royal Film Commission (RFC) headquarters.

Chinese film “The Days with Granny,” directed by Zheng Yunchang, won the Jury Award for Best Feature Film. Inspired by Zheng’s personal experience, it depicts the bond between a girl orphaned in an earthquake and her “grandma” adopting her.

Another Chinese film, “Who Is Afraid of Writing Class,” directed by Ma Lanhua, received the UNICEF Children’s Rights Award. The light-hearted animation-live action film follows Xiaohua, a primary school pupil, and her teacher Ma, who experiments with new teaching methods. (Xinhua)

Future schools: Teachers and AI working together

China urges human-centered AI at education summit

BEIJING, Aug. 25, (Xinhua): Chinese education experts have emphasized that AI should serve as a powerful enabler rather than a replacement. They have advocated for a human-centered approach that integrates technology to enhance educational quality, foster creativity, and support students’ holistic development in the intelligent era.

These remarks were made during the recent Global Smart Education Conference 2025 in Beijing last week, co-organized by Beijing Normal University and the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education.

Under the theme “Human-Machine Collaboration Fosters a New Ecology of Education,” the event gathered specialists from the education, technology and enterprise sectors, along with frontline teachers -- to explore pathways for deeper integration of emerging technologies in education.

At the forum on high-quality school development in the new era, principals and scholars from across China shared insights on digital transformation and intelligent upgrading in school education.

Li Youyi, chairman of the School Alliance of Educational Digitalization, highlighted that the deep integration of new technology and education has become a core issue in global digital transformation.

She urged school leaders to proactively embrace technological opportunities while remaining mindful of its dual-edged nature, ensuring that

technology always aligns with the fundamental values of education.

Sharing practical experiences, Xu Hui, principal of the No.1 Middle School affiliated to Central China Normal University in central China’s Hubei Province, outlined her school’s experiments with AI-enhanced curricula, human-computer collaborative teaching and data-driven personalized learning.

She emphasized that innovative talent should no longer be viewed merely as repositories of knowledge, but as deep comprehenders and creators of future knowledge. “AI is not a substitute for education -- it is an amplifier. Human intelligence must remain central, working synergistically with machine intelligence,” she noted.

Echoing the need for educator development, Wu Yingming, principal of Hefei No. 1 High School in east China’s Anhui Province, proposed that teachers strengthen four core capabilities in the AI context -- aesthetic appreciation, cultural understanding, scientific reasoning and value judgment.

These competencies will enable educators to better discern authentic information, integrate technology with teaching fundamentals, and foster students’ core competencies through teacher-student-machine interaction.

Zhang Hua, vice dean of Changsha Normal University’s primary education college in Hunan Province, central China, emphasized three guid-

ing principles in facing AI -- use, use wisely and do not abuse. The college combines national and project-based curricula, stimulates student interest through activities, and provides teacher training and incentives to improve digital competence.

Warning against treating AI as a panacea, Wang Xiao, principal of No. 3 Primary School in Yumin County, northwest China’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, stressed the importance of guiding students to become creators of technology rather than passive users. Wang reiterated that AI should empower -- and not replace teachers.

Adding a corporate perspective, Nie Xiaolin, co-founder of China’s leading AI company iFLYTEK, introduced the concept of “two-way empowerment” between AI and education. “While AI empowers education, education also feeds back into AI, improving its capabilities in the educational domain,” he explained.

To address a shortage of qualified science teachers in primary schools, iFLYTEK has partnered with the China National Institute of Education Sciences to develop a three-dimensional knowledge graph and a teaching logic-driven large model for science education.

By learning from over 50,000 courses taught by expert teachers, the system makes implicit teaching experiences visible -- helping educators instruct like experts and inspiring students to think like scientists.

Pakistan to launch cervical cancer vaccination campaign

Clinical trial unveils new path for treating brain cancer patients

SYDNEY, Aug. 25, (Xinhua): Scientists have made a breakthrough by using an innovative process to learn how a new drug suppresses tumor activity in low-grade glioma (LGG) brain cancer patients.

It's the first clinical trial to be conducted through the pioneering Brain Perioperative platform (BrainPOP), according to a statement released Monday by Australia's Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH).

LGGs are a slow-growing type of brain cancer that significantly impacts the lives of patients, many of whom are young adults in their prime. Characterized by a specific mutation in a gene called IDH, current treatments are limited, and LGGs have long been considered incurable.

But a new treatment is on the horizon, thanks to the discovery of mutations in LGG and a new and innovative process for treating them, the researchers said.

The pilot study tested Safusidenib, an oral inhibitor targeting the mutated IDH1 gene, and researchers from leading Australian medical institutions observed the drug's effect on LGGs tumor samples both before and after treatment.

The results have been promising, with the proof of principle study published in the journal Nature Medicine.

"This trial is not only a revolution in the way we test new treatments but brings new opportunities for this most deserving group of patients with a devastating disease," said Kate Drummond, director of neurosurgery at the RMH and the trial's lead investigator.

Oncologist Jim Whittle at the Melbourne-based Peter MacCallum Cancer Center, the study's senior author, said

perioperative trials, which take biopsies before and after treatment to measure drug effects, are common in other cancers but, due to neurosurgery's complexity, have not been used in brain cancer until now.

The new study demonstrates BrainPOP as a safe, effective platform that reveals a drug's detailed effects in the brain, enabling personalized treatment decisions and identifying patients who would benefit most, Whittle said.

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Preparations are underway for Pakistan's first-ever national cervical cancer vaccination campaign, which is set to begin on Sept. 15, sources from the country's Ministry of Health said on Sunday.

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination drive will run until Sept. 27 across selected regions, including eastern

Punjab, southern Sindh, Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, and Islamabad, the sources told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

The campaign will target school-going girls aged between nine and 14 years, the sources added.

"Each eligible girl will receive one dose of the HPV vaccine, which is known to significantly reduce the risk of cervical cancer, a preventable but potentially deadly disease if left untreated," the sources added.

Registration for the campaign has already started, with efforts underway to raise awareness among parents through voice messages.

The sources said that the initiative marks a major milestone in Pakistan's public health efforts, aiming to protect future generations of women from cervical cancer.

Authorities warn of fatal risk as measles spreads

Indonesia starts measles vaccination campaign after 17 die in an outbreak

SUMENEP, Indonesia, Aug. 25, (AP): Hundreds of children in Indonesia lined up for free measles shots Monday as authorities rolled out a vaccination campaign in response to an outbreak that has caused 17 deaths.

More than 2,000 children were infected in East Java province over the past eight months, according to officials who said 16 of the 17 deaths occurred in Sumenep district. Sixteen patients were not immunized and one did not complete the vaccines, according to data from Sumenep District Health Agency.

Indonesia has reported previous outbreaks of the highly infectious disease, mostly driven by gaps in vaccination coverage in the world's largest Muslim-majority nation.

A major outbreak occurred in the easternmost province of Papua in 2018, causing dozens of deaths. That year, the Indonesian Ulama Council reported the measles and rubella vaccine used for mass immunization programs contained pork. Use of the vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India was permitted until a halal vaccine without pork could be found.

Just 72% of Indonesia's 22 million children under 5 received the measles vaccine last year, and in some provinces, vaccination rates were below



A health worker gives a shot of measles vaccine to a child during a measles vaccination campaign following an outbreak, in Sumenep, East Java, Indonesia, Monday, Aug. 25. (AP)

50%, according to data from Statistics Indonesia.

Indonesian authorities have called on residents and community and religious leaders to support immunization efforts. The mass vaccination in Sumenep is targeting 78,000 children from 9 months to 6 years old.

"Otherwise, this disease, measles, will spread further among our children. It will be even more fatal in the

future," said Imam Hasyim, deputy chief of Sumenep district.

Globally, the World Health Organization says 84% of children received the first dose of measles vaccine last year, and 76% had received two doses. But experts say measles vaccine rates need to reach 95% to prevent outbreaks.

WHO noted that 60 countries reported big measles outbreaks last year.

Bangladesh reports 5 dengue deaths in a single day

Laos expands eco-friendly mosquito 'release method' to combat dengue

VIENTIANE, Aug. 25, (Xinhua): In the fight against dengue, Laos is expanding the release of Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes, a safe and effective method that turns mosquitoes into tiny warriors against the virus.

In early August, Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes were released across seven districts of the capital Vientiane. The move builds on the success of a pilot project in 2022, which saw the deployment of Wolbachia mosquitoes in several areas of the city, protecting 32 villages and nearly 86,000 people.

Wolbachia is a natural and safe bacterium that reduces the ability of dengue-carrying Aedes aegypti mosquitoes to transmit viruses between people. The bacteria-carrying mosquitoes breed with the wild Aedes aegypti mosquitoes in the area, passing Wolbachia to their offspring.

Many citizens have expressed strong support for the ongoing efforts, particularly among those who value

environmental protection.

Khonesavanh, a resident of the capital, viewed the method as both an eco-friendly and smart solution that safeguards public health while preserving the natural environment.

She believed the approach offered a sustainable, long-term form of protection, and said it minimized harm to both people and nature.

"I feel satisfied that our government has chosen a method that not only helps prevent and reduce the spread of the disease, but also shows concern for environmental protection and overall effectiveness," she told Xinhua on Saturday.

According to a Lao Ministry of Health report, Laos reported 2,614 cases of dengue fever in the first half of 2025, marking a significant decrease from the 5,192 cases recorded during the same period in 2024.

Meanwhile, no dengue-related deaths were reported in the country from January to June, compared with

three deaths in the same period in 2024.

Molakod, a medical student, said dengue fever requires serious attention, as it can be difficult to diagnose in its early stages but can lead to life-threatening complications if not treated in time.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh recorded this year's highest single-day toll of five dengue deaths on Thursday, bringing the tally to 110, said the country's Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The official data showed 311 more new infections in the past 24 hours as of 8:00 a.m. local time Thursday, raising the total number of cases of the mosquito-borne disease to 27,782 this year.

Bangladesh recorded more than 100,000 cases and 575 deaths in 2024.

The South Asian country logged 1,705 dengue-related deaths in 2023, marking the highest annual death toll.

Evolution hint

Jurassic era dino found

NANNING, Aug. 25, (Xinhua): Scientists have identified a new species of eusauropod dinosaur, a derived clade within sauropod dinosaurs, in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, marking the earliest known long-necked herbivore in the region and providing fresh insights into sauropod presence during the Jurassic Period.

A team of researchers, led by paleontologist Mo Jinyou from the Natural History Museum of Guangxi, formally named the species Huashanosaurus qini after an iconic local landmark.

According to Mo, the dinosaur can be traced back to the Early to Middle Jurassic, around 180 million years ago, roughly 30 million years earlier than Jingia dongxingensis, the region's oldest known sauropod from the Upper Jurassic.

"These findings offer novel fossil evidence for global Jurassic sauropod evolution and distribution patterns," said Mo. "They also suggest a potentially diverse sauropod community that once roamed south China during this period."

The discovery, detailed in a study published this month in Acta Geologica Sinica (English Edition), stems from the fossils excavated at a quarry near the Mingjiang River in Ningming County.

The scattered bones, first spotted by a local teacher, were later collected during a joint expedition by the Natural History Museum of Guangxi and the local authorities of Ningming County in 2017.

Researchers analyzed the partial skeleton, including fragments of vertebrae, ribs, humerus, ulna, fibula and foot bones, before identifying it as a new species of eusauropod, a group of advanced sauropods known for their massive size and elongated necks.

The defining bone traits that set it apart from other known sauropods include a sharply curved, hook-shaped posterior process on the ulna, which is a first among sauropod dinosaurs, a unique crescent-shaped cross-section in the ulna's shaft due to bone indentation, and a longitudinal groove on the distal end of the fibula's posterior surface.

These characteristics, unseen in other sauropods, suggest specialized adaptations in the dinosaur's limbs, possibly related to locomotion or weight distribution.



Pages from the US Affordable Care Act health insurance website healthcare.gov are seen on a computer screen in New York on Tuesday, Aug. 19. (AP)

Patients face higher bills

Health insurance prices to rise in 2026: experts

NEW YORK, Aug. 25, (AP): Pricier prescriptions and nagging medical costs are swamping some insurers and employers now. Patients may start paying for it next year.

Health insurance will grow more expensive in many corners of the market in 2026, and coverage may shrink. That could leave patients paying more for doctor visits and dealing with prescription coverage changes.

Price increases could be especially stark in individual coverage marketplaces, where insurers also are predicting the federal government will end some support that helps people buy coverage.

"We're in a period of uncertainty in every health insurance market right now, which is something we haven't seen in a very long time," said Larry Levitt, an executive vice president at the nonprofit KFF, which studies health care.

In conference calls to discuss recent earnings reports, insurers ticked off a list of rising costs: More people are receiving care. Visits to expensive emergency rooms are rising, as are claims for mental health treatments.

Insurers also say more healthy customers are dropping coverage in the individual market. That leaves a higher concentration of sicker patients who generate claims.

Enrollment in the Affordable Care Act's insurance marketplaces swelled the past few years. But a crackdown on fraud and a tightening of eligibility verifications that were loosened during the COVID-19 pandemic makes it harder for some to stay covered, Jefferies analyst David Windley noted.

People who use little care "are disappearing," he said.

Prescription drugs pose another challenge, especially popular and expensive diabetes and obesity treatments sometimes called GLP-1 drugs. Those include Ozempic, Mounjaro,

Wegovy and Zepbound.

"Pharmacy just gives me a headache, no pun intended," said Vinnie Daboul, Boston-based managing director of the employee benefits consultant RT Consulting.

New gene therapies that can come with a one-time cost of more than \$2 million also are having an impact, insurance brokers say. Those drugs, which target rare diseases, and some newer cancer treatments are part of the reason Sun Life Financial covered 47 claims last year that cost over \$3 million.

The financial services company covers high-cost claims for employers that pay their own medical bills. Sun Life probably had no claims that expensive a decade ago and maybe "a handful at best" five years ago, said Jen Collier, president of health and risk solutions.

Some of these drugs are rarely used, but they cause overall costs to rise. That raises insurance premiums.

"It's adding to medical (cost growth) in a way that we haven't seen in the past," Collier said.

Price hikes will be most apparent on the Affordable Care Act's individual coverage marketplaces. Insurers there are raising premiums around 20% in 2026, according to KFF, which has been analyzing state regulatory filings.

But the actual hike consumers see may be much bigger. Enhanced tax credits that help people buy coverage could expire at the end of the year, unless Congress renews them.

If those go away, customer coverage costs could soar 75% or more, according to KFF.

Business owner Shirley Modlin worries about marketplace price hikes. She can't afford to provide coverage for the roughly 20 employees at 3D Design and Manufacturing in Powhatan, Virginia, so she reimburses them \$350 a month for coverage they buy.

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Musovski's hat trick helps Sounders beat Sporting KC

SEATTLE, Aug 25, (AP): Danny Musovski scored three goals, Snyder Brunell added a goal in his first MLS start and the Seattle Sounders beat Sporting Kansas City 5-2.

Musovski had his first career hat trick and his third multi-goal game in the last five.

Kansas City (6-15-6) is winless in six straight, which includes five losses.

Musovski put away a pass played by Reed Baker-Whiting from near the right corner of the area with a header that skipped into the net in first-half stoppage time to give Seattle a 2-1 lead.

Musovski scored on another header off a corner kick played in by Danny Leyva in the 50th minute and converted from the penalty spot in the 75th.

The 29-year-old Musovski, who went into the season with 17 career goals, has 13 goals this season.

The Sounders (12-7-8) rebounded from a 1-0 loss to Minnesota last week, Seattle's only loss June 1.

Kalani Kossa-Rienzi, near the penalty spot, stopped and low entry played in by Georgi Minoungou and fired a shot that was blocked by Zorhan Bassong, but the rebound went back to Kossa-Rienzi for the putback to make it 1-0 in the 11th minute.

Kansas City's Mason Toney scored on a first-touch shot, off a low cross played by Tim Leibold, Leibold bent a cross from near the left sideline to Dániel Sallói near the penalty spot and Seattle defender Cody Baker redirected it into the net for an own goal.

Brunell, an 18-year-old homegrown who signed with the Sounders on July 29, scored on a first-touch shot from the center of the area off a low entry played by Minoungou from the left end line. Brunell also scored in his only other appearance for Seattle, a 4-0 win over the LA Galaxy on Aug. 10.

The Sounders beat Kansas City 3-2 on the road on July 12.

Kerwin Vargas scored a goal in the 30th minute, Kristijan Kahlina had his fourth consecutive shutout, and Charlotte FC beat the New York Red Bulls 1-0 to extend the longest win streak in MLS this season.

Charlotte (15-11-2) has won seven games in a row and is unbeaten in eight straight.

Kahlina had four saves and has not conceded a goal since Emmanuel Latte Lath scored for Atlanta in the 86th minute of Charlotte's 3-2 win on July 19.



Team Champions captain Jon Rahm, second from right, Tyrrell Hatton, left, Caleb Surratt, second from left, and Tom McKibbin, right, of Legion XIII, pose with the trophy following the final round of LIV Golf Team Championship Michigan at The Cardinal at Saint John's in Plymouth, Mich. (AP)

Fleetwood wins Tour Championship for first PGA Tour title and FedEx Cup

Henderson and Jon Rahm and his LIV team big winners on busy day of golf

ATLANTA, Aug 25, (AP): Tommy Fleetwood of England ended a summer of heartache with the richest prize on the PGA Tour, winning the Tour Championship on Sunday for his first tour title to capture the FedEx Cup and its \$10 million reward.

Fleetwood got plenty of help at the start when Patrick Cantlay began bogey-double bogey and could never catch up. Scottie Scheffler hit his opening tee shot out-of-bounds and still was a threat until a tee shot into the water ended his hopes on the 15th.

Through it all, Fleetwood held his nerve at East Lake. He closed with a 2-under 68 for a three-shot victory over Cantlay (71) and Russell Henley (69). Fleetwood finished at 18 -under 262.

His first PGA Tour victory came with two trophies - the FedEx Cup and the "Calamity Jane" replica putter for the Tour Championship.

Ryder Cup captain Keegan Bradley was within one shot of the lead on the front nine but wound up with a 70 to tie for seventh. He said he was "dead tired," and now has to decide whether to use one of his six captain's picks on himself. He announces his picks Wednesday.

Scheffler missed a 5-foot birdie on the 10th, and his hopes ended with a 5-iron that went into the water on the 15th for double bogey. He closed with a 68.

Canadian star Brooke Henderson won her second CPKC Women's Open



Tommy Fleetwood, of England, walks up to the 18th green during the final round of the Tour Championship golf tournament in Atlanta. (AP)

title, beating playing partner Minjee Lee by a stroke for her first victory in more than 2 1/2 years.

Henderson closed with a 4-under 68 at Mississauga Golf and Country Club to finish at 15-under 269. Lee, the Australian player ranked fourth in the world, had a 68.

Henderson broke a tie for the lead with a 6-foot birdie putt on the par-3 14th. On the short par-4 17th, she followed Lee's 13-foot birdie putt with a 12-footer of her own to keep the lead.

Also the 2018 champion at Wascona in Saskatchewan, the 27-year-old Henderson won her 14th LPGA Tour title and first since January 2023. She's from Smith Falls, Ontario.

Lee won the KPMG Women's PGA Championship in June in Texas for her third major title and 11th LPGA Tour title.

Mao Saigo of Japan was third at 11 under after a 66.

Jon Rahm and Legion XIII outlasted Bryson DeChambeau and the Crushers in a playoff in the LIV Golf League team final.

Legion XIII rallied to match the Crushers at 20 under at The Cardinal at Saint John's, with the Stinger squad from South Africa well back at 12 under in three-team final.

Rahm and Tyrrell Hatton each birdied the final two holes of regulation, then ended the playoff with a pair of birdies on the second extra hole against DeChambeau and Paul Casey. Rahm made a 6-footer and Hatton had a short putt for the deciding birdies.

Caleb Surratt led Legion XIII with a 64, Rahm and Tom McKibbin each shot 65, and Hatton had a 66. DeChambeau shot 62, Casey and Anirban Lahiri had 65s, and Charles Howell III closed with a 68. Howell birdied five of the first seven, then dropped three strokes.

Rahm helped Legion III take the team event a week after successfully defending his LIV Golf season points title in Indiana, a tournament where he closed with a 60 before losing a play-off to Sebastian Munoz.

Alex Noren, who didn't return from a hamstring injury until May, holed a 6-foot bogey putt on the final hole for a 5-under 67 and a one-shot victory in the British Masters.

The other big winner was Rasmus Hojgaard, whose tie for 13th was easily enough for him to claim one of six automatic spots on the Ryder Cup team. The Dane felt the nerves all day and shot a 71 to move past Shane Lowry in the European standings.

His twin brother, Nicolai, had a 67 and tied for second with Kazuma Ko-

bori (65). Keita Nakajima shot 67 and was alone in fourth.

Noren won for the 11th time on the European tour. It was his first win for the 43-year-old Swede since the French Open just over seven years ago.

Stewart Cink successfully defended his title in The Ally Challenge for his second PGA Tour Champions victory of the year, beating Ernie Els with a par on the first hole of a playoff.

Cink closed with a 4-under 68, birdieing two of the last three holes, to match Els at 15-under 201 at Warwick Hills. Els parred the final five holes in a 69.

The 52-year-old Cink won the In-sperity Invitational in May in Texas, beating Retief Goosen in a playoff. He won eight times on the PGA Tour, topped by the 2009 British Open.

Cink opened with a 62 and shot a 71 on Friday to enter the final round a stroke behind Els.

Steven Alker (65), Cameron Percy (70) and Soren Kjeldsen (70) tied for third at 12 under.

Becky Morgan of Wales ran away with the U.S. Senior Women's Open, closing with a 3-under 70 for a six-stroke victory over Juli Inkster.

Morgan finished at 7-under 285 at San Diego Country Club. The former LPGA and Ladies European Tour winner made her first start in the event after turning 50 in September.

The 65-year-old Inkster shot a 71. Liselotte Neumann was third at even par after a 74.

Maria McBride and Corina Kelpouris, tied with Morgan for the third-round lead, each shot 78 to tie for fourth at 1 over with 2024 winner Leta Lindley (73).

Double red for reckless Rennes

Veteran Giroud scores again for Lille in late victory over Monaco

PARIS, Aug 25, (AP): Veteran forward Olivier Giroud is revealing in life back in Ligue 1.

The 38-year-old Frenchman scored again on Sunday - and missed a penalty - as Lille snatched a 1-0 win over Monaco.

The match appeared to be heading for a goalless draw when Giroud turned in a low cross from Matias Fernandez-Pardo in stoppage time.

Giroud could have doubled his tally in the ninth minute of stoppage time but sent a penalty over the crossbar after Fernandez-Pardo had been fouled by Monaco defender Christian Mawissa Elebi.

Giroud, who joined Lille after a disappointing spell with Los Angeles FC, took only 11 minutes to score on his return to Ligue 1 in a 3-3 draw at Brest last week.

He previously made his name with AC Milan, Chelsea and Arsenal - the club he joined from Montpellier after winning the French title in 2012 and scoring 21 league goals that season.

Giroud is France's all-time leading men's scorer with 57 goals and won the 2018 World Cup with Les Bleus.

Rennes would like to finish a match with all 11 of its players on the field.

After having Abdelhamid Ait Boudlal sent off in the first half of its season-opening win over Marseille last week, Rennes

had two players dismissed in the first 11 minutes of a 4-0 loss at Lorient.

Midfielder Mahdi Camara was sent off just five minutes into the first start for his new club after unintentionally kicking Lorient's Dermane Karim in the chest.

Matters grew worse for Rennes six minutes later as it was reduced to nine men, with defender Christopher Wooh also shown a straight red card for bringing down Aiyegun Tosin when the Lorient forward was clear on goal.

According to Opta, Rennes is the first team to pick up two red cards in just over 10 minutes of a Ligue 1 game since it started collecting those stats in the 1992-93 season.

Rennes nevertheless managed to hold out until first-half stoppage time when Sambou Soumano broke the deadlock. But the floodgates opened after the break, with Tosin, Pablo Pagis and Théo Le Bris scoring.

Toulouse and Strasbourg continued their positive starts to the season with both teams picking up a second straight win without conceding a goal.

Frank Magri scored a second-half double to help Toulouse to a 2-0 win over Brest, and Emanuel Emegha's late goal fired Strasbourg to a 1-0 win over Nantes.

Lens won 2-1 at Le Havre.

Valkyries deal Wings 5th straight loss

Collier scores 32 in return from 7-game absence, Lynx tops short-handed Fever

MINNEAPOLIS, Aug 25, (AP): Napheesa Collier had 32 points and nine rebounds in her return from a seven-game absence and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Indiana Fever 97-84 on Sunday night.

Collier, who was the favorite to win WNBA MVP before she suffered an ankle injury in the third quarter of a 111-58 win over Las Vegas on Aug. 2, shot 11 for 19 from the field.

Courtney Williams had 14 points and 10 assists with no turnovers for Minnesota (30-7). Kayla McBride and Maria Kiliandikova scored 13 points apiece.

Kelsey Mitchell led Indiana (19-18) with 26 points on 7-for-12 shooting and Shey Peddy scored a season-high 16. Aliyah Boston had 14 points and Natasha Howard scored 10. Aerial Powers had five points, five rebounds and three assists.

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Minnesota Lynx guard Courtney Williams (10), front, is fouled by Indiana Fever guard Kelsey Mitchell (0), middle, during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Minneapolis. (AP)

Caitlin Clark (groin) missed her 15th consecutive game for the Fever. The 2024 WNBA rookie of the year has missed 24 of the Fever's 37 games this season due to various injuries.

Peddy and Powers were signed Tuesday and Saturday, respectively, to seven-day hardship contracts following Sophie Cunningham's season-ending knee injury on Aug. 19.

Kiliandikova scored or assisted (a short turn-around jumper by Collier) on every point in Minnesota's 11-0 run to close the second

quarter and take a 52-45 lead into halftime. Collier hit a short jumper and then a 3 to give the Lynx a 12-point lead 46 seconds into the third quarter.

The Fever trailed by at least nine points the rest of the way.

Minnesota shot 57.1% from the field (36 of 63) and 3-point range (12 of 21), and hit 13 of 14 (92.9%) from the free-throw line.

The Lynx beat Indiana 95-90 on Friday. The Fever beat Minnesota 74-59 to win the Commissioner's Cup championship on July 1.

The Fever host Seattle on Tuesday before the Storm visit the Lynx on Thursday.

Valkyries 90, Wings 81

In Arlington, Veronica Burton had 25 points, 13 assists and a career-high four blocks and the Golden State Valkyries beat Dallas, sending the Wings to their fifth straight loss.

Golden State (19-18) snapped a three-game skid and has a one-game lead over the Los Angeles Sparks for the eighth and final spot in the WNBA playoffs, which begin Sept. 14.

Iliana Rupert tied her career high with 17 points, Kaila Charles matcher her career best with 16 points and Kate Martin hit four 3-pointers and finished with 12 points for the Valkyries.

Burton, who had her fourth double-double this

season, made a layup with 7:53 to play that capped a 10-0 run and gave the Valkyries their biggest lead of the game at 69-55.

Dallas (9-28) has lost 10 of its last 11.

Maddy Siegrist led the Wings with 16 points and Myisha Hines-Allen scored 15. Amy Okonkwo made her second WNBA appearance and added a career-high 12 points, and Grace Berger scored 11. Rookie Paige Bueckers had nine points on 3-of-12 shooting, grabbed a career-high tying nine rebounds and five assists.

Rookie JJ Quinerly (knee), Li Yueru (knee) and Arike Ogunbowale (knee) did not play for Dallas.

The Valkyries host Washington on Saturday. Dallas plays Connecticut at home on Wednesday.

Storm 84, Mystics 82

In Washington, Nneka Ogumike hit a 15-foot jumper as time expired and finished with six 3-pointers and 30 points as the Seattle Storm beat the Washington Mystics.

Seattle (20-18) has won four of its last five following a six-game skid. Washington (16-22) has lost four games in a row.

Sug Sutton hit a 3-pointer from the left wing to make it 82-all with 6.1 seconds left. Ogumike caught a pass from Sklar Diggins



Dallas Wings guard Paige Bueckers, right reaches for the ball against Golden State Valkyries center Iliana Rupert (12) during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Arlington, Texas. (AP)

near the right elbow and made a spinning fade-away jumper that bounced multiple times as it rolled around the rim and then dropped.

Dominique Malonga had 17 points, 10 rebounds, the 19-year-old rookie's fourth double-double this season, and three steals, and Skylar Diggins added 10 points and 11 assists for the Storm.

Shakira Austin made 10 of 15 shots from the field, 10 of 10 from the line and scored a career-high 30 points for the Mystics. Sonia Citron added 14 points, Kiki Iriafen scored 12 and Stefanie Dolson 11.

Dolson hit a 3 to cap an 11-1 run that cut Washington's deficit to three late in the third quarter and Austin

made a driving layup with 4:53 to go in the fourth quarter that gave Washington its first lead at 71-70.

Iriafen finished with six rebounds and has a franchise single-season record 332. Crystal Langhorne held the previous record of 330, set in 2010.

Malonga made a layup that gave Seattle its biggest

lead at 35-21 with 7:28 remaining in the first half.

Noelle Quinn earned her 94th win for Seattle and moved past Anne Donovan for second on the franchise's all-time coaching wins list.

The Storm play the fourth of five consecutive road games Tuesday at Indiana. The Mystics play the Liberty in New York on Thursday.



Al-Senousi adjusts his boot during a training session.

NZ begins Cup defense with win, Brazil debuts

SUNDERLAND, Aug 25, (AP): New Zealand began its defense of the Women's Rugby World Cup by scratching a 54-8 win over Spain in York.

The Black Ferns were comfortable eight-try winners - with only 13 players for the last quarter - but at the possible cost of flanker Kaipo Olsen-Baker, who suffered a right leg injury and was carried off the field in tears.

Olsen-Baker missed the 2022 home World Cup because of a training injury and lasted only 14 minutes in York.

Other injured players couldn't be replaced because the bench was already empty, but even with 13 players New Zealand scored two tries though conceded its very first try to Spain in injury time.

Ireland and South Africa achieved their highest World Cup scores in their opening matches.

Ireland overcame Japan 42-14 and, in the second game of the Northampton doubleheader, South Africa overwhelmed debutant Brazil 66-6.

Both teams' previous best scores were against Kazakhstan: Ireland's



New Zealand's Laura Bayfield is tackled by Spain's Claudia Pena during the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 Pool C match between New Zealand and Spain at York Community Stadium in York, England. (AP)

was 40-5 in 2014 and South Africa's was just 25-10 in 2010.

Brazil's Yaras became the first team from South America to feature in the World Cup and played only their 18th test ever.

New Zealand made all the running, 1,600 meters to Spain's 348, and committed Spain to a staggering 221 tackles. But last passes by the Black Ferns were frequently missed amid an inspired scrambled defense by Las Leones, who were playing New Zealand for the first time in 27 years.

"There was a lot of excitement out there and some of those passes were not sticking," New Zealand captain Alana Bremner said. "But first game we weren't expecting perfection."

With nine players from the 2022 final and another nine making their World Cup debut, New Zealand didn't click in its first test in six weeks until Jorja Miller scored from out of nothing. She stepped two defenders on the Spain 22, slipped another, and split two more in a brilliant solo try.

The world's best sevens player was over again four minutes later, then player of the match Liana Mikaele-Tu'u crashed over and it was 21-0 after 24 minutes. But the Black Ferns couldn't score another try until the second half.

The halftime injection of Olsen-Baker in place of Miller, lock Laura Bayfield and scrumhalf Risi Pouri-Lane helped New Zealand up the tempo and 21-3 at halftime quickly blew out to 35-3.

The un-retired Portia Woodman-Wickliffe scored to extend her World Cup all-time tries record to 21 but dropping to 13 players slowed down New Zealand.

Rookie Fatima included in Pakistan squad for WCup

ISLAMABAD, Aug 25, (AP): Rookie batter Eyman Fatima was selected in Pakistan's 15-member squad announced Monday for next month's women's Cricket World Cup.

The squad will play South Africa in a three-match ODI series in Lahore from Sept. 16-22 before heading to Colombo, where it will play all its World Cup games.

The 20-year-old Fatima made her T20 international debut during Pakistan's recent 2-1 loss to Ireland, scoring 23 and 4 in the two games in which she batted.

Fatima Sana, 23, will lead the team for the first time at an ODI World Cup after her 100% winning record in the qualification tournament held in Pakistan.

The World Cup runs Sept. 30-Nov. 2 in India and Sri Lanka.

Pakistan opens Oct. 2 against Bangladesh before taking on archrival India on Oct. 5.

If Pakistan qualifies for the semifinals and the final, both knockout games

will be played in Colombo. The second semifinal will be played at Navi Mumbai. If Pakistan doesn't qualify for the final, Navi Mumbai will also host the championship decider on Nov. 2.

Syeda Aroob, Shawaal Zulfiqar and Fatima featured in the inaugural edition of ICC Women's Under-19 T20 World Cup in South Africa in 2023.

Selectors made two changes from the squad that contested the qualifying tournament. Fatima and Sadaf Shamas have replaced Gull Feroza and Najiha Alvi, who are now part of the non-travelling reserves with Tuba Hassan, Umm-e-Hani and Waheeda Akhtar.

Squad: Fatima Sana (captain), Muneeba Ali, Aliya Riaz, Diana Baig, Eyman Fatima, Nashra Sandhu, Natalia Pervaiz, Omaira Sohail, Rameen Shamim, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Sidra Amin, Sidra Nawaz, Syeda Aroob Shah.

Non-traveling reserves: Gull Feroza, Najiha Alvi, Tuba Hassan, Umm-e-Hani, Waheeda Akhtar.

Newly promoted Pisa shocks Atalanta

Juventus beats Parma as David scores on debut

MILAN, Aug 25, (AP): Canada forward Jonathan David scored in his Serie A debut to set Juventus on the way to a 2-0 win over Parma in their season opener.

David joined Juventus in July on a free transfer after his five-year contract at Lille expired.

Juventus ended the match with 10 men after Andrea Cambiaso was sent off seven minutes from time but substitute Dusan Vlahovic doubled the Bianconeri's lead moments later.

"It's everything I hoped for," said David, who was given a standing ovation when he was replaced by Vlahovic in the 80th minute. "It was the first game of the season and the fans brought an amazing atmosphere and you could feel them pushing us forward."

"I'm happy to score in my first game but the most important thing is the three points."

The 25-year-old David scored 25 goals and provided 12 assists in 49 matches across all competitions for Lille last season.

Pisa's first match back in Serie A since 1991 ended with a credible 1-1 draw at Atalanta.

Pisa, which finished second in Serie B last season, surprisingly took the lead in Bergamo in the 26th minute.

David is also Canada's all-time leading scorer with 36 goals in 67 appearances.

"The target is to help the team as



Juventus's Francisco Conceição, center, vies for the ball with Parma's Emanuele Valeri, left, and Parma's Lautaro Valentini during a Serie A soccer match between Juventus and Parma at the Juventus Stadium in Turin, northern Italy. (AP)

much as I can," David said. "If it's by scoring goals, by getting assists, running back, defending, I will do everything."

Juventus struggled in the first half but was dominant after the break and broke the deadlock in the 59th minute when David got in front of his marker to prod home Kenan Yildiz's cross.

Yildiz also set up Juve's second as a rapid counterattack saw Vlahovic send him down the right and then race from the center circle into the box to tap home the return pass.

That came shortly after Cambiaso

earned himself a needless red card. He had gone up together with Mathias Løvik for a high ball and then reacted by shoving the Parma player and appearing to strike him in the face with his arm.

Idrissa Touré's cross from the right went through to Samuele Angori, who put it back into the area toward Henrik Meister, but Atalanta defender Isak Hien bundled it over the line instead.

Atalanta was playing its first match of the post-Gian Piero Gasperini era after the coach left for Roma following nine years in

charge and was replaced by Ivan Juric.

Juric's halftime talk paid off as Atalanta was a team transformed after the interval. Gianluca Scamacca leveled five minutes into the second half, gathering a pass from Mario Pasalic and cutting inside his defender before firing into the far bottom corner.

It was Scamacca's first goal in more than 450 days and he almost doubled his tally in the 58th but headed off the crossbar.

Nico Paz set up one goal and scored a stunning second as Como kicked off its Serie A season with a 2-0 win over Lazio.

Cesc Fábregas' team broke the deadlock less than two minutes into the second half when Nico Paz gathered the ball inside his own half and feinted past a Lazio player before threading an impressive through ball for Tasos Douvikas to run onto and fire past Ivan Provvedel.

Nico Paz got on the scoresheet himself in the 73rd minute with a free kick into the top left corner.

Lazio had thought it had equalized 10 minutes earlier but Taty Castellanos' strike was ruled out by the video assistant referee for offside.

In a first for Italian soccer, referee Gianluca Manganiello announced the decision live to the stadium. The explanation of VAR decisions in real time has been introduced from this season in Serie A.

Salmiya and Qadsia make moves

Al-Arabi signs Marmouk, ends Simakula deal

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25: Salmiya has mutually agreed to terminate the contract of Libyan professional Al-Senousi Al-Hadi ahead of the new season.

Family circumstances prevented Al-Senousi from continuing with the club, and he is now set to join Libyan side Ittihad Tripoli.

Salmiya has opened talks with Jordanian players Muhannad Samrin and Ahmed Arsan to fill

the gap left by Al-Senousi. Samrin (23) plays for Al-Wehdat, while Arsan played for Kazma and currently represents Al-Faisaly in Jordan.

Al-Arabi has ended the contract of Ugandan forward Kenneth Simakula due to underwhelming performances and signed Moroccan defender Nabil Marmouk (26) as his replacement. Marmouk brings experience from Saudi club Abha, Moroccan side FUS Rabat, Cypriot club Anorthosis, and Wydad Casablanca.

Al-Arabi also retains Nigerian

players Anayo Iwuala and Christopher Joe, Frenchman Hassimi Fadiga, and Belgian Julien Ngoy.

Further changes are possible as the team seeks additional defensive and midfield reinforcements.

In pre-season action, Al-Arabi drew 1-1 with UAE side Al-Arabi in Dubai, with Bader Tariq scoring. The team had previously beaten Dubai City 2-1 and will face Shabab Al-Ahli in its final friendly.

Qadsia is preparing a backup

plan if the deal for Libyan striker Hamdo Al-Houni falls through or if Moroccan Mehdi Barhama remains with the team. The club has reportedly entered negotiations with Defense Jdid striker Khaled Baba.

Qadsia's current roster includes Egyptian Mahmoud Abdel-Moneim "Kahraba," Libyan Mohamed Sula, Algerian Sofiane Bouchare, and Moroccan Mehdi Barhama. While Al-Houni signed a preliminary agreement with Qadsia, his current club Ahli Tripoli seeks to retain him.

Mbappé scores twice as Madrid wins at Oviedo to maintain ‘perfect’ start



Oviedo's David Costas, back, challenges Real Madrid's Rodrygo during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Oviedo and Real Madrid at Carlos Tartiere stadium in Oviedo, Spain. (AP)

Villarreal tops La Liga after Girona rout



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe scores his side's 2nd goal during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Oviedo and Real Madrid at Carlos Tartiere stadium in Oviedo, Spain. (AP)

But it was another star forward who broke the deadlock eight minutes before halftime, with Mbappé beautifully controlling a pass from Arda Güler before turning and firing a low shot into the far corner.

Real had 17 shots in the first half against only one for the newly promoted Oviedo and another goal always looked likely. It came seven minutes from the end when Vinicius, who re-

placed Rodrygo after 63 minutes, stole possession in midfield before feeding Mbappé to steer in another low strike for his second goal.

Vinicius made it 3-0 in stoppage time with an assured finish after a quick counterattack.

Villarreal beat Girona 5-0 to top the league ahead of defending champion Barcelona and Madrid.

Canada midfielder Tajon Buchanan

scored a hat trick, and Rafa Marin and former Arsenal striker Nicolas Pepe got one each, as the home side overran the visitors, who were 4-0 down at the break.

Girona has no points from its first two games and an already daunting goal difference of minus seven.

The result laid down a marker for Marcelino García Toral's Villarreal but he was quick to temper any euphoria.

"It's only two games and the schedule means we played them both at home," he said. "This is a process. I am proud and grateful to the players, it's been a real pleasure. But this is ephemeral. We will have a glass of wine with the family and keep working."

New Osasuna coach Alessio Lisci got his first home win as Ante Budimir once again proved a key asset for the Basque Country side in a 1-0 win over Valencia.

Budimir's superb header in the ninth minute was the difference between the teams, although the home side was given a helping hand by Valencia captain José Gayà, who apologized to supporters after being sent off midway through the first half for bringing down Víctor Muñoz as he ran toward the goal.

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NEWS



Pisa's Adrian Semper makes a catch during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Atalanta and Pisa at Gewiss Stadium in Bergamo, Italy. The match ended 1-1. (AP) – See Page 15

Sports

Italian soccer chief fears losing Euro hosting rights

MILAN, Aug 25, (AP): A soccer chief in Italy says he fears the country could be stripped of the hosting rights to the European Championship in 2032 if an immediate move isn't made to update stadiums.

Italy and Turkey will stage the tournament in seven years, but while Turkey has arenas and infrastructure almost entirely ready after a massive national construction project in the last two decades, Italy does not have 10 stadiums ready or in planning to host a 24-team, 51-game tournament.

The situation was called "a shame" by UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin in May, adding Italy had "by far the worst infrastructure" of the biggest nations in Europe.

His words set off alarm bells according to Ezio Simonelli, the president of the Italian league's governing body.

"I'm really worried about Euro 2032," Simonelli said in an interview with Italian state radio.

"Is the candidacy at risk? I hope it's just my concern, but when the president of UEFA says that our stadiums are in a comatose state and the Euros are in six years' time, we risk not making a very good impression on an international level.

"It's a shame, however, that, beyond Udine, Bergamo and Turin, the rest of our stadiums are in a comatose state. Ceferin has strongly criticized Italian stadiums and I agree with him."

Italy needs to build and renovate an aging inventory of stadiums yet construction projects in the country, such as replacing the iconic San Siro in Milan and Stadio Olimpico in Rome, can be bureaucratic and slow.

"We are behind all the other countries," Simonelli said. "In the last 18 years we have only inaugurated six sta-

diums, of which only three are in Serie A. In the rest of Europe, 226.

"I am very worried. We are pressing the government to streamline the procedure and thus silence the famous 'no committees,' which in Italy never get anything done, and the authorities that are supposed to protect cultural heritage."

Udinese, Juventus and Atalanta are the only Serie A clubs to have new or recently renovated stadiums. They, crucially, own their grounds, while many arenas in Italy are council-owned.

The issue with San Siro highlights the problems clubs face. Inter Milan and AC Milan revealed plans to build a new stadium on the site in 2019 but delays and red tape made both clubs look for, and find, land to build new home venues in the city.

However, in another complete turnaround, the clubs look set to buy the San Siro and land from the Milan city council after all. But even as this process moves forward slowly, there is still debate about the fate of the original San Siro.

San Siro was built in 1925 and has the largest capacity in Italy at 80,000. It will host the opening ceremony of the 2026 Winter Olympics.

"I don't understand what type of protection there should be for a stadium like San Siro," Simonelli said. "It's a hundred years old, it was rebuilt in 1955 and there is debate as to whether it was inaugurated before or after November. These are absurd things.

"It's a stadium that is no longer functional for playing soccer and welcoming people with dignity. You just need to go to the San Siro bathrooms to realize this. A new stadium needs to be rebuilt, full stop, putting an end to all these senseless diatribes."

Kuwait continues impressive run at Asian Shooting Championship

Team wins gold and bronze in Kazakhstan

ASTANA, Aug 25: Kuwait's national shooting team continued its impressive run at the 16th Asian Shooting Championship in Kazakhstan, securing a gold and a bronze medal yesterday to bring the country's total haul to five medals: two golds, one silver, and two bronzes.

The gold medal came in the men's team trap shooting event, with shooters Nasser Al-Muqalled, Talal Al-Tarqi, and Abdulrahman Al-Faihan leading the team to first place. In the women's category, Kuwaiti shooters Hawal, Sara Al-Hawal, and Reem Al-Zamanan earned the bronze medal, finishing third behind India (gold) and China (silver).

Obeid Al-Osaimi, head of the delegation and Secretary-General of the Shooting Club, praised the athletes for their dedication and high spirit, noting that their performance reflects Kuwait's growing leadership in shooting at regional, continental, international, and Olympic levels.

Al-Osaimi dedicated the victories to His Highness the Amir, Sheikh



Obeid Al-Osaimi poses with Kuwaiti shooters.

Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the government, the people

of Kuwait, and the entire Kuwaiti shooting community.

He emphasized that the club will continue working to maintain Ku-

wait's success in shooting sports, benefiting from strong support from the country's leadership and government.



Gold medalist Kuwait on the podium with other winners.

Kuwait grabs gold and silver at Asian Youth Bowling Champ'ship

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 25: Kuwait's youth bowling team continued its stellar performance in Asia, claiming gold and silver medals at the Asian Youth Bowling Championship held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from August 20 to 27.

The national team secured first place in the team event, led by Hasan Qasim, Abdulrazzaq Mohammed, Nasser Al-Kandari, and Adel Ebel. In the doubles event, Hasan Qasim and Abdulrazzaq Mohammed earned second place, while Hasan Qasim also topped the overall individual standings.

Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, President of both the

Kuwait and International Bowling Federations, expressed his delight over the achievement, highlighting the athletes' dedication and the strong support from Kuwait's leadership.

He emphasized that the recent success reflects the continuous efforts to nurture young talent and advance the sport at both continental and international levels.

Al-Sabah congratulated the athletes, coaching and administrative staff, and the players' parents for their support, noting that teamwork and a clear strategic plan have been key to Kuwait's bowling accomplishments.

Shelton and Taylor Fritz get American men off to strong start at US Open

Eala becomes first Filipino woman to win Grand Slam match

NEW YORK, Aug 25, (AP): Alexandra Eala became the first woman representing the Philippines to win a Grand Slam match, doing so at the U.S. Open by defeating No. 14 seed Clara Tauson 6-3, 2-6, 7-6 (13-11) on Sunday after coming back from a 5-1 deficit in the third set and getting some help from a key video review decision that flustered Tauson.

"I was playing really bad, anyway. But it definitely didn't help," Tauson told The Associated Press. "But that's how life is."

Eala is a 20-year-old who is ranked 75th and trains at the Rafael Nadal Academy. This was her fourth win

against a top-20 opponent in 2025, including against Iga Swiatek in March en route to the Miami Open semifinals.

Her milestone victory on Sunday for the Philippines meant a lot to Eala.

"I'm so blessed to be the first to do this. I take so much pride in representing my country," she said. "It makes what I do bigger than myself."

The pivotal moment came in the last set at the Grandstand, with Tauson clinging to a 5-4 lead and serving for the match for the second time. Eala hit a shot right up near the net and it wasn't immediately clear during play whether or not her racket had

crossed over the tape to make contact with the ball, which isn't allowed.

Chair umpire Kader Nouni employed video review, a system that was introduced at the U.S. Open in 2023 on a small number of courts to allow officials to check calls such as double bounces and was expanded to all 17 competition arenas this year.

Nouni ruled that Eala hit the ball fairly and awarded her the point, giving her two break chances at 15-40. There was a lengthy delay before action resumed, though, with Tauson complaining and telling Nouni: "Look at the ball. What is your opinion about this? What is your opin-

ion?"

Some in the stands booed her.

"I don't need to watch it again. (It was an) incorrect call. My coach said the same. Physio said the same. And especially if my coach says that, I know that I'm not in the wrong, because he's often telling me I'm wrong," Tauson said with a hint of a laugh in an interview a little more than a half-hour after the match ended. "So I have nothing else to say, other than it's an incorrect decision. I don't know we can do that with VR. I don't know how that's even possible."

Even after his decision was made clear to all, Tauson took some extra time before hitting her next serve, standing with both hands on her hips at the baseline. Eventually, Tauson double-faulted, making it 5-all and drawing a rowdy reaction from a crowd that was loudly supporting Eala.

"The whole stadium was with her, so I'm sure the umpire felt pressure," Tauson said.

That gave Eala 16 of 21 points in that span, and soon she was one away from victory. Took a bit longer, though: In the end, she needed five match points to close out the win after more than 2 1/2 hours.

When Tauson sent one last forehand long, Eala dropped to her back on the court, chest heaving, and covered her face with both hands.

After Eala arose, and met Tauson at the net for a handshake, the winner skipped around the court while the spectators roared their approval.

There's a larger contingent of Americans in the U.S. Open men's bracket than at any time in the past quarter-century. Might be the best crop in nearly that long, too, and two of the leaders - Taylor Fritz and Ben



Ben Shelton, of the United States, reacts after scoring a point against Ignacio Buse, of Peru, during the first round of the US Open tennis championships in New York. (AP)

Shelton - got the tournament started on Sunday with dominant performances.

Shelton, the No. 6 seed and twice a Grand Slam semifinalist, needed just 2 hours, 7 minutes to get past qualifier Ignacio Buse of Peru 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 in the first contest in Arthur Ashe Stadium on the event's debut of a Sunday start instead of Monday.

Fritz, the No. 4 seed and the runner-up to Jannik Sinner at Flushing Meadows a year ago, needed about 10 fewer minutes to move on with a 7-5, 6-2, 6-3 victory over yet another U.S. man, Emilio Nava, a wild-card entry, at Louis Armstrong Stadium.

In all, there are 23 men from the host country in the field, the most since the same number were in the draw in 1997 at what Fritz called "the most important tournament for us Americans all year." There are

25 U.S. women, which is less of a milestone for a group that regularly produces Grand Slam champions and finalists.

"I do think the competition among all of us," Fritz said about the men, "pushes all of us and gives us motivation to be better."

They're all chasing the same prize: the first Grand Slam singles trophy for an American man since Andy Roddick triumphed in New York in 2003.

That's quite a ways away at this point, though, especially considering that Sinner and No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz have combined to win each of the past seven major titles.

He produced some highlight-worthy moments Sunday while accumulating more than twice as many winners as Buse, including one swerving, around-the-post forehand that looked very much like something his idol - another lefty, by the name of Rafael Nadal - used to do.

Shelton won the point on 26 of 33 trips to the net and saved all five of Buse's five break chances.

Fritz, similarly, went 13-for-14 at the net and swept aside all four break points he faced, buoyed, he said, by "the confidence that I know I've played well here before."

Emma Raducanu won a match in New York for the first time since she claimed the 2021 U.S. Open title, eliminating Ena Shibahara 6-1, 6-2. No. 1 seed and defending champion Aryna Sabalenka beat Rebeka Masarova 7-5, 6-1.

At night, Novak Djokovic beat 19-year-old Californian Learner Tien 6-1, 7-6 (3), 6-2 to improve to 19-0 in the first round of the U.S. Open, before 2024 runner-up Jessica Pegula topped Mayar Sherif 6-0, 6-4 in the last match in Ashe.



Alexandra Eala, of the Philippines, returns a shot to Clara Tauson, of Denmark, during the first round of the US Open tennis championships in New York. (AP)