



CABINET CALLS OUT IRANIAN AGGRESSION, VOWS FIRM ACTION

Another blow to Kuwait lifelines

- Cabinet praises conservation efforts
- Kuwait summons Iran envoy after Kuwaiti tanker hit in Hormuz
- Gulf allies condemn Iranian strikes
- US, Iran dig in for long fight
- Pakistan steps up diplomacy

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (Agencies): Kuwait's air defense systems are currently intercepting hostile missile and drone attacks amid the ongoing Iranian aggression against the country, the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army announced Tuesday.

The General Staff said any explosion sounds heard by the public are the result of air defense systems intercepting hostile projectiles, urging citizens and residents to follow all security and safety instructions issued by the relevant authorities.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy said several power generation and water desalination facilities came under attack Monday for the fourth consecutive day as a result of what it described as Iran's criminal aggression against Kuwait.

The ministry said the attacks sparked fires at several facilities, but emergency teams, in coordination with the Kuwait Fire Force and security authorities, responded immediately and brought the blazes under control.

Damage assessments have been completed and repair plans are being prepared, the ministry said, adding that several generation units were temporarily taken offline as a precautionary measure to protect equipment and ensure the stability of electricity and water networks.

The ministry reaffirmed that updates would continue to be provided through its official channels.

Cabinet condemns attacks, praises conservation efforts

The Cabinet on Tuesday strongly condemned the Iranian missile and drone attacks targeting Kuwait, which struck electricity generation and water desalination plants, oil sector facilities and other vital installations, causing fires and

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His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday. PM Diwan photo



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Help the Yemeni people rise up against their Houthi oppressors

THERE is nothing surprising in the Houthi statements. Since 2011, we have grown accustomed to this kind of screaming borne out of pain, because fools have chosen to defy geography and history. The Houthis mask their cries of pain with a veneer of threats.

For 15 years, the Yemeni people have been suffering under the weight of poverty, disease and hunger as a result of the Houthi militia control. This militia takes its orders from the rogue and racist Iranian regime, which is obsessed with ruling and dominating the region.

Therefore, the threat of the Houthi group to close the Bab al-Mandab Strait is nothing new. The Houthis repeatedly tried to do so, but the regional and international mechanisms for disciplinary action are ready.

Today, the nature of the danger is different, as the region is in a state of war that is likely to escalate, especially since Iran continues to target the Gulf countries.

At the same time, Iran is suffering from a suffocating siege and it is threatening the region with chaos, as the losing side usually resorts to burning all its bridges to force its army to commit suicide with it. Thus, the danger today is graver than before.

This is the true description of what is happening

in Yemen today. For 15 years, the Yemeni people have been suffering under the tyranny of a small and armed terrorist group that controls the fate of millions, and engages in systematic violence both domestically and abroad.

We must acknowledge that the Arab world's failure since 2011 to dismantle the arms of the Tehran regime in Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen has enabled such groups to commit their terrorist crimes against everyone.

While it is true that the Arab Coalition to Support Legitimacy weakened the Houthi group and forced it to live in isolation in the mountains of Saada, it still possesses sufficient power to harass its neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia, by supporting Iran and destabilizing the Red Sea to expand the scope of the war.

The inability to eliminate the power of the Houth group stems from the lack of Arab and international support for the Yemeni people to rid themselves of it.

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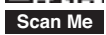
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Arab allies reject maritime blackmail

Kuwait backs Saudi against Houthi threats

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Kuwait strongly condemned and denounced, Tuesday, statements issued by the military spokesperson of the Houthi militia containing allegations against Saudi Arabia and threats targeting maritime security and freedom of navigation.

In a statement issued Tuesday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on the international community to ensure the implementation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolution 2216 on Yemen and Resolution 2722 on rights and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

The ministry reaffirmed that

freedom of navigation in international waterways is a right guaranteed under international law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

It also reiterated Kuwait's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and its support for all measures taken by the Kingdom to safeguard its security and sovereignty, stressing that Saudi Arabia's security is an integral part of the security of Kuwait and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

Saudi Arabia on Monday strongly condemned the allegations made by the so-called military spokesperson of the Houthi terrorist mi-

lity, who accused the Kingdom of besieging the Yemeni people and claimed the imposition of a maritime blockade on the Kingdom.

In a press statement, the Saudi Foreign Ministry affirmed that it has worked over the past years with the legitimate government of Yemen to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people through the continuation of development projects, support for the Yemeni governments budget, and the provision of petroleum derivatives to operate power plants, as reported by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

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Motorists navigate a dust-covered road on Tuesday as suspended particles blanket parts of Kuwait. Photo by Samer Shiger

Dust subsides as near-50°C looms

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Dust conditions across Kuwait were expected to gradually improve during the coming hours as northwesterly winds weaken, allowing suspended dust to settle and horizontal visibility to recover from the early hours of the night, Acting Director of the Meteorological Department Dhirar Al-Ali said on Tuesday.

Al-Ali told KUNA that Kuwait has been affected since Tuesday morning by an extension of a surface low-pressure system accompanied by an extremely hot air mass and active northwesterly winds, which were strong at times, particularly over western areas.

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Amiri Diwan on Tuesday mourned the passing of the late **Sheikha Nuzha Salem Sabah Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah**, widow of the late **Sheikh Fadhel Duaij Al-Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah**, at the age of 83.

Funeral will be held after the Isha prayer on Tuesday, July 21, 2026. (KUNA)

GAZA: Three Palestinians were killed and several others injured on Tuesday after an Israeli occupation airstrike targeted a residential apartment in **Al-Samar** area of Gaza, raising the death toll to 12 since dawn.

Health authorities said in a press statement that the bodies of three martyrs and several wounded individuals arrived at Al-Shifa Hospital after the apartment was targeted, with rescue teams continuing evacuation and search operations at the scene. (KUNA)

PARIS: France on Tuesday summoned Iran's charge d'affaires following the intimidation tactics against two French diplomats in **Tehran**.

A statement by the French foreign ministry said, "At the request of the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, **Jean-Noel Barrot**, the charge d'affaires of the Islamic Republic of Iran was summoned today by the Secretary General of the Quai d'Orsay, following the extremely serious intimidation action which targeted two agents of the French embassy in Iran on July 19." (KUNA)

KRCS elevates humanitarian initiatives, wins ICRC acclaim

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Head of the Regional Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Anne Momontafon praised the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) as a key partner in numerous joint humanitarian initiatives and programs at the regional and international levels.

Speaking to KUNA following her visit to the KRCS headquarters, Momontafon said cooperation between

the ICRC and the society represents a successful model of humanitarian partnership based on coordination and the exchange of expertise.

She affirmed the ICRC's commitment to further expanding cooperation and developing humanitarian programs and projects to address growing humanitarian challenges and enhance assistance to the most vulnerable groups.

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KRCS Chairman Khaled Al-Mughamis receives Head of the Regional Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Anne Momontafon. Kuwait Red Crescent photo

3,000 traffic violations in 24 hours

3 Asians busted over rogue taxi runs

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The General Traffic Department at the Interior Ministry continued its field campaigns throughout the country, leading to the issuance of about 3,000 traffic violation citations and impoundment of 31 vehicles in the

last 24 hours.

A security source disclosed that the violations included using mobile phone while driving, not wearing seat-belt, non-compliance with trucks and towing regulations, speeding, causing excessive noise, tinted vehicle windows and other traffic violations.

In a related development, officers from the General Traffic Department

arrested three Asians found to be transporting passengers in their private vehicles in exchange for money.

According to a security source, these Asians are now detained at a police station and their vehicles were seized to complete legal proceedings.

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Yemen's oil export 'restart' counters Houthi blackmail

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Yemeni Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Ali bin Safaa said the decision of Presidential Leadership Council Chairman Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi to resume oil exports is a strategic step towards restoring sovereignty and revitalizing the Yemeni economy.

In a statement to the newspaper, Bin Safaa affirmed that the decision is a significant shift in confronting what he described as 'Houthi blackmail', which disrupted one of the most important sources of state revenue.

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Dr. Ali bin Safaa, Yemen's Ambassador to Kuwait



8 National Investments Company Leads Successful Capital Increase for Rawahel Holding Company K.S.C.

8 Zain contributes \$10 million to the Kuwait Emergency Response Fund



Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:31 Asr 15:29
Sunrise .. 05:02 Maghrib .. 18:46
Zohr 11:54 Isha 20:15



HH the Amir



King Philippe

Kuwait Amir congratulates Belgian King on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to King Philippe of Belgium, on occasion of the country's national day.

His Highness the Amir wished the King good health and the people of Belgium all progress and prosperity.

Crown Prince congratulates

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

Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to King Philippe of Belgium, on occasion of the country's national day, and wished the King good health.

Kuwait PM congratulates

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to King Philippe of Belgium, on occasion of the country's national day.

Industrial and craft zones under PAI counter audit

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Technical Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Munira Al-Amir, held its 38th meeting for the fourth session, during which it approved three items on its agenda.

The committee approved the request of the Ministry of Interior to reallocate the site belonging to the Committee for Monitoring the Implementation of Cabinet Decisions Related to Security Affairs in Shuaiba Industrial Area, measuring 7,000 square meters. It also approved a request submitted by the Ministry of Defense.

Meanwhile, Municipal Council member Abdullah Al-Enezi forwarded questions to the executive branch regarding the quality of municipal services and the coordination mechanism in the industrial and craft zones under the supervision of the Public Authority for Industry

(PAI). In the preamble to his questions, Al-Enezi cited the provisions of Kuwait Municipality Law No. 33/2016, underscoring the importance of strengthening integration and coordination among the relevant official institutions to provide the best services in the industrial and craft zones.

He inquired about the existing coordination mechanism between PAI and the Municipality regarding the services in all industrial and craft zones, particularly public cleaning, waste removal, and maintaining a civilized appearance.

He asked if there are joint committees or a formal coordination mechanism between PAI and the Municipality to define the responsibilities and address issues related to municipal services. If yes, what are the achievements of such committees?

He also asked if the Municipality, in coordination with PAI, conducted a thorough evaluation of the municipal services and infrastructure.



Al-Amir



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in talks with the Saudi Eastern Province Governor Prince Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz.

Kuwait, Saudi explore ways to further enhance relations

DAMMAM, July 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met on Tuesday with Eastern Province Governor Prince Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz to discuss bilateral ties and ways to further expand cooperation across various fields.

During the meeting at the governor's office, the two sides reviewed areas of cooperation and coordination and exchanged views on issues

of mutual interest.

Speaking to KUNA, Ambassador Sheikh Sabah said Kuwaiti-Saudi relations stand as a distinguished model of cooperation, highlighting the continued support they receive from the leaderships of both countries.

He added that the meeting reflected the shared commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations and broadening cooperation in ways that serve the interests of the two countries and their peoples.



KUNA photo

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Abdullah Al-Wuhaib wishes the injured officer a speedy recovery.

Al-Wuhaib visits officer injured on duty, wishes quick recovery

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Abdullah Al-Wuhaib visited the security officer, who was injured while on duty on Tuesday, to personally look into his condition and follow up his treatment, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This is part of the commitment of the ministry to closely monitor the well-being of its personnel, and guarantee that they are in good health and safe.

During the visit, Al-Wuhaib conveyed the greetings of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, along with his wish for the speedy recovery of the injured officer.

The medical team overseeing the treatment of the officer briefed Al-Wuhaib on his condition and the treatment plan being implemented.

Meanwhile, the ministry reaffirmed its deep concern for the welfare of its personnel and its commitment to provide them with all forms of support and care in line with the directives of the political leadership.

It also commended the efforts of the medical teams supervising the officer's treatment and praised the high standard of healthcare being provided to him.

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Aisha Al-Baijan, Director of the Civil Society Organizations Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs, received a delegation from the Retired Officers Association, headed by retired Major General Faisal Al-Jazzaf, to discuss cooperation mechanisms for the "National Project for Community Protection" submitted by the association to the ministry, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The association's delegation included retired Major General Engineer Tariq Al-Dousari, retired Major General Bader Al-Ghadhour, and retired Major General Dr.

Hussein Bin Tafla Al-Ajmi . The meeting was also attended by Badour Bounashi and Alia Al-Aoun from the Ministry of Social Affairs.



Aisha Al-Baijan

During the meeting, the objectives of the project were discussed. The project requires the ministry's sponsorship and supervision for its implementation in partnership with the association, with the aim of enhancing cooperation among state institutions in strengthening community security and addressing negative phenomena.

The association's delegation explained that the project represents a comprehensive national vision that goes beyond traditional awareness

campaigns. It seeks to establish a sustainable framework that promotes values, supports community prevention efforts, and protects families, children, and youth through scientific programs, training initiatives, and institutional partnerships.

Al-Baijan praised the project, emphasizing that protecting society is a shared responsibility focused on safeguarding the future.

She highlighted the importance of cooperation and activating coordination mechanisms to support national projects that strengthen social cohesion and promote prevention and social responsibility.

Both sides affirmed that the project is based on the belief that building a safe society begins with prevention, awareness, human development, and the integration of efforts between government institutions and civil society organizations.

Playground used for commercial activity

Municipality razes illegal sports pitch on gov't land

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Kuwait Municipality has demolished an illegally constructed sports pitch on state property in Hawally Governorate as part of its ongoing campaign to remove encroachments.

The encroachment removal team at the Hawalli Municipality carried out the demolition after completing all legal procedures and issuing several warnings to the violator.

Ibrahim Al-Sab'an, Head of the State Property Encroachment Removal Department at Hawally Municipality, said the play-

ground had been built on a large area of state property and was being used for commercial purposes without providing any benefit to residents of the area.

Speaking to Al-Akhbar TV, Al-Sab'an explained that the municipality had previously requested the responsible party to provide proof of the site's legality and the necessary permits. However, the warnings were not addressed, leading to the demolition in accordance with applicable regulations.

The violator will be responsible for all demolition costs, as well as any procedures and penalties resulting from the violation, in accordance with the regulations and bylaws

governing the protection of state property.

Furthermore, the inspection campaigns in Hawally Governorate revealed several other encroachments, including the unauthorized closure of electrical transformers, which obstructs technical teams from carrying out operational and routine maintenance work. Swimming pools and other structures built on state property without permits were also removed.

Al-Sab'an indicated that voluntarily removing violations before the deadline allows violators to avoid legal action, fines, and the costs associated with removal procedures.

Other Voices

The Anglo-French love-hate relationship

By Ahmad alsarraf

The Anglo-French rivalry can be considered the most famous in history. It was a fierce cultural, colonial, and military conflict. The struggle continued until the Suez Canal connected them, following the collapse of the Concorde dream and Britain's exit from the European Union, of which France, along with Germany, is a key pillar.

Among the most notable English victories over France were the Battle of Crécy in 1346, the Battle of Poitiers in 1356, where the French King Jean II was captured, and the legendary Battle of Agincourt in 1415, in addition to Napoleon's famous defeat at Waterloo in 1815. The British fleet also decisively defeated the French fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

On the other hand, the most significant French victories included the Battle of Hastings in 1066, won by William the Conqueror, the Battle of Orléans in 1429, where Joan of Arc broke the siege and turned the tide of the Hundred Years' War, and the Battle of Castillon in 1453, which finally expelled the English from France.

Among the battles were the Siege of York- the American victory over the British, aided by France, in 1781, the naval Battle of Minden in 1759, and the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), which saw the British emerge victorious.

Despite this animosity, the languages of the two nations are replete with words borrowed from each other. It is said that approximately 30 percent of English vocabulary originates from French.

Some of the most curious examples of English loanwords include "cow," but its meat is called "beef," derived from the French "boeuf." Similarly, sheep meat is called "mutton," borrowed from the French "mouton." And "pig" is the English word



alsarraf

for pig, but its meat is called "pork," from the French "porc." Also, "deer" is the English word for gazelle, but its meat is called "venison," derived from the French "venis."

The Normans left the name for chicken unchanged because, quite simply, they did not eat it. Although English cuisine was not heavily influenced by the French, the English adopted many table manners from the French.

William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy who became King of England, is considered one of the most influential figures in the culture and history of both nations.

William was the illegitimate son of the Duke of Normandy. His mother was the daughter of a tanner, earning him the nickname "William the Bastard" before history gave him a different meaning.

He secured his position at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, claiming that the late English king, Edward, had promised him the throne. He marched his forces to Britain, defeated his Anglo-Saxon rival, Harold, and was crowned King of England that same year. He left an indelible legacy, having commissioned a comprehensive survey of all lands and properties in England in 1086 (i.e., determining who owned what and its value).

The inclusion of this data in the Domesday Book was an extraordinary achievement, perhaps the first systematic census in English history.

Even now, 960 years after that census, we in Kuwait still do not know the precise size of state and private property.

Among William the Conqueror's accomplishments was his success in transforming England from an Anglo-Saxon kingdom into a French-Norman kingdom. He unintentionally laid the foundation for the English language (and culture), which would eventually conquer the world.

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Mol arrests eight individuals in many drug peddling cases

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's security forces have arrested eight individuals in separate cases found to be in possession of narcotics for trafficking purposes, the Interior Ministry (Mol) said on Tuesday.

Security operations as part of a national crackdown on illicit pharmaceuticals led to the confiscation of an array of drugs, including Captagon pills, Lyrica capsules and methamphetamine (shabu), according to a ministry statement.

The latest arrests come a day after Kuwaiti security forces foiled an attempt to smuggle the narcotic substance known as "A4" into the country through an air freight shipment, added the statement.

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Drug trafficker acquitted: The

Criminal Court, chaired by Judge Hamad Al-Wazzan, with Judges Abdulaziz Adel Al-Namash and Ahmad Mohammad Nour Al-Huda as members, acquitted a citizen of trafficking and using narcotics and psychotropic substances, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The court took this decision due to the invalidity of the Public Prosecution's arrest and search warrant, which was based on inconclusive investigations.

The officer in charge of the case stated that he received information from a confidential source indicating that the defendant possessed narcotics and intoxicants with the intent to traffic and use these substances. The officer then obtained a warrant from the prosecution to arrest the defendant and search his residence.

Iran policies may trigger unrest, regime downfall

"IT is said that a worker in a fish freezing and preservation factory entered the fish storage freezer to do his work, but the door was accidentally locked," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The worker tried to open the door but couldn't, and he began shouting for help, but the shift had ended, and no one was left in the factory.

"After five hours, the man was on the verge of death due to the extreme cold. At that moment, the factory guard attempted to open the freezer door and rescue the worker.

"The factory manager asked the guard how he knew that the worker was still inside the factory and hadn't left with the other workers. The guard said that he had worked at this factory for thirty years, and that no one among the workers and employees greeted him daily or asked about his well-being except for that one worker. The guard said that at the end of that day, he missed the worker because he was accustomed to greeting him but didn't see him leave. The guard was certain that the worker was still in the factory, and so he searched everywhere until he finally found him.

"A kind word was the reason the worker's life was saved. A person may speak a kind word without realizing its profound impact and thus, a person should never underestimate the value of any good deed, no matter how small.

"There is another story in which someone mocked a sanitation worker for whom then God opened doors of opportunity and as a result, he became wealthy. The story began when someone photographed a Bangladeshi sanitation worker standing silently and thoughtfully in front of a gold shop window in Riyadh.

"The worker was gazing at the gold pieces behind the glass with a simple expression. The photographer however, mocked him, posting his picture with a sarcastic comment reading, "This worker is only allowed to look at garbage."

"I wonder if some people see poverty as a sin. If honest work is considered to be shameful only because it is humble?

"If God wants to elevate someone, he makes hearts and circumstances work in their favor. Within hours, the mockery sparked a wave of outrage among followers, who defended the worker's dignity. A widespread solidarity campaign, led by the "Humanities" account online, was launched to find the worker and honor him, not out of pity, but in recognition of his humanity, which had been insulted.

"Hence, the insult became a moral test in which society triumphed, and the mockery was defeated. As soon as the worker was found, donations poured in from all directions. He received gifts of gold jewelry sets, cash, latest phones, food, and even plane tickets to visit his family. Amazingly, the gold set he had been admiring behind the glass was now his own, as if fate were sending a message - "Generosity comes only from God."

"It later turned out that this worker, whose salary did not exceed 700 Saudi Riyals, was known for his extreme honesty and compassion. He would even give away a small portion of his own food to feed stray cats in the street.

"Hurting people or causing damage to their feelings are among the most painful wounds that never heal. Always remember that God does not forget a kind heart, nor does he let the reward of those who do good go to waste.

"Over the past years, we advised Iran to learn from the Danish-Swedish experience in order to improve its internal situation by inviting Gulf countries, Europe, and America to invest. However, experience has proven that Iran is a backward country that lacks a skilled Minister of Economy to advise its political leadership.

"Iran's internal situation has deteriorated, and it has begun pursuing hostile policies against Gulf countries. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has formed clandestine cells in Iraq, composed of Iraqi fighters operating in small groups of no more than ten members each.

"These cells have targeted Gulf states, launching drone attacks from southern Iraq. The major factions that once formed the backbone of Iranian influence have now become increasingly vulnerable to surveillance and targeting. The Iranian regime has neglected the needs of its citizens. The Iranian people may well rise up to overthrow the regime."

Also:

"The homeland is a trust placed upon the shoulders of its sons, and protecting it is an unparalleled honor," Kuwaiti writer and lawyer **Abdullah Fallah Al-Hajri** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"In the State of Kuwait, the values of courage and heroism are embodied

by the men of the armed forces, who tirelessly safeguard the nation's security and serve as an impenetrable barrier against every threat, driven by the belief that the safety of the homeland is the highest priority.

"The Kuwaiti Air Force stands as a formidable guardian of the country's airspace, with highly skilled personnel who possess advanced training and the expertise required to respond to various aerial threats.

"Kuwait's falcons soar through the skies with unwavering determination, monitoring the nation's airspace around the clock and ready to respond to any intrusion or threat. The skill of Kuwait's air defense extends beyond technical readiness, encompassing rapid response, precise coordination, and seamless teamwork. Advanced surveillance and monitoring systems, along with modern fighter jets, form the first line of defense in safeguarding Kuwait's sovereignty and demonstrate the country's ability to protect its airspace with the highest level of competence.

"At sea, the Kuwaiti Navy stands vigilant, like whales moving with confidence and strength as they patrol the nation's territorial waters. It protects the coastline, secures maritime routes, and confronts any threat that may compromise the country's security. The personnel of the Kuwaiti Navy possess extensive experience in maritime surveillance, rescue operations, and security missions, carrying out their duties with dedication and commitment to ensure the continued safety and security of Kuwaiti waters.

"Their constant presence at sea sends a clear message that Kuwait's sovereignty is a red line that cannot be crossed. The courage of Kuwait's brave men is reflected in the coordinated efforts of the Air Force, Navy, and all branches of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces. United by a shared national spirit, they work toward a common goal - protecting the nation and preserving its dignity. These efforts reflect a deep sense of belonging, loyalty to the wise leadership, and dedication to the stability and prosperity of the country.

"With God's help, Kuwait will remain safe and secure as long as it has loyal men who guard its skies like falcons and protect its seas with strength and vigilance."

"Marriage is a sacred bond and a gateway to sustenance," a Kuwaiti lawyer and Doctor of Law **Dr. Nayef Al-Adwani** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "The most blessed women are those with the lowest dowries." This prophetic tradition encourages moderation and discourages extravagance in dowries.

"Today, however, dowries and wedding expenses have become excessive, often beyond the means of the average



Dr. Al-Adwani

groom, let alone those with limited income. This is largely driven by a desire for social status and outward displays of wealth. Wedding celebrations have become lavish spectacles like Hollywood Oscars, with costly

attire and elaborate entertainment, as though the guests were attending a beauty pageant.

"Large sums of money are spent in beauty salons preparing the bride and her companions. Significant amounts are also spent on pre-wedding celebrations, such as the "Al-Dazza." Some couples book reception halls in five-star hotels and hire renowned designers to create the bridal stage (kusha), while also purchasing flowers, perfumes, and gifts for the guests.

"The groom may reserve a luxury hotel suite for the wedding night, and an expensive luxury car is often rented for a single evening. The wedding procession may include a convoy of high-end vehicles to escort the newlyweds for several kilometers.

"Added to these expenses are the men's reception, the cost of booking a hotel ballroom, catering, beverages, flowers, and sweets. On top of this come the costs of furnishing and equipping the marital home, the honeymoon, and travel.

"The total cost of a wedding can be comparable to the price of a business, a house, or an apartment. As a result, many young men begin married life by taking out loans, burdening themselves with debts that consume a portion of their salaries for years to come.

"Marriage should be a successful life project, so why turn it into a costly burden? Many young people are now reluctant to marry because of the financial demands involved, despite government marriage loans and other forms of assistance.

"Addressing this problem requires a change in social attitudes, a return to simplicity and moderation, and a willingness to ignore social pressure and the desire to impress others."

— **Compiled by Simi K.Kutty**

Indian duo's 'life' upheld

Kuwaiti, Egyptian jailed for life in drug peddling

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Criminal Court sentenced a Kuwaiti and an Egyptian to life in prison for smuggling drugs and intoxicants from Egypt.

The court sentenced another Egyptian to 10 years in prison and fined him KD50,000 for trafficking and using hashish and psychotropic substances.

The court sentenced another Kuwaiti citizen to 10 years in prison and fined him KD50,000 for trafficking and using hashish.

The court sentenced an illegal resident (Bedoun) to 15 years in prison and fined him KD10,000 for trafficking hashish and psychotropic substances in Al-Waha.

The court sentenced two Afghans to 10 years in prison and fined them KD50,000 each after they were found guilty of trafficking Lyrica tablets in Salmiya.

Meanwhile, the Court of Appeals upheld the life sentence imposed on two Indians who were proven to be part of an international drug trafficking gang. The two defendants were arrested in Kaifan and Shuwaikh in possession of 14 kilograms of heroin and eight kilograms of hashish.

The same court upheld the prison sentence of 14 and 12 years respectively for two Bedouns convicted of trafficking psychotropic substances, drug use, and possession of unlicensed firearm and ammunition.

MoSA probes suspected money-wash at a 'co-op'

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Ministry of Social Affairs, represented by the Financial and Administrative Affairs and Cooperative Affairs Sector, is investigating a suspected money laundering case involving a single cash purchase worth thousands of dinars at a cooperative society, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

According to informed sources, the ministry has taken the necessary legal measures to determine the details of the incident, particularly since the cash payment exceeded KD 5,000.

They described the transaction as unusual and potentially unprecedented in cooperative societies.

The sources indicated that the incident prompted the ministry to set a maximum limit of KD 200 for cash transactions, as stated in a circular issued to the boards of directors of cooperative societies.

They emphasized that any violations detected will be immediately referred to the relevant authorities for legal action, with those responsible held accountable in accordance with the laws and regulations governing cooperative activities.

The sources added that the circular aims to enhance financial oversight within cooperative societies and prevent practices that could be exploited for suspicious financial transactions.

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Expired goods seized: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced that the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection Department, represented by the Capital Inspection Division, seized a warehouse containing large quantities of expired products, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The ministry explained that the seized items included 1,500 packages of cosmetics and cleaning products, as well as 1,320 kilograms of flavored tobacco. The goods were stored by the violator with the intention of selling and distributing them in the market, in violation of Article 2 of Law No. 20/2019 on the issuance of the Unified System for Combating Commercial Fraud in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

Warehouse on fire

Verify fire safety licenses before renting shops: KFF

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) urged individuals seeking to rent shops in malls and commercial establishments to verify that the property has a valid fire safety license before signing lease agreements, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

KFF explained that this measure helps tenants obtain the necessary fire safety approvals to operate their businesses and ensures compliance with fire prevention and safety requirements. A valid fire safety license confirms the establishment's compliance with approved safety standards.

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Warehouse on fire: Firefighters brought under control a fire that broke out at a construction materials warehouse in the south of Khaitan on Tuesday morning, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Four teams from the Al-Sumoud, Al-Istiqlal, Mishrif, and Al-Isnad fire stations responded to the incident and successfully extinguished the blaze.

No casualties were reported, and authorities took the necessary measures to deal with the incident.

Court upholds acquittals in supporting Iran strikes

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The State Security Court of Appeals upheld the rulings in several cases of sympathizing with Iranian attacks on Kuwait and inciting sectarian strife, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The court upheld the acquittal of a male citizen, a female student and a male student on charges of inciting sectarian strife and sympathizing with Iran, after it was proven that they were outside Kuwait at the time of the Iranian attacks and were unaware of the events taking place in the country.

The court upheld the decision to refrain from ruling on the case of several citizens accused of sympathizing with Iran and inciting sectarian strife on social media platforms, including X, Instagram and WhatsApp. It then obligated the defendants to maintain good conduct for two years and to post bail ranging from KWD 1,000 to KWD 3,000.

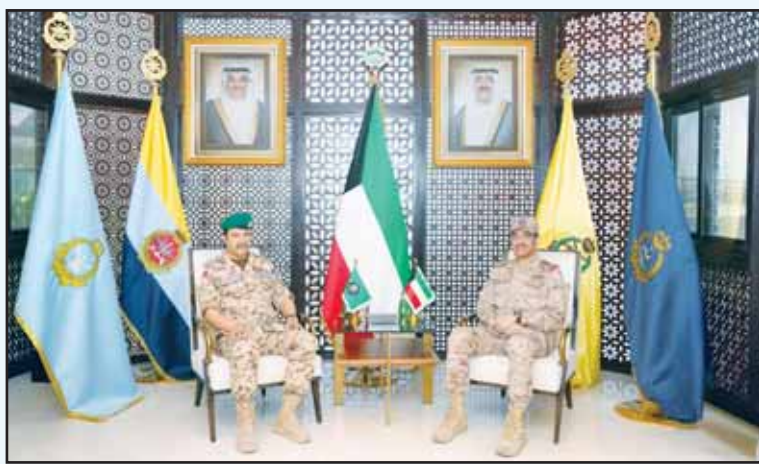
In another case, the court upheld the acquittal of a citizen on charges of spreading false news and insulting the Gulf states.

The court upheld the decision to not rule on the case of a citizen accused of inciting sectarian strife and sympathizing with Iran.

The court upheld the five-year prison sentence imposed on Salman Al-Khalidi for offending and defaming HH the Amir during his trial.

The court ordered a citizen to undergo psychiatric evaluation in a case, in which he was previously sentenced to three years in prison for inciting sectarian strife and expressing sympathy for Iran.

The court acquitted the same citizen of spreading false news, stirring panic during wartime, and offending the Gulf states.



KUNA photo

Chief of General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lieu. Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraiaan Tuesday received the Assistant Secretary for Military Affairs at the General Secretariat of the GCC Major Gen. Salman Al-Fadhala.

Kuwait: GCC must push up military cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Chief of General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lieu. Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraiaan discussed on Tuesday ways to boost military cooperation with the Assistant Secretary for Military Affairs at the General Secretariat of the GCC Major Gen. Salman Al-Fadhala.

In a statement by the General Staff, Gen. Al-Shuraiaan received Major Gen. Al-Fadhala and his accompanying delegation, where they discussed topics and issues of mutual interest, as well as ways to enhance the military cooperation between the GCC countries.

Mol foils bid to peddle A4

10kg pot in Thai parcel

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's Interior Ministry announced Monday that the General Department for Drug Control had foiled an attempt to smuggle the narcotic substance known as "A4" into the country through an air cargo postal shipment.

In a statement, the ministry said the operation resulted in the arrest of two Asian nationals and the seizure of narcotics intended for trafficking, describing the case as part of the Criminal Security Sector's ongoing efforts to combat drug smuggling and distribution.

The ministry said coordination with the General Administration of Customs led to the inspection of the parcel, where officers discovered 210 sheets of the A4 drug disguised as instructional booklets and concealed inside 10 electric light bulbs.

Following further investigations, authorities arrested the recipient of the parcel, who admitted he intended to deliver it to the second suspect.

Officers also seized 10 grams of methamphetamine (shabu) and a digital scale in their possession.

The suspects and seized items were referred to the competent authorities for legal action.

The Ministry reaffirmed its commitment to carrying out pre-emptive operations against drug traffickers and dealers and preventing attempts to smuggle narcotics into the country, stressing that it will continue to confront anyone seeking to undermine the security of society.

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10kg pot from Thailand: The General Administration of Customs (GAC), represented by the Air Cargo Customs Department, thwarted an attempt to smuggle approximately 10 kilograms of marijuana concealed in a shipment arriving from Thailand, which was declared as containing a table and lighting fixtures, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Customs inspectors grew suspicious of the shipment, and a search revealed the drugs hidden beneath boxes containing lighting fixtures.

The Drug Control General Department was immediately notified, and the suspect, an Indian national, was arrested while receiving the shipment. Legal procedures were initiated against him.

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Governors: Gov’t bodies must unify efforts, improve services for Kuwaitis, expats

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: In a press release issued by the Farwaniya Governorate, His Excellency Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, Governor of Farwaniya, received Their Excellencies the Governors this morning at the governorate’s headquarters, in the presence of His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health.

The meeting comes within the framework of strengthening coordination and integration among Kuwait’s governorates and unifying government efforts to enhance the quality and efficiency of services provided to citizens and residents.

Attendees included His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Governor of the Capital Governorate; His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Bader Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Acting Governor of Hawalli; and His Excellency Mr. Hamad Jassim Al-Habashi, Governor of Jahra.

According to the press release, Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser underscored the importance of sustained coordination meetings as a platform for exchanging expertise and reinforcing institutional integration, noting their direct impact on improving service delivery and elevating government performance.

Discussions focused on several key areas of common interest, foremost among them the development of healthcare services and strengthening cooperation between governorates and relevant government entities. Participants also reviewed a number of initiatives and projects aimed at enhancing quality of life and meeting the needs of citizens and residents in line with the highest standards of efficiency and sustainability.

The meeting further emphasized the need to unify efforts across government bodies and adopt best administrative and developmental practices to support national plans and accelerate progress across service sectors.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the governors and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health expressed their appreciation to the Governor of Farwaniya for the warm reception, reaffirming the importance of continued coordination and joint action among governorates, ministries, and government institutions to serve the public interest and advance the aspirations of Kuwait’s leadership in developing government performance and improving services nationwide.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Governors of all six Kuwaiti governorates meet for the welfare of Kuwaitis and residents.

Egypt Kuwaitis’ second home, tourism flourishes – minister

Call to upgrade cultural ties

CAIRO, July 21, (KUNA): Egyptian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Sherif Fathy has said that Egyptian-Kuwaiti relations in the tourism and cultural sectors are distinguished by their depth and special nature.

Fathy told KUNA that Kuwaiti tourists comes to Egypt considering it their second home.

During the reopening of Sultan Qaitbay Mosque in Cairo Governorate following the completion of its restoration, Minister Fathy stated that the Kuwaiti tourist “does not need anyone to introduce him to Egypt,” given the close historical and



Sherif Fathy

humanitarian ties that connect the two countries.

Egyptian people greatly appreciate the Kuwaiti people and hold them in high regard, emphasizing that history has demonstrated the depth of relations between the two countries, he added.

Fathy explained that Egyptian-Kuwaiti cooperation in the tourism sector is natural and spontaneous, noting that Kuwaitis visit Egypt as though it were their own country because of the strong ties and long-standing friendships that bind them to it.

Regarding future cultural cooperation between Egypt and Kuwait, Minister Fathy affirmed Egypt’s openness to various forms of cultural exchange with Kuwait and other Arab countries.

The reopening of the Sultan Qaitbay Mosque in Cairo’s Al-Gamaliya district comes after the completion of a restoration and development project as part of Egypt’s efforts to preserve its cultural and architectural heritage, safeguard historical monuments, and enhance tourism and cultural destinations.

‘Remove encroachments’

KD 500 fine for dumping construction waste: EPA

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Environment Public Authority (EPA) stressed that the responsibility for transporting demolition and construction waste to designated sites is up to the individual.

It emphasized that random disposal of waste is a punishable act under the Environmental Protection Law by a fine of up to KD 500 in addition to obligating the violator to remove the effects of the violation on his own expense.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Municipality continued its campaigns to remove encroachments on state property, demolishing an illegally constructed stadium after exhausting all legal procedures.

It affirmed the continuation of these campaigns across all governorates, holding violators responsible for the removal costs and enforcing the law to protect state property.

MEWRE announces training course to hone locals’ skills

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy issued a circular regarding the training program for the 2026/2027 training season, organized by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) as part of its efforts to support and develop the national workforce.

The circular, issued by acting Assistant Undersecretary for Planning, Training and Information Systems Ali Shaaban, explained that the training program is in line with the efforts of CSC to implement its annual plan for developing national talent.

The training programs and workshops guide includes programs for senior staff within the ministry, covering various topics, such as leadership strategies in project management, key performance indicators (KPIs), media readiness for leaders and direct meetings, risk management, future of government work, smart commands for artificial intelligence applications, and developing leadership skills for legal oversight.

The ministry called on all of its departments to adhere to the nomination requirements and procedures for participating in the programs. These requirements include completing the nomination form with all the required information and submitting an official letter from the Administrative Development and Training Department through the Workflow system to finalize the registration process.

Meanwhile, the ministry added a tender to its contracts for the current year. This tender is for the installation and supply of four high-voltage main substations for the development of Wafra agricultural farms, along with their feeders and accessories. The project aims to meet the growing demand for energy and contribute to agricultural development.

The substitution tender will be issued through the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) in accordance with the relevant regulations.

MoH eyes boost in healthcare facility procedures for patients

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, Sheikh Dr. Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah, issued a circular regulating procedures in healthcare facilities to clarify roles and responsibilities and improve the efficiency of patient services, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Health explained that the circular assigns healthcare facility administrations and public relations departments the responsibility of receiving and handling inquiries from patients and their families promptly and efficiently, in accordance with approved procedures.

The circular also mandates the implementation of necessary organizational measures to ensure smooth workflow, create a more efficient working environment, and address any challenges that may arise.

Healthcare staff should limit their interactions with patients to medical, clinical, and technical matters within the scope of their professional duties.

The circular aims to reinforce the separation of responsibilities between medical and administrative departments, thereby preserving patients’ dignity, protecting the professional standing of healthcare practitioners, and enhancing the overall quality of healthcare services.

News in Brief

MOC_APP for digital services out

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Ministry of Communications has launched its official “MOC_APP” as part of its ongoing digital transformation efforts and expansion of e-services, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The app is now available for download on the App Store and Google Play, allowing citizens and residents to securely access a wide range of services anytime and anywhere.

The most important services include electronic payments, account statement inquiries, clearance certificate requests, international call details, new phone line applications, local and international service transfers, temporary suspension and reconnection of services, and the activation or deactivation of additional features such as Caller ID, call forwarding, call waiting, and three-way calling.

The ministry urged users to download the app and benefit from its digital services, which aim to streamline transactions, improve service quality, and enhance the overall user experience in line with Kuwait’s digital transformation goals.



201 permits issued: Kuwait Municipality issued 201 construction and renovation permits through the Engineering Licensing Department of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Municipality during June, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Eng. Nawaf Al-Otaibi, Director of the Engineering Licensing Department at the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Municipality, said the permits covered new construction, demolition, building additions, modifications, and landscaping works for properties in private residential, investment, and commercial areas.

He affirmed that the department continues to process licensing applications in accordance with approved procedures and regulations.

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KFAED photos

KFAED Acting Director General Rasheed Al-Bader and UNDP Resident Representative Emma Morley during the signing of a \$3 million grant agreement to boost renewable energy solutions in Lebanon.

KFAED, UNDP sign \$3 mln Lebanon solar deal

Kuwait grant targets Lebanon's electricity challenges

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed a USD 3 million grant agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on Tuesday to help finance a solar energy project supporting public services in Lebanon.

The agreement was signed by Acting Director General of KFAED Rasheed Al-Bader and UNDP Resident Representative in Kuwait Emma Morley.

Al-Bader told KUNA the project aims to improve the

sustainability and reliability of electricity supplies at priority public institutions in Lebanon by installing photovoltaic solar energy systems and enhancing energy efficiency.

He said the project will reduce reliance on diesel generators, lower operating costs, improve the continuity of essential public services, cut emissions from conventional energy sources and promote the sustainable use of energy.

The project includes installing photovoltaic solar systems at beneficiary institutions, implementing energy efficiency measures and providing the necessary equipment and related infrastructure, Al-Bader said.

He stated that the project also includes building the

technical capabilities of personnel and concerned authorities in the field of systems operation and maintenance and sustainable energy management, while strengthening operation and maintenance arrangements to ensure sustainability and maximize project outcomes.

Al-Bader said the grant reflects KFAED's commitment to supporting sustainable development across Arab countries through projects that improve infrastructure, strengthen essential public services and enhance institutions in facing challenges.

He added that the agreement underscores the long-standing strategic partnership between KFAED and UNDP, reaffirming the fund's commitment to supporting Lebanon in addressing current development challenges.

For her part, Morley said partnerships are essential to addressing global development challenges, adding that cooperation between the two sides will strengthen public institutions, support climate action and generate sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.

She added that UNDP and KFAED have worked together for years to support sustainable development and build more resilient communities.

KFAED and UNDP maintain a longstanding development partnership, with the fund contributing around USD 15 million to joint projects supporting vital initiatives in several countries, reflecting its commitment to sustainable development and humanitarian response.

Continued from Page 1

Help the

The world acted decisively to combat the Somali pirates when they threatened commercial ships near Yemen. This contradiction reveals that the world adopts a policy of multiple power balances.

The international community is mistaken if it considers the Houthi threats to be directed at certain countries. The truth is that the Houthi threats are a carbon copy of Iran's obstruction of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. Thus, any threat to a Saudi or Gulf commercial vessel means further damage to the global economy and a higher cost of war.

The effective prescription for the salvation of the region and the world lies in defeating the Houthis by supporting the Yemeni people in their uprising against the group. The collapse of this stronghold will naturally lead to the fall of the other dominoes with which the Tehran regime is using its weapons to destabilize the world.

The closest example to us is Syria. When the Syrian people revolted against the regime of Bashar Al-Assad, the foundations of the so-called 'axis of resistance' were shaken.

Consequently, the Tehran regime weakened extremely, thanks to a regional and international decision to stand with the Syrian people in their struggle for liberation.

Hence, today, it is necessary to dismantle the second pillar of the proxies of Iran, represented by the Houthi group in Yemen, which is a source of concern for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the entire world. A firm international resolution is required to achieve this goal.

If there is no radical solution, the current situation will persist for a long time, thereby, increasing the cost for the global economy. Are the nations around the world ready to implement this scenario?

Dust subsides

He said wind speeds exceeded 60 kilometers per hour, raising dust and sand and reducing horizontal visibility to less than 2,000 meters in some exposed areas.

For Wednesday, Al-Ali forecast extremely hot weather during the daytime and hot to relatively hot conditions at night, with moderate northwesterly winds occasionally becoming active at speeds ranging between 20 and 45 kilometers per hour, causing blowing dust in exposed areas.

Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 47 and 49 degrees Celsius, while minimum temperatures will range between 32 and 36 degrees Celsius, he added.

KRCS elevates

She added that the KRCS's humanitarian initiatives reflect its firm commitment to humanitarian principles and help strengthen relief efforts and promote the values of humanitarian solidarity at both the regional and international levels.

In turn, KRCS Chairman Khaled Al-Mughamis said the society is keen to broaden cooperation with its international partners and exchange expertise and successful experiences to enhance the efficiency of humanitarian work and keep pace with increasing challenges.

He stressed the coming phase requires greater integration, coordination and strengthened joint action to achieve humanitarian objectives and serve affected communities.

He also noted that the meeting comes within the framework of reinforcing the

strategic partnership with the ICRC, with which the society has maintained close and productive cooperation for many years across various humanitarian fields.

Al-Mughamis lauded the efforts made by the ICRC regional delegation in developing coordination mechanisms and joint humanitarian action, expressing the society's aspiration to continue the partnership through launching qualitative initiatives, exchanging expertise and reinforcing commitment to humanitarian principles.

3 Asians

Moreover, the Traffic and Operations Sector held intensive traffic and security campaigns in all governorates from July 13 to 19, with the aim of improving traffic discipline, enhancing road safety, apprehending violators, and ensuring equal enforcement of the law.

The campaigns resulted in the issuance of 23,567 traffic citations, the detention of 29 individuals at traffic police stations, the referral of nine juveniles to the Juvenile Prosecution for legal action, and the impounding of 271 vehicles and four motorcycles.

Traffic patrols responded to 2,632 reports and 927 collisions, including 164 accidents involving injuries.

They also arrested one person suspected of possessing narcotics and another found in an abnormal condition, referring both to the Drug Control General Department.

In addition, 35 residency law violators, one person without official identification, 36 wanted individuals, and 26 wanted vehicles were apprehended.

Furthermore, the Traffic and Operations Sector, represented by the General Directorate of Emergency Police, held field campaigns in governorates from July 12 to 18.

The campaigns resulted in 1,943 operations, including the arrest of 32 wanted individuals, the seizure of 13 wanted vehicles, and the arrest of 16 residency law violators, nine individuals found in an abnormal condition, and five people without official identification documents. Also, three suspects were arrested and referred to the Drug Control General Department for legal action.

They also issued 1,115 traffic citations, impounded two vehicles for violating laws and regulations, responded to 149 traffic accident reports, and provided 1,017 instances of humanitarian assistance to citizens and residents.

Kuwait backs

Furthermore, the ports in northern Yemen (Hodeidah, Salif, and Ras Isa) received more than 300 ships carrying various food items goods, fuel, and construction materials during the first half of 2026, while maintaining the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2216, including the prohibition on the entry of weapons and ammunition that the Houthi militia seeks to smuggle into Yemen by all available means in order to prolong its control over the resources of the Yemeni people.

The ministry recalled the Houthi militias previous widespread attacks targeting the Yemeni people and infrastructure, including the attack on Aden Airport on December 30, 2020, which resulted in the deaths and injuries of dozens of people.

During the truce, the militia also targeted oil export ports in southern Yemen on October 21, 2022, and subsequently carried out attacks that aimed to cripple the governments ability to sell oil, which represents approximately 60 percent of

the governments revenues, and directly impacting the payment of salaries to government employees, it added.

The militia also seized four aircraft belonging to Yemenia Airways and detained them at Sanaa Airport after they had transported Yemeni pilgrims from Jeddah, the ministry noted.

Furthermore, the Houthi militia dragged Yemen into the regional conflict and targeted commercial ships in the Red Sea, thereby exacerbating the suffering of the Yemeni people, preventing them from traveling, and worsening the economic situation, particularly in areas under the control of the Houthi militia, according to the ministry's statement.

The Houthi militia rejected all initiatives to resume flights from Sanaa Airport, most recently the Jordanian initiative, and has continued to commit humanitarian violations against Yemeni citizen, it underlined. The militia is now attempting to deflect responsibility for the economic challenges and growing public discontent it faces by fabricating false accusations against the Kingdom.

The ministry affirmed that the Kingdom aims to achieve peace in Yemen and end the suffering of the brotherly Yemeni people, supporting the United Nations efforts to achieve peace in Yemen over the past years, including the roadmap accepted by the Yemeni government, while the Houthi militia refrained from announcing its acceptance and instead engaged in the regional conflict in support of its sinister agenda and objectives, thereby exacerbating the suffering of Yemeni citizens in the areas under its control.

The State of Qatar has strongly condemned and denounced remarks by the Houthi military spokesman accusing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of imposing a blockade on the Yemeni people and enforcing a maritime embargo.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on the international community to uphold its responsibilities by implementing the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolution 2216 on Yemen and Resolution 2722 on freedom of navigation and navigational rights in the Red Sea.

The Ministry stressed that freedom of navigation through international waterways is a fundamental principle of international law and of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Ministry reiterated the State of Qatar's full solidarity with the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its support for all measures taken by the Kingdom to safeguard its sovereignty and security.

It also affirmed that Saudi Arabia's security is an integral part of the security of Qatar and the other Gulf Cooperation Council member states.

Jordan strongly condemned on Tuesday the recent statements issued by the military spokesperson of the Houthi group, which included false accusations against Saudi Arabia and threats aimed at international maritime traffic.

A statement by Jordan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Ambassador Fuad Al-Majali, emphasized Jordan's unequivocal rejection and strong condemnation of the allegations.

Al-Majali reaffirmed Jordan's absolute solidarity with Saudi Arabia in all measures it undertakes to protect its sovereignty, security, and the safety of its citizens and residents. He urged the international community to implement UN Security Council Resolutions 2216 on Yemen and 2722 to safeguard freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

Ambassador Al-Majali stressed that freedom of navigation in international waterways remains a fundamental right guaranteed under international law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Yemen's oil

He disclosed that the Houthi militia used drones in attacking the Al-Dhaba oil terminal in Hadramawt Governorate and the Al-Nashima Port in Shabwa Governorate in October and November 2022, halting the Yemeni crude oil exports and depriving the public treasury of revenues from such exports of around 70,000 barrels per day.

He pointed out that the export suspension caused direct and indirect losses exceeding \$3 billion and contributed to a budget deficit of more than 70 percent. He added that these losses led to the depreciation of the national currency, delays in paying government employee salaries, and weakened the government's ability to provide basic services like electricity, water and healthcare.

He believed that resuming oil exports will yield a number of economic gains, most notably boosting public revenues and increasing the Central Bank of Yemen's foreign currency reserves, which will stabilize the Yemeni Rial exchange rate and ensure the regular payment of salaries for civilian and military employees.

He said the decision will also provide the necessary cash to purchase fuel for power plants, support the water and health sectors, and restart hospitals and health centers, reduce the cost of living and stabilize the prices of basic commodities due to the improved value of the national currency.

He indicated that resuming oil exports will improve the performance of service and development institutions and alleviate the pressure on citizens.

He emphasized that the attacks on oil ports in 2022 were not merely attacks on economic facilities, but rather an economic war crime that harmed the livelihoods of Yemenis.

He reiterated that the decision of the Presidential Leadership Council confirms the commitment of the legitimate leadership to put the interests of the Yemeni people on top of its priorities. He stressed that resuming and securing oil exports could be the cornerstone for restoring the health of the national economy and enhancing the ability of the state to meet its obligations towards the citizens.

Another blow

damage to critical infrastructure, civilian facilities and residential buildings.

During its weekly meeting chaired by His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Cabinet said the attacks represented a blatant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security, as well as a serious breach of international law, international humanitarian law, the UN Charter and UNSC Resolution 2817 (2026).

The Cabinet held Iran fully responsible, legally and morally, for the continued attacks and their consequences, stressing that the repeated targeting of civilian and vital facilities reflected a systematic aggressive approach that threatens regional security and undermines efforts toward de-escalation.

It affirmed Kuwait's right to take all necessary measures to defend its sovereignty, protect its territory and safeguard vital facilities in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and international law.

The Cabinet also condemned Iranian attacks targeting Bahrain, Qatar and Jordan, reaffirming Kuwait's solidarity with the three countries and support for

measures taken to protect their security and sovereignty.

It further rejected threats issued by the Houthi militia against Saudi Arabia and maritime navigation, reiterating that Saudi Arabia's security is an integral part of Kuwait's and the GCC's security.

Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet on the latest military developments and the readiness of Kuwait's armed forces, while Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah updated ministers on diplomatic efforts by the Foreign Ministry and Kuwait's missions abroad.

The Cabinet also praised the public response to the national electricity and water conservation campaign "Waffir," saying cooperation from citizens, residents, government institutions, the private sector and media reflected a strong sense of national responsibility.

It urged continued conservation efforts, stressing that rational use of resources should become a permanent national practice to ensure sustainable essential services.

The Cabinet was also briefed on HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah's visit to injured victims receiving treatment at Al-Adan Hospital following the recent attacks on civilian and vital facilities. The Prime Minister, accompanied by Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, reaffirmed the government's commitment to providing full medical care until their recovery.

Kuwait protests tanker attack

Separately, Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan summoned Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Totonchi over Iran's attack on the Kuwaiti tanker Keifan while it was transiting the Strait of Hormuz on Monday evening, injuring several crew members.

The Foreign Ministry said Al-Mashaan described the attack as a blatant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national interests, as well as a threat to international navigation and a breach of international law, the UN Charter and UNSC Resolution 2817.

He demanded that Iran immediately stop its unlawful attacks, stressing that Kuwait reserves the right to take necessary measures and holds Iran fully responsible for the tanker attack and continued aggression against Kuwait.

Regional condemnation grows

Kuwait also strongly condemned renewed Iranian attacks on Bahrain, describing them as violations of Bahrain's sovereignty and territorial integrity and breaches of international law, the UN Charter and UNSC Resolution 2817.

Qatar condemned renewed Iranian attacks on Kuwait and Bahrain, calling them a dangerous escalation that threatens regional security and stability. Doha reaffirmed its solidarity with Kuwait and Bahrain and urged an immediate halt to military actions.

The United Arab Emirates also condemned renewed Iranian missile and drone attacks targeting Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan, describing them as violations of sovereignty and threats to regional stability.

The UAE reaffirmed its support for all measures taken by the three countries to safeguard their security and sovereignty.

Separately, the Cabinet approved a draft decree-law combating commercial concealment, aimed at strengthening transparency, fair competition and regulation of economic activity.

The legislation prohibits individuals from conducting economic activities on behalf of others or outside the scope of licensed activities and was referred to

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for approval.

The Cabinet also reviewed green urban development initiatives aimed at expanding green spaces, beautifying roads and public parks, installing artistic landmarks and enhancing public infrastructure through cooperation between the public and private sectors.

US, Iran clash drags on

Elsewhere, diplomats sought Tuesday to salvage the collapsed interim deal between Iran and the United States even as both countries continued to launch attacks in a 10th day of renewed fighting.

Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni's visit to Pakistan, a key mediator in the conflict, pointed to intensified diplomatic efforts, but it was unclear what new arrangement might be reached to end the war.

Shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has largely stalled, and as the fight for control over the waterway intensifies, both sides have targeted civilian infrastructure in the region relied on by millions of people.

A barrage of U.S. strikes hasn't compelled Tehran to loosen its grip on the strait, through which about one-fifth of the world's crude oil and natural gas was shipped before the war. The U.S. continued its airstrikes on the Islamic Republic early Tuesday, and Iran attacked a tanker in the strait, forcing the crew to abandon the ship.

Iran also kept up attacks against U.S. allies in the region. Sirens in Bahrain and Kuwait warned residents on Tuesday afternoon of incoming projectiles.

In the Red Sea, Iran-backed Houthi rebels have opened a new front against Saudi Arabia by declaring a naval blockade of the kingdom, threatening the flow of global oil supplies and trade. With the Strait of Hormuz blocked up, Saudi Arabia has been relying on a pipeline to the Red Sea to get millions of barrels of oil out to market.

A news agency in Yemen that is run by the Houthis, SABA, said Tuesday that six ships in the Red Sea were forced to reroute after they received warnings from the rebel group. The Associated Press could not immediately confirm the claim.

Three Houthi officials said the group warned international shipping companies on Monday to avoid transiting in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the gateway to the Red Sea at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity, saying they weren't authorized to speak to journalists.

The escalation has pushed oil prices higher. Benchmark Brent crude traded Tuesday above \$90 a barrel and regular gasoline in the U.S. climbed to an average of \$4 a gallon, keeping pressure on Americans' wallets ahead of midterm elections this fall.

Momeni met Pakistan's army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir, according to two officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door negotiations. Momeni later met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

In a statement, Sharif expressed deep concern over the recent escalation between the U.S. and Iran, and he urged all sides to exercise restraint and avoid actions that could further destabilize the region.

Pakistan's political leadership and Munir, who serves as both the chief of army staff and defense forces, played a key role in brokering last month's interim agreement between the United States and Iran. Islamabad has been working to persuade both sides to return to the negotiating table to resolve outstanding issues under the June memorandum of understanding.

WH opens investigation into Harvard’s financial aid for international students

WASHINGTON, July 21, (AP): The Justice Department is investigating whether Harvard University is allowing Chinese donors to create scholarships that exclude American students, adding to the barrage of federal inquiries the Trump administration has opened in its battle against the Ivy League school.

Justice Department officials announced the new review Monday, saying Harvard’s foreign funding disclosures “raised concerns” about possible discrimination against US students. The agency did not specify which scholarship programs are being targeted and emphasized it “has not reached any conclusions.”

The investigation is aimed at Harvard’s “China-based financial aid programs,” the Justice Department said. The agency said Chinese donors have given money to Harvard to support financial aid programs limited to students from certain countries. That restriction could amount to illegal discrimination based on country of origin, the department said.

“Schools cannot take federal dollars and then turn around and accept money from foreign sources to give financial aid that deliberately excludes American citizens - doing so is illegal, and we will stop it wherever we find it,” said Harmeet Dhillon, who leads the department’s Civil Rights Division. Harvard said it was reviewing the Justice Department notice.

“Harvard follows the law for required reporting of donations and, consistent with our legal obligations under

Title VI, does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national origin in allocating financial aid,” the university said in a written statement.

In a statement, Liu Chang, a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington, said China-US education cooperation is mutually beneficial. “China maintains that normal education and academic exchange should not be disrupted for political purposes,” Liu said.

Like many US universities, Harvard accepts foreign funding through direct donations or contracts. The Trump administration has pushed for greater transparency around outside money, warning that accepting funding from foreign adversaries is a national security risk.

Federal disclosures from Harvard show it has accepted \$630 million from Chinese sources over a period of decades. Overall, it has reported about \$4.5 billion in foreign funding. The Justice Department cited those figures but did not single out any donors or programs being reviewed.

The investigation is a compliance review, meaning it’s initiated by the federal government rather than responding to an outside complaint.

Unlike the vast majority of US universities, Harvard and a small number of other schools provide need-based scholarships to international students on the same basis as U.S. students. Grants and other aid from the federal government are reserved for American students, but Harvard “has its own job and scholarship money available to foreign students,” according to a Harvard financial aid website.



People take photos near a John Harvard statue, (left), on the Harvard University campus on Jan 2, 2024, in Cambridge, Mass. (AP)

Graham to run for full term in late brother’s Senate seat

Dems could take preliminary vote on '28 presidential primary calendar this week

COLUMBIA, SC, July 21, (AP): Democrats could vote as early as this week on the order of their primary calendar for the 2028 presidential election, although the decision wouldn’t be final until the full Democratic National Committee agrees.

The panel that sets the party’s voting order could make that determination as early as Friday when it meets in Washington, two people with knowledge of the party’s process but not authorized to discuss it publicly told The Associated Press on Monday.

The Rules and Bylaws Committee has been holding monthly meetings as it considers the order in which states will vote during the 2028 primaries. The panel has heard presentations from a dozen states hoping to kick off the party’s primaries and caucuses, including Iowa, Michigan, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina.

The calendar isn’t considered set until it’s approved by the full DNC, which is scheduled to meet in August. The DNC did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Democrats upended their process for setting their calendar after Iowa’s 2020 Democratic caucus debacle, which led to days of uncertainty over who had won. The party since then has favored more diverse states.

For the 2024 cycle, President Joe Biden led a DNC effort to have South Carolina - which for years has held the party’s first Southern contest - go first overall in the party’s primaries. He cited the state’s more racially diverse population compared to the traditional first-in-the-nation states of Iowa and New Hampshire, which are overwhelmingly white.

Four years earlier, Rep. Jim Clyburn, South Carolina’s lone congressional Democrat and for a time the top Black Democratic lawmaker on Capitol Hill, helped Biden revive his flagging primary campaign and win a resounding victory in the state. He then went on to secure the party’s presidential nomination.

South Carolina’s Democratic leaders have pushed for the state to lead off again, lobbying for support and getting buy-in from Democratic Party chairs in five Southern states. In May, they pressed for South Carolina to reprise its role as the party’s first-in-the-nation contest holder, arguing that the state best represents the initial playing field for presidential candidates to build the coalitions needed to win.

A quarter of the state’s population is Black and about 9% is Hispanic, according to the Census Bureau.



Democratic National Committee chair Ken Martin speaks during an interview with The Associated Press at DNC headquarters on Jan 12, in Washington. (AP)

Also:

COLUMBIA, SC: Sen **Darline Graham** said Monday she’s running for a full term to replace her late brother **Lindsey Graham**’s Senate seat.

“I’ve made a decision,” Darline Graham told Fox News Channel host **Sean Hannity**, according to a clip released of an interview set to air later Monday. “I’m in.”

The entrance of Darline Graham - sworn in last week to fulfill the remaining months of her late brother’s term, which expires in January - into the Republican scramble to select a new Senate nominee further complicates an already rushed

process following Lindsey Graham’s death earlier this month.

A weeklong filing period opens Tuesday for the special Republican primary, which will be Aug. 11. On Friday, President **Donald Trump** said that Darline Graham had his “Complete and Total Endorsement” to seek the nomination, adding, “RUN, DARLINE, RUN!”

Last week, Gov. **Henry McMaster** appointed Darline Graham to serve the remainder of her brother’s term, which ends in January. In his announcement, McMaster made no reference to Darline Graham as a placeholder or symbolic appointment, although a person familiar with McMaster’s thinking but unauthorized to speak publicly said the governor, in selecting Darline Graham, had never contemplated that she would run for the seat herself.

Before the emergence of **Darline Graham** - and their Oval Office meeting after she was sworn in - Trump had previously suggested he could back a potential candidacy from Rep. **Russell Fry**, who said Monday he would officially enter the special primary.

Several other noteworthy politicians, including Rep. **Ralph Norman**, have already gotten in, and others like Lt. Gov. **Pamela Evette** have been eyeing a run. Rep. **Nancy Mace** announced Monday she would not enter the contest.

Darline Graham told Hannity said she had been “praying a lot” about how to navigate her new role.

“It is a tremendous amount of pressure,” she said.

“I know I’m a hard worker. I learned that from Lindsey,” Darline Graham said. “I feel like I can do it. I feel an inner peace about it. Will it be difficult? Yes.”

Funeral services for Lindsey Graham are scheduled to be held next week in **Washington** and **South Carolina**. A preliminary report from the medical examiner said he suffered a tear in his aorta.

The millions in Lindsey Graham’s campaign account aren’t funds that Darline Graham could directly access in a run of her own, according to Bradley A. Smith, a former chairman of the Federal Election Commission.

Under federal rules, Lindsey Graham’s campaign would be limited to transferring just \$2,000 to a potential Darline Graham candidacy. However, Smith said there is no limit on how much it could transfer to the National Republican Senatorial Committee, which could - thanks to a Supreme Court decision last month - “spend an unlimited amount in coordination with Darline’s campaign.”



Buildings stand in ruins after Russian attacks on the Lukianivka neighbourhood in Kyiv, Ukraine on June 18. (AP)

In one of Kyiv’s most frequently bombed neighborhoods, residents choose to stay

KYIV, Ukraine, July 21, (AP): Residents of Kyiv’s historic Lukianivka neighborhood share a dark joke: Russian strikes hit the area so frequently, they ought to be issued military service documents as though they are living on the front line of the war.

Real estate agent Dmytro Zhekov acknowledges the danger up front when he tries to draw prospective renters to one of the Ukrainian capital’s most frequently bombed areas. In his sales pitch on social media, he highlights the neighborhood’s many virtues: affordable rents, easy access to the city center, a well-connected metro line and historic landmarks.

“From the beginning I tell them, ‘This is a place in the danger zone. It gets hit regularly. If you are all right with that, then we can see it,’” he said.

The district includes a Soviet-era weapons plant that has become one of Russia’s most frequent targets in Kyiv, with its roof blackened by repeated strikes. Across the street, the Lukianivka metro station, which gives the neighborhood its name, has been hit at least eight times. During air raids, it also serves as a shelter for residents. Craters have become a permanent part of the urban landscape.

Residents no longer ask whether Lukianivka will be hit again, only when. Living in the neighborhood means re-opening businesses beside the charred ruins of a market, cutting hair in buildings scarred by shrapnel, moving theater performances underground and choosing to rebuild rather than leave.

Between strikes, people sweep up shattered glass, board up blown-out windows and try to carry on. After another Russian missile barrage on Sunday, the routine began again.

“After every attack, I walk down the main street, and it feels like watching a wound widen,” resident Vladyslav Darmohrai said.

Lukianivka’s main thoroughfare, Dehtiarivska Street, follows part of the ancient Via Regia, the medieval trade route that carried merchants into Kyiv for centuries.

The neighborhood later grew into a working-class district of factories, markets and the Lukianivka prison, whose inmates have included former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who was incarcerated for 2½ years for striking a gas deal with Russia in a case that was largely viewed as retribution by her political rival, then-President Viktor Yanukovich.

Successive eras, from the Soviet industrial period to Ukrainian independence and, now, the repeated Russian bombardment, have continued to shape the neighborhood, which now includes renters displaced by the war.

Ukraine’s first McDonald’s, which opened in Lukianivka in 1997, became an early symbol of that postindependence rebirth. Today, customers eat there beneath a plastic sign permanently warped by the heat of Russian strikes.

“It’s part of our history now,” said historian Kyrylo Stepanets.

The neighborhood’s role as a crossroads gave rise to Lukianivka’s iconic market, which had served residents since the late 19th century until it was destroyed in a Russian strike on May 24.

It’s now a charred maze of kiosks, frozen in the moment of the attack. Blackened loaves of bread still sit on the shelves of what was once a bakery.

For many residents, the market lives on in childhood memories of parents and grandparents leading them hand in hand through its crowded aisles to buy fruit, flowers and everyday necessities.

Alyona Lukianets, 32, spent 11 years building her produce business there. After the strike, she returned to find her stall reduced to ashes. Weeks later, she went back to work.

Her new stall, assembled from wooden pallets and tarpaulins outside the market’s ruins, bears little resemblance to the one she lost. Every morning she still lines up baskets of berries and fresh vegetables with the same care. The acrid smell of the destroyed market behind her sometimes still hangs in the air.

Several of Starmer’s senior ministers removed

UK’s leader Burnham gathers Cabinet

LONDON, July 21, (AP): New UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham gathered his Cabinet for its first meeting on Tuesday and vowed to take a “one-team approach” despite purging allies of predecessor Keir Starmer from the government.

Burnham told his top team that he would lead a “cost-of-living government” focused on easing the economic burden felt by millions of people.

“We need to think every day, what can we do just to take that little bit of pressure off people’s shoulders, to give them that little extra sense that help is coming, so they can have that bit of hope that things are getting better,” Burnham told the Cabinet.

Burnham made a small down payment on that pledge by announcing a tax cut on energy bills that will save the average household about 45 pounds (\$60) a year. The cut will take effect Oct. 1, Burnham said, with the funding coming from scrapping a plan for digital ID cards announced by Starmer.

The former mayor of Greater Manchester entered Downing St. on Monday after replacing Starmer as leader of the governing Labour Party, becoming Britain’s seventh prime minister since 2016. Starmer resigned just two years after winning a landslide election victory, forced out by his own party after a series of missteps and U-turns.

In his first speech as prime minister, Burnham pledged to ease the cost of living, decentralize political power, revitalize industry and end



Britain’s new Prime Minister Andy Burnham arrives at 10 Downing Street in London on July 20. (AP)

street sleeping by homeless people - a tall order, especially given Britain’s sluggish economic growth in recent years.

Burnham acknowledged at the Cabinet meeting that the government would have to make difficult financial decisions and “take a really hard look at what our priorities are.”

After taking office Monday, Burnham set about remaking the government in his image.

Starmer’s finance minister, Rachel Reeves, was ousted, replaced by John Healey, a former defense secretary who resigned in June and accused the Treasury of failing to spend enough on the military at a time of rising threats. In an interview

after he quit, Healey called the Treasury “a dead hand on dynamic government” and “in denial.”

Healey has said defense spending, due to be 2.6% of GDP next year, should rise to 3% by 2030. Now he will have to find the money.

Wes Streeting, whose resignation as health secretary in May helped topple Starmer, took over the defense portfolio.

Other key Cabinet appointees include Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband, Housing Secretary Angela Rayner and Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds, who has an expanded brief that includes innovation and science.

Man stabs and wounds two tourists near Acropolis



Sun rays break through the clouds above the ancient Parthenon temple as tourists walk across the Acropolis during a hot day in Athens on July 2. (AP)

ATHENS, Greece, July 21, (AP): A man stabbed and wounded two tourists Tuesday morning near the ancient Acropolis in Athens, Greece’s top tourist attraction, police said.

The assailant attacked a man and a woman, both Greek Americans, with a knife on a pedestrian street near an entrance to the Acropolis itself and near the entrance to the Acropolis Museum, which lies at the foot of the Acropolis hill. The woman suffered light injuries to the leg, while the man was more seriously hurt with wounds to the arm, police said.

The attacker was detained at the scene, while the two victims were transported to the hospital by ambulance, authorities said. The identity of the attacker was not immediately clear, but police said he appeared to have been suffering from psychological problems.

The attack did not lead to any closure to the sites, which continued operating as usual. Greek media reported that the assailant had allegedly been randomly threatening passers-by with a knife, and that police had been alerted by a member of the public.

‘We expressed serious concern over rapidly evolving situation in ME’

Southeast Asia’s top diplomats hold security talks in Manila as Iran war rages

MANILA, Philippines, July 21, (Agencies): Southeast Asia’s top diplomats opened three days of talks in the Philippine capital Tuesday with an agenda topped by their most daunting security problems and a backdrop of unfolding crises led by the resurging war in Iran and a violent skirmish in the disputed South China Sea.

The foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations met behind closed doors before issuing a joint statement calling for an immediate halt to fighting in the Middle East and the full and safe reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

“We expressed serious concern over the rapidly evolving situation in the Middle East, particularly the renewed hostilities involving the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran,” the ASEAN ministers said.

The ministers also said they reaffirmed the obligations of states to peacefully resolve their differences and respect national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Southeast Asia, a bustling region of more than 680 million people, relies heavily on Middle East oil and gas and was severely hit by the global supply and price shocks sparked by the Iran war. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. declared a national energy emergency in March to ensure the availability of fuel, food and other basic goods and prevent hoarding and profiteering.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in Manila on Tuesday morning for an annual meeting with his ASEAN counterparts on Wednesday, where the Middle crisis will be high in the agenda along with other security and economic issues.

Rubio plans to join regional security talks called the ASEAN Regional Forum, which also will include the European Union, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Rubio, Wang and Lavrov have not publicly announced any plan to meet on



ASEAN Chair and Philippine Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro, center, hosts an informal consultation with Foreign Ministers during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foreign Ministers’ Meeting at the Philippine International Convention Center in Manila on July 21. (AP)

the sidelines. If Rubio and Wang speak, it would be the highest-level contact between the U.S. and China since President Donald Trump flew to Beijing in May for talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping that focused on the US-Israel war on Iran, trade and the status of Taiwan, among other issues.

The three will attend a final forum Thursday called the East Asia Summit, where 18 Western and Asian countries, including the 11-nation ASEAN, will

tackle geopolitical, economic and security concerns.

ASEAN ministers were scheduled to meet Wang Yi on Wednesday with an agenda that includes a discussion on the status of negotiations between China and the regional bloc on a proposed pact called a “code of conduct,” which aims to prevent territorial disputes in the South China Sea from spiraling out of control.

A new clash in the disputed waters underscored the urgency of the proposed nonaggression pact, which has been negotiated by the two sides for about two decades. They aim to conclude talks within the year.

The Philippine military accused China’s coast guard of injuring a Filipino sailor during an altercation Monday in the disputed Second Thomas Shoal.

Chinese coast guard personnel aboard a motorboat repeatedly struck the sailor on the head with a wooden baton, injuring him and damaging his smaller vessel, the Philippine military said.

Philippine officials condemned the Chinese coast guard, which blamed the Filipinos for starting the high seas confrontation. Marcos called the Chinese Ambassador Jing Quan for a meeting Tuesday afternoon, his spokesperson said without providing details.

Also:

MANILA: Two soldiers and three civilians were wounded after unidentified attackers threw a grenade at a passing military vehicle in **Maguindanao del Sur** province in the southern **Philippines**, according to local authorities.

Police said the soldiers were traveling aboard a military truck when two motorcycle-riding men threw a grenade at the vehicle before fleeing the scene. The grenade landed on one side of the highway, not on the cargo deck of the vehicle, and went off.

All five victims were taken to a nearby hospital for treatment, while police and local authorities launched an investigation to identify and arrest the attackers.



Colombia’s President Gustavo Petro speaks during the opening of a new session of Congress in Bogotá, Colombia on July 20. (AP)

Colombia’s Petro calls on supporters to defend economic reforms in last presidential speech

BOGOTÁ, Colombia, July 21, (AP): Outgoing Colombian President Gustavo Petro called Monday on his supporters to protect his government’s social and economic reforms and resist any efforts by the incoming administration to change the nation’s labor laws.

The left-wing leader accused Israel and the United States of interfering in Colombia’s recent presidential election, in a lengthy speech Monday that marked the nation’s Independence Day and that he said would be his last as the nation’s head of state.

President-elect Abelardo de la Escriella, a conservative lawyer and dual US-Colombian citizen, has promised to cut government spending by up to 40% and draft labor laws that will enable companies to hire employees on an hourly basis. He will be sworn in on Aug 7.

Petro doubled down on accusations of electoral fraud, saying he would soon provide evidence on how vote tallies were rigged with the help of software supplied by Israel. Colombia’s electoral authorities have dismissed allegations of fraud.

Petro also urged his supporters to mobilize “by the millions” and organize strikes if the nation’s incoming government tries to change labor laws, which have increased overtime pay and made it harder for companies in Colombia to hire workers on short-term contracts.

“We must exercise our opposition in the streets, and resist peacefully ... but in an overwhelming manner,” Petro said.

Political tensions have increased in Colombia following the June 21 presidential election, which de la Escriella won by a small margin of 250,000 votes. The losing candidate, Petro ally Iván Cepeda, initially recognized the results, but later said that if de la Escriella does not renounce his US citizenship, he will not acknowledge him as a legitimate head of state.

Criminal defense lawyer de la Escriella entered politics last year after running a Florida law firm that represented high-profile clients, including former leaders of Colombian paramilitary groups and businessmen charged with

money laundering.

The lawyer has promised to cancel peace talks between Colombia’s government and rebel groups, while implementing an iron-fisted approach to crime that includes building mega prisons, modeled after the CECOT penitentiary in El Salvador.

De la Escriella has also said he would like to reduce taxes on businesses, so that they can afford to pay workers higher wages. Under the Petro administration the nation’s minimum wage was almost doubled to around \$550 a month.

De la Escriella was endorsed by US President Donald Trump in the run-up to the election, prompting accusations of interference in Colombia’s domestic affairs.

Petro said Monday that Trump’s support for de la Escriella, should be a reason to annul the results.

Colombia’s electoral authorities have certified de la Escriella’s victory, and the president-elect has said he would like to stage his inauguration ceremony at a military base as a way to show his support for the nation’s armed forces.

The president-elect said Monday that rebel groups, including the National Liberation Army and FARC holdout groups, are offering hitmen up to a million dollars to kill him. De la Escriella has promised to take a tougher stance against these groups, which have become increasingly powerful in rural areas, where they profit from the drug trade.

Sergio Guzmán, a political risk analyst in Bogota, said that de la Escriella will have to make some concessions as he attempts to implement budget cuts or build new prisons because the conservative lawyer lacks a majority in Congress.

Petro on Monday hinted that he could stay in politics by serving as the president of his political party, the Historical Pact.

Petro’s goal now, Guzmán said, “is to prove that he is still influential” and that his administration’s priorities “will not fade away” but will be part of a movement that will endure in Colombian politics.

Explosion in tunnel at Indian hydropower project leaves 11 dead

GUWAHATI, India, July 21, (AP): A suspected gas explosion triggered a collapse inside an under-construction tunnel at a hydropower project in India’s northeastern Himalayan state of Sikkim, near the Chinese border, leaving least 11 people dead and 14 others missing, officials said on Tuesday.

The blast ripped through the tunnel on Monday at Samardung village, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the state capital, Gangtok, where multiple workers were carrying out construction work on the 500-megawatt Teesta hydroelectric project, Anupama Tamling, a civil official in the area, told reporters.

Survivors who managed to escape told authorities they heard a loud explosion before debris came crashing through the tunnel, trapping dozens inside, she said.

As news of the accident spread, six officials from the state-owned National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC), which is building the project, entered the tunnel to assist in rescue efforts but became trapped themselves, officials said.

“We have recovered 10 bodies so far and 17 others are feared trapped,” local police chief Sonam Dolma told reporters.



Members of the rescue team carry oxygen cylinders outside the entrance to an under-construction tunnel at a hydropower project in Samardung village, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Gangtok, India on July 21. (AP)

Rescue teams, including the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), have been struggling to reach those trapped because of hazardous conditions inside the tunnel, where toxic gases have accumulated.

“We found toxic gases such as methane, carbon monoxide and hydrogen sulphide inside the tunnel,” NDRF official Nitin Kumar told re-

porters at the scene. He said rescuers were using specialized breathing equipment as they tried to search for survivors amid dangerous air conditions.

Also:

NEW DELHI: Supporters of India’s youth-led Cockroach movement said Tuesday they will continue their protest in New Delhi, refusing to leave their sit-in site a day after police used tear gas and batons to disperse thousands of them as they tried to march toward Parliament.

Hundreds of protesters remained camped at Jantar Mantar, a designated protest site, under heavy police presence, saying they would stay until Education Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** resigns over alleged failures in India’s examination system.

“We are going to continue our protest,” said **Abhijeet Dipke**, founder of the Cockroach Janta Party.

Monday’s confrontation between protesters and police has become one of the most significant moments in CJP’s two-month campaign, which began as a satirical protest but quickly evolved into a nationwide, youth-led movement focused on exam leaks, unemployment and government accountability.



Residents and rescue workers inspect buildings damaged by heavy flooding in the eastern province of Nuristan, Afghanistan on July 21. (AP)

Flash floods kill 20, rescue crews search for missing in Afghanistan

Flash floods in eastern Afghanistan have killed 20 people, injured about 80 more and left more than 100 missing, Afghan authorities said Monday.

The floods struck the eastern province of Nuristan, said Yousaf Hammad, spokesman for the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority, adding that a search and rescue operation was underway to locate the missing.

“Unfortunately, severe floods today in Parun city and several other areas of Nuristan province have caused heavy loss of life and property among our fellow citizens,”

Hammad said, adding that the floods had caused extensive damage to people’s homes, agricultural land and public facilities.

“We urge all citizens to stay away from flood-prone areas and zones at risk,” he said.

Afghanistan is highly vulnerable to extreme weather events, with snow and heavy rain that trigger flash floods, often killing dozens, or even hundreds, of people at a time. In 2024, more than 300 people died in springtime flash floods. Earlier this year, at least 110 people were killed by widespread flooding and landslides in several parts of the country

Decades of conflict, along with poor infrastructure, a struggling economy, deforestation and the intensifying effects of climate change, have amplified the impact of such disasters, particularly in remote areas where many homes are built of mud and offer limited protection against sudden deluges or heavy snowfall.

“We were saddened to learn that floods caused loss of life and property damage in Nuristan province this afternoon,” said government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid. “We pray for those who lost their lives in this incident and for a speedy recovery for the injured.” (AP)

US pledges to crack down on Haitian gangs making money off social media

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, July 21, (AP): The US envoy to the United Nations said Monday that the US government soon will move to stop violent gangs in Haiti from making money off social media posts.

Gang leaders in the troubled Caribbean country are prolific users of social media and have celebrated killings, issued threats and posted musings on various sites. Younger gang members also post music videos and wave cash they’ve earned in an effort to recruit children in the impoverished nation.

Mike Waltz, who recently visited Haiti, called the practice “incredibly disturbing” and warned the US would “shut that down” in the near future. He didn’t provide further details while speaking at a UN Security Council meeting in New York.

He spoke as the US prepares this week to strip the temporary protected status of some 350,000 Haitians who live in the United States, ex-



Vehicles that were set on fire by armed gangs sit in the Cite Soleil neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, Haiti on May 12. (AP)

posing them to deportation, a move largely criticized by lawyers and human rights experts.

Efforts to crack down on the gangs’ use of social media are not new. In 2023, YouTube banned

Johnson André, considered Haiti’s most powerful gang leader and also known as Izo, following heavy criticism after he received an award for surpassing more than 100,000 subscribers.

Africa

Guyana launches criminal probe: Rescuers in Guyana searched for survivors Monday as authorities launched an investigation after a ferry believed to have been overloaded capsized over the weekend. The government said at least 32 of the 67 people rescued were not listed on the passenger manifest.

Hopes of finding more survivors faded as Prime Minister **Mark Phillips** told reporters late Sunday that officials believe there were many more passengers than the documented 116 and 17 crew members aboard the decades-old ferry.

Passengers have complained for years that ticket clerks unofficially sell seats to friends and associates for cash without adding their names to the manifest, a practice that has persisted for decades at state-run ferry terminals.



Phillips

Phillips also said the rescued captain and at least one other crew member tested positive for marijuana and remain in police custody as part of the criminal investigation. (AP)

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Heavy rainstorm kills 4 in Nigeria: At least four people were killed after a strong rainstorm triggered by heavy rainfall caused widespread destruction in Nigeria’s northern state of Sokoto, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said on Monday.

Tukur Abubakar, a senior emergency response officer with NEMA in Sokoto, said that the storm affected several communities and caused extensive damage to homes and critical public infrastructure, including a primary school and a hospital in Kware Local Government Area.

Abubakar said hundreds of households were affected in recent days, with many people sustaining injuries.

The emergency management agency said it conducted an assessment to determine the extent of the damage and identify the immediate humanitarian needs of the affected communities. (Xinhua)

Kuwait oil price surge to \$84.83 pb

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Price of Kuwaiti oil went up USD 2.58 to reach USD 84.83 per barrel (pb) on Monday's trading, compared to 82.25 pb the day before, according to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

Globally, Brent crude rose USD 1.12 to settle at USD 89.22 pb, and US West Texas Intermediate went up by 76 cents to settle at USD 83.23 pb.

Business

National Investments Company Leads Successful Capital Increase for Rawahel Holding Company K.S.C.

As Lead Manager and Subscription Agent, with Subscription Coverage Exceeding Offered Shares



Fahad Abdulrahman AlMukhaizim
Board Member & CEO
National Investmets Company

■ The successful completion of Rawahel Holding Company's capital increase, with subscription coverage exceeding the total offered shares at 104.37%

Rawahel Holding Company K.S.C. (Rawahel), in collaboration with National Investments Company (NIC), announced the successful completion of Rawahel's capital increase amounting to KWD 4.5 million, marking a significant milestone in

Rawahel's restructuring journey post COVID-19 business losses. The transaction increased Rawahel's issued and paid-up capital by approximately 123.84%. NIC acted as the Lead Manager and Subscription Agent, overseeing the execution of the capital increase in accordance with all applicable regulatory requirements. The capital increase achieved 104.37% subscription coverage, reflecting strong investor confidence in Rawahel's long-term growth strategy, management team and future prospects despite prevailing global economic uncertainties. Commenting on the successful completion of the transaction, Mr. Fahad AlMukhaizim, Board Member and Chief Executive Officer of NIC, stated: "We are proud to have successfully led this important transaction in the private market and to have supported Rawahel in achieving a fully subscribed capital increase. This transaction further reinforces NIC's long-standing track record in delivering complex capital market transactions with the highest standards of professionalism, efficiency and execution. Throughout the subscription period, our team worked closely with existing and prospective investors, ensuring a seamless subscription process that ultimately

resulted in full coverage of the offering." Mr. AlMukhaizim added: "At NIC, we remain committed to supporting the continued development of Kuwait's capital markets by partnering with leading companies to execute strategic transactions that enhance market liquidity and create attractive investment opportunities. We will continue to introduce innovative financial solutions and capital market products that contribute to the growth and diversification of the Kuwaiti investment landscape while supporting the broader objectives of the national economy." Commenting on the successful completion of the transaction, Mr. Abdullah Al-Otaibi, Chairman of Rawahel Holding Company, said: "The successful completion of this capital increase marks an important milestone for Rawahel and demonstrates the confidence our shareholders and investors have in the Company's future. The process was executed smoothly while fully complying with all legal and regulatory requirements. We would like to thank our shareholders, regulatory authorities and all parties involved for their continued support throughout this important corporate action." Mr. Al-Otaibi added: "The proceeds from the capital increase

will be strategically deployed to strengthen the Company's financial position and support its future growth plans. This includes providing additional financial support to one of our subsidiaries to enhance its operations and expand its transportation fleet through the acquisition of additional buses, as well as funding working capital requirements." NIC was appointed as Lead Manager and Subscription Agent based on its extensive experience and proven track record in managing capital market transactions, including capital increases, initial public offerings, listings and mergers and acquisitions. The subscription period remained open for 15 days, from 21 June to 5 July 2026. The successful completion of the capital increase represents another important achievement for both Rawahel and NIC, underscoring the strength of Kuwait's capital markets and reinforcing investor confidence in well-structured transactions that support corporate growth and long-term value creation. As one of the leading investment institutions locally and regionally, NIC reaffirms its continued commitment to delivering integrated and innovative investment solutions based on a deep understanding of markets and client



Abdullah Mohammad Al-Otaibi
Chairman
Rawahel Holding Company

■ The successful capital increase reflects shareholder confidence and positions Rawahel for a new phase of growth.

needs, while focusing on achieving sustainable growth and creating long-term value. The Company is committed to upholding the highest standards of governance and transparency, reinforcing its position as a trusted partner in developing the investment sector.

Strengthening its presence in regional markets

KIB Invest joins \$2.75 billion Saudi SRC Sukuk as Joint Lead Manager

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Kuwait International Bank (KIB), through its Islamic investment arm, KIB Invest, participated as a Joint Lead Manager in the pricing of the third issuance of international Sukuk guaranteed by the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the Saudi Real Estate Refinance Company (SRC), with a total value of US\$2.75 billion.

The US dollar-denominated issuance was structured in two tranches under the company's international Sukuk issuance program. The SRC is a subsidiary of the Saudi Public Investment Fund.

The issuance was structured under Mudaraba and Murabaha arrangements and priced on 7 July 2026, with settlement scheduled for 14 July 2026. The Sukuk was issued in two tranches: a US\$1.25 billion tranche with a 5.5-year tenor, maturing on 14 January 2032, and a US\$1.50 billion tranche with a 10-year tenor, maturing on 14 July 2036.

Commenting on KIB's participation, **Mohammad Al Duwailah**, General Manager of Treasury at KIB, said: "The success of this landmark issuance amid the current regional environment is a clear testament to the resilience and depth of the region's financial markets. It also reflects the strong confidence that global investors place in the Saudi Real Estate Refinance Company, as well as the continued appeal of debt instruments and Islamic financing solutions. At KIB, we are proud to have contributed to this issuance and to support the allocation of capital to high-quality, sustainable investment opportunities that meet investors' expectations and help our partners achieve their objectives."

From his side, **Jamal Al-Barrak**, Chief Executive Officer of KIB Invest, said: "KIB Invest's participation as a Joint Lead Manager in this prominent regional transaction reflects the company's strong market position and the advisory and execution expertise it has built across the capital markets. It also underscores the banking syndicate's ability to attract a broad and diverse base of institutional and international investors. At KIB Invest, we remain committed to developing Sharia-compliant investment solutions and strengthening our position as a trusted strategic partner in regional and global capital markets."

Al-Barrak added: "Despite vola-



Mohammad Al Duwailah



Jamal Al-Barrak

tile geopolitical conditions and prevailing uncertainty, the Saudi Real Estate Refinance Company timed the issuance as market conditions improved, focusing on execution quality and achieving competitive pricing in line with global sovereign and quasi-sovereign issuances, which helped attract a broad investor base. KIB's active role throughout the book-building process also contributed to the issuance's positive momentum and supported the success of the offering."

KIB Group participated in the issuance alongside a syndicate of leading regional and international financial institutions, including DBS Bank Ltd, HSBC Bank plc, the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector, J.P. Morgan, KFH Capital, Mizuho, Bank Al Salam, and Standard Chartered. This participation further underscores the Group's strong standing in the Islamic and international capital markets.

KIB Invest continues to offer a comprehensive range of innovative Sharia-compliant investment solutions and products designed to meet clients' evolving needs and aspirations. In line with the Group's vision to reinforce its position in the Islamic banking sector regionally and internationally, the company draws on a team of experts and specialists with extensive experience and in-depth knowledge of local and global capital markets, enabling it to deliver specialized investment solutions in accordance with the highest professional standards.

About KIB

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

About KIB Invest

Al Dawli Invest Investment Company (KIB Invest) is a Shariah Compliant investment company that delivers a broad range of investment products and services with a specialization in Asset Management, Fund and Portfolio Management, Wealth Management, Custody Services and Investment Advisory Services.

Established in 2023 and headquartered in Kuwait, KIB Invest is a Kuwaiti Shareholding Closed Company (K.S.C.C) with a paid-up capital of KD 45,000,000. It is a subsidiary of Kuwait International Bank (KIB).

Zain contributes \$10 million to the Kuwait Emergency Response Fund

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Zain Group has confirmed its support for the strategic national initiative launched by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) to establish the Kuwait Emergency Response Fund, which aims to strengthen national preparedness and enhance the country's ability to address challenges and exceptional circumstances.

The Group contributed USD 10 million to the Kuwait Emergency Response Fund, noting that the initiative comes at a critical time and represents a collective national response during a period that calls for coordinated efforts and complementary roles among government institutions, the private sector, and all relevant stakeholders. This creates a shared national responsibility that requires active participation from major national institutions.

The current period, shaped by rapidly evolving regional developments and exceptional challenges, and their direct and indirect impact on national achievements, infrastructure resilience, and the continuity of essential services, highlights the need to unify national efforts and strengthen cooperation between government institutions and the private sector. This collaboration is vital to enhancing Kuwait's preparedness and its ability to respond effectively to changing conditions and exceptional circumstances.

Zain's support comes at a pivotal moment, with national challenges and priorities requiring the highest levels of preparedness and solidarity. As one of Kuwait's leading national institutions, closely connected to the country's socio-economic fabric throughout its various stages and challenges, Zain views its contribution as a national duty.

Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi said: "Under these exceptional circumstances, strengthening the country's ability to address challenges and safeguard its socio-economic wellbeing is a shared national responsibility that requires the combined efforts of all sectors and institutions."

"This KFAED-led initiative represents a national purpose that unites efforts under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and requires us to continue working together, reinforce a culture of national responsibility, and strengthen effective partnerships."

Al-Kharafi continued: "The Kuwait Emergency Response Fund represents a model of national partnership and reflects the State's vision for building an institutional framework capable of responding swiftly to exceptional circumstances. By mobilizing national resources and directing them towards priority projects and needs, the Fund strengthens the State's ability to prepare in advance, maintain stability and recover during crises and emergencies."

Al-Kharafi concluded: "We extend our sincere appreciation to His Excellency Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and the KFAED management team, for leading this strategic national initiative. Their vision has embodied the highest standards of national responsibility and proactive institutional action at this important juncture. The establishment of the Fund reflects a forward-looking national approach that strengthens Kuwait's preparedness and ability to respond to evolving challenges and circumstances, while safeguarding its development gains and ensuring the continuity of its vital services."

KFAED has emphasized that the initiative is not simply a source of emergency financing, but an integrated national mechanism for mobilizing domestic resources and directing them towards the State's priorities. It has also called on government



Bader Al-Kharafi

■ **Bader Al-Kharafi:** "This KFAED-led national initiative embodies a shared national purpose that unites efforts under the wise leadership of H.H. the Amir"

■ Zain reinforces its role as a national partner in enhancing preparedness and supporting the continuity of essential services

■ Coordinated national action strengthens Kuwait's resilience, addresses emerging challenges, and safeguards its socio-economic well being



institutions and the private sector to contribute to supporting the Fund.

For decades, Zain has consistently been at the forefront of institutions supporting national initiatives during crises and exceptional circumstances. The company has placed active contributions to stability and development, as well as support for high-impact initiatives, at the heart of its strategy.

As a leading provider of technology solutions and innovative digital services, Zain affirms that its responsibility extends beyond delivering connectivity. It also encompasses supporting the foundations of stability and strengthening the resilience of the critical infrastructure on which economic, development, and public service sectors depend.

Throughout its corporate journey, Zain has maintained a longstanding partnership with Kuwait's national efforts and initiatives, accompanying the country through successive stages of development and transformation and serving as a national partner during moments of achievement and challenge alike.

For more than four decades, Zain's name has been closely intertwined with Kuwait's modern development journey. The company has witnessed the country's progress, contributed to its achievements, and remained present through changing circumstances.

At every defining moment in Kuwait's journey, Zain has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to its national responsibility, grounded in its belief that the private sector is an essential partner in supporting national efforts.

General index at 8,620

Boursa Kuwait closes slightly lower

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Tuesday's trading session slightly lower, with the General Index easing by 6.14 points, or 0.07 percent, to close at 8,620.73 points. Total trading activity reached 310.2 million shares across 19,793 transactions, with a total value of KD 78 million (approximately USD 253.9 million).

The Main Market Index declined by 16.59 points, or 0.19 percent, to settle at 8,753.24 points. Trading volume stood at 199.3 million shares through 10,309 transactions, valued at KD 29.8 million (around USD 97 million).

Meanwhile, the Premier Market Index edged down by 4.23 points, or 0.05 percent, closing at 9,039.94 points. A total of 110.8 million shares were traded via 9,484 transactions, with a value of KD 48.1 million (approximately USD 156.6 million).

The Main 50 Index recorded the steepest decline, falling 54.68 points, or 0.54 percent, to 10,097.62 points. Trading activity totaled 165.7 million shares across 7,451 transactions, with a value of KD 24.5 million (about USD 79.7 million).

Including a 24% discount on purchases from Talabat and Xcite and a movie screening entry on July 24th

Exclusive offers for NBK 247 Cashback Visa Platinum Prepaid Card holders

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: As part of its ongoing commitment to rewarding its customers and enhancing their banking experience, National Bank of Kuwait announced a range of exclusive offers and unique benefits for holders of the NBK 247 Cashback Visa Platinum Prepaid Card, in celebration of “247 Day” which falls on July 24, 2026.

This initiative underscores NBK’s dedication to providing comprehensive banking experience through its strategic partnerships with leading brands, enabling it to offer high-quality promotions that enrich the customers’ experience and enhance the value of using bank cards in their daily lives.

During “247 Day” NBK is offering a distinctive collection of promotions combining entertainment and shopping specifically for NBK 247 Cashback Visa Platinum Prepaid Card holders.

- An instant 24% discount on Talabat app purchases when paying with the card.
- Receiving an instant 24% discount on same-day purchases through the Xcite app.
- Benefitting from an exclusive screening of Spider-Man: Brand New Day in collaboration with Cinescape, an exceptional entertainment experience available to a select number of cardholders.

These exclusive offers are valid for one day only, July 24, 2026. Customers can apply for the card through the NBK Mobile Banking App.



Anwar Al-Ballam

Al-Ballam: This offer is not simply about offering cashback; it's a step towards elevating our customers' rewards through exclusive experiences and strategic partnerships that enrich their lifestyles.



Through this initiative, NBK continues to utilize its strategic partnerships with leading service providers in the entertainment, technology, and food delivery sectors to offer innovative promotions that go beyond the conventional concept of cashback, further providing customers with real value and high-quality experiences that align with their lifestyles.

On this occasion, Mr. Anwar Al-Ballam, AVP - Cards Services Management at National Bank of Kuwait, commented: “At NBK, we are committed to making ‘247 Day’ more than just a package of offers; it’s a comprehensive experience that reflects the true value provided by 247 Cashback Visa Platinum Prepaid Card to our customers. Through this initiative, we reaffirm our commitment to rewarding them not only with cashback but also with exclusive experiences and strategic partnerships that enrich their lifestyles”.

Al-Ballam added: “We continue to invest in developing our products and services to meet our customers’ evolving aspirations and needs, and we always strive to offer innovative benefits that strengthen their connection with NBK and reinforce its position as their first choice for their daily banking transactions”.

The 247 Cashback Visa Platinum Prepaid Card is one of NBK’s most innovative banking solutions, offering customers up to 24% cashback on select categories of their daily spending, making it their ideal companion around the clock.

Through the “247 Day” campaign, NBK reaffirms its commitment to providing innovative initiatives that enhance customer experience and reinforce the Bank’s leadership in offering advanced banking solutions that meet the demands of modern life.

Project awards decline sequentially in Q2-2026 led by war impact

By KAMCO Invest

The aggregate value of contracts awarded in the GCC witnessed a 25.4% q-o-q drop to reach USD 59.4 Bn as compared to USD 79.6 Bn in Q1-2026. All GCC countries witnessed q-o-q declines, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, which registered a 160.4% q-o-q jump in total contract awards during Q2-2026 to reach USD 30.0 Bn. Qatar witnessed the largest contraction in q-o-q project awards, registering USD 931 Mn in total contracts awarded during Q2-2026 against USD 9.3 Bn in Q1-2026. From a sectoral q-o-q perspective, all GCC sectors recorded q-o-q declines in the value of contracts awarded during Q2-2026, with the exception of the Oil Sector, which registered a 269% q-o-q increase to reach USD 13.7 Bn. The overall q-o-q drop in the GCC’s aggregate value of contracts awarded during the quarter was mainly due to impact of the Iran war in the region and its global and regional effect on economic activity.

On the other hand, the picture was different in terms of y-o-y performance as aggregate value of contracts in the GCC increased by 30.0% to reach USD 59.4 Bn as compared to USD 45.7 Bn in Q2-2025. This improvement was driven largely by a substantial upturn in contract awards within Saudi Arabia and Oman, which represent the two largest percentage y-o-y growth in projects markets in the region during the quarter. In contrast, UAE, Bahrain, and Qatar recorded y-o-y decline in project awards during the same period.

According to MEED, overall contract awards in the wider Middle East region witnessed a sharp decline in the months following the commencement of the Iran war. The total monthly contract awards in the MENA region stood at USD 35.5 Bn in February-2026, but after the onset of the Iran war, this figure fell substantially to USD 19.2 Bn in March, USD 16.3 Bn in April-2026, and USD 16.8 Bn in May-2026.

Contract awards in Saudi Arabia improved 53.6% y-o-y in Q2-2026 to reach USD 30.0 Bn as compared to USD 19.5 Bn in Q2-2025. Similarly, project awards in Kuwait increased by 49.1% yoy to reach USD 2.0 Bn as compared to USD 1.3 Bn in Q2-2025. Meanwhile, contract awards in Oman jumped 341.7% y-o-y to reach USD 5.9 Bn as compared to USD 1.3 Bn. On the other hand, contract awards in the UAE recorded a 5.4% y-o-y dip to reach USD 20.5 Bn, while total projects awarded in Qatar declined by 40.8% y-o-y to reach USD 931 Mn as compared to USD 1.6 Bn in Q2-2025.

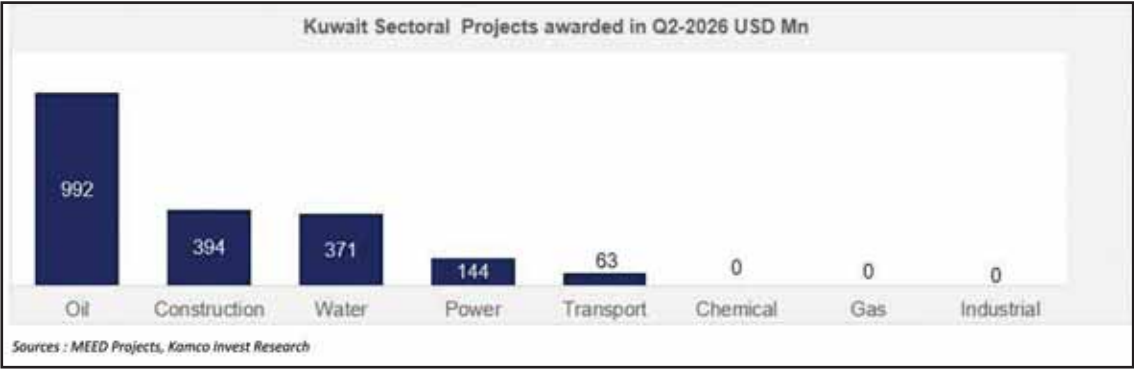
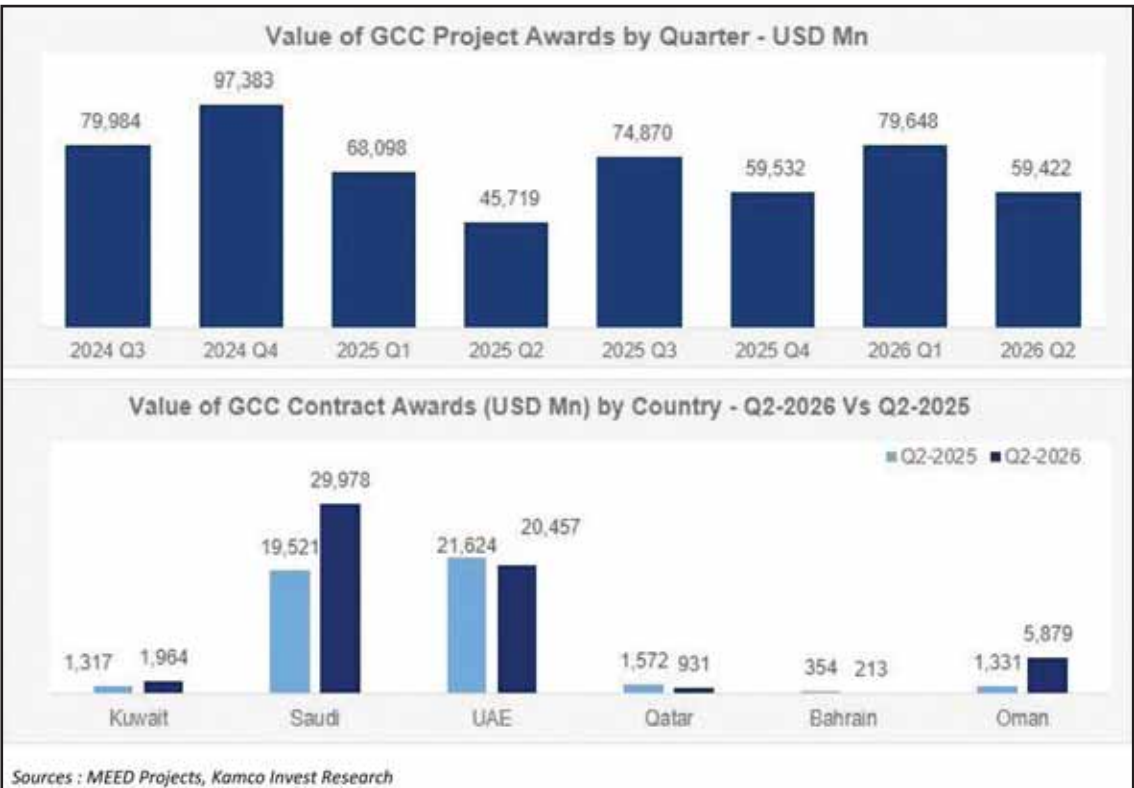
The y-o-y growth of the GCC contracts was also mainly driven by greater contract awards in the region’s Oil Sector during the quarter, which reached USD 13.7 Bn as compared to USD 986.0 Mn in Q2-2025. Moreover, the Construction Sector, the largest sector in terms of value of contracts awarded, also witnessed strong 27.6% y-o-y improvements in the total value of projects awarded, which reached USD 21.9 Bn during the quarter.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia was the only country in the GCC that recorded an increase in total projects awarded in terms of q-o-q comparison and y-o-y comparison. The total value of contracts awarded in Saudi Arabia during Q2-2026 reached USD 30.0 Bn, recovering from the second-lowest level recorded over the preceding twenty-one quarters, which amounted to USD 11.5 Bn in Q1-2026. Contract awards increased across four of the eight sectors within the Kingdom’s projects market during the quarter. This broadbased upturn was spearheaded by the Construction sector, which recorded a 184.4% y-o-y surge in contract awards to reach USD 14.2 Bn, compared to USD 5.0 Bn in Q2-2025, followed by the Gas sector, which escalated from USD 0.8 Bn in projects awarded during Q2-2025 to USD 4.4 Bn in contracts awarded in Q2-2026.

Similarly, the Transport and Water sectors registered substantial double-digit growth in contracts awarded during the quarter, with values reaching USD 7.0 Bn and USD 2.5 Bn, respectively. Meanwhile, the three remaining sectors experienced y-o-y contractions in Q2-2026, most notably the Power Sector, which witnessed an 89.7% y-o-y decline in projects awarded during the sector to reach USD 648.0 Mn against USD 6.3 Bn in Q2-2025.

Notable contracts awarded in the Kingdom during Q2-2026 include the USD 4.6 Bn contract awarded by the Ministry of Defense to leading local contractor Al-Bawani Company for the construction of its headquarters building. Furthermore, another significant project awarded during the quarter was the USD 1.3 Bn contract for the construction of the Sheikh Jaber Al-Sabah Road project in Riyadh. This project was awarded to a joint venture



comprising Riyadh-based Al-Rashid Trading & Contracting Company (RTCC) and Turkiye’s IC Ictas. The project, which spans 12 KM from Khurais Road to Al-Thumama Road in Riyadh, also entails the construction of five interchanges: Prince Bandar interchange, King Abdullah interchange, Imam Abdullah interchange, Dammam Road interchange, and Al-Thumama interchange.

Another noteworthy project awarded during the quarter was the USD 727 Mn contract for the main construction works on the development of the Waldorf Astoria superblock, awarded by Diriyah Company to the joint venture of Hassan Allam Construction Saudi and UCC Saudi. The Waldorf Astoria superblock comprises a mixed-use development, which includes a Waldorf Astoria hotel, Waldorf Astoria-branded residences, commercial and residential facilities, and office space.

UAE

The total value of projects awarded in the UAE declined by 5.4% y-o-y to reach USD 20.5 Bn in Q2-2026, compared to USD 21.6 Bn in Q2-2025, according to data collected by MEED Projects. In terms of q-o-q performance, aggregate value of projects awarded in the UAE registered a steeper decline of 56.6% highlighting the adverse impact of the war in the region had the Emirates projects market. The contraction in contract awards was underpinned by a broad-based reduction in y-o-y project awards for seven out of the eight sectors during the quarter, led by the Gas sector, which recorded a 99.4% y-o-y fall in contracts awarded to reach USD 30 Mn against USD 5.3 Bn in Q2-2025. The Emirates projects market stepped down from being the largest projects market in the GCC for the two quarters preceding Q2-2026 to the second-largest projects market during the quarter. The Emirates’ share of the total value of projects awarded in the GCC during Q2-2026 reached 34.4%, declining from 47.3% in the corresponding period of 2025.

From a sectoral perspective, the Oil sector constituted the largest proportion of new project

awards in the UAE during Q2-2026, representing 56.4% of total projects awarded in the Emirates, reaching USD 11.5 Bn compared to USD 230 Mn awarded in Q2-2025. Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (Adnoc) has recently announced its plans to allocate USD 54.4 Bn of its USD 150 Bn capex budget for the next five years toward new contract awards during the upcoming two years (2026-2028). Adnoc has indicated its intention to direct 70% of these funds to upstream oil and gas projects, while the remaining 30% are designated for downstream projects.

Kuwait

The total value of projects awarded in Kuwait during Q2-2026 improved 49.1% y-o-y to reach USD 2.0 Bn against USD 1.3 Bn in Q2-2025, according to MEED Projects. However, in terms of q-o-q performance, the total value of contracts awarded in Kuwait during Q2-2026 fell sharply by 65.4% reflecting the impact of the instability caused by the war in the region. Over 50% (USD 992 Mn) of the value of projects awarded in Kuwait during the quarter were awarded in the Oil Sector, while 20% (USD 394 Mn) of the value of projects awarded fell into the Construction Sector during the same period.

The Kuwait Oil Company has awarded a USD 992 Mn contract to develop the export facilities and upgrade the existing export network for Jurassic Light Oil in Kuwait (JLO). Among other components, the project includes the development of nine new crude oil storage tanks, each rated at 618 million barrels of usable capacity, a north-tank farm, and the installation of a JLO pump station equipped with high-pressure centrifugal pumps that are skid-mounted and redundant. Meanwhile, Kuwait’s aggregate value of contracts awarded in the Water Sector jumped to USD 371 Mn during Q2-2026 against USD 11 Mn in Q2-2025.

Conversely, total projects awarded in Kuwait’s Power Sector declined by 29.8% y-o-y to reach USD 144 Mn as compared to USD 205 Mn during

the corresponding period of the previous year. Notable projects awarded in Kuwait during Q2-2026 included the USD 100 Mn project to construct a substation in Wafra in the Al-Ahmadi Governorate, awarded to the local Al-Ahleia Switchgear Company. The construction of the substation (400/132/33kV) is scheduled for completion by January-2029. Another notable project awarded in the country during the quarter was the USD 565 Mn upstream oil project awarded to Kuwait’s Heavy Engineering Industries & Shipbuilding Company (Heisco) by Kuwait Oil Company (KOC).

Qatar

The total value of contracts awarded in Qatar registered a substantial y-o-y contraction of 40.8%, reaching USD 931 Mn in Q2-2026 against USD 1.6 Bn in Q2-2025, according to data from MEED Projects. Furthermore, the aggregate value of contracts awarded also experienced a steeper q-o-q decline of 90% during the period, reflecting a sharp drop in contracts awarded due to the impact of the conflict in the region.

The y-o-y decline in contract awards was principally attributable to the absence of contracts awarded in five out of the eight sectors during the quarter, including the Chemical, Gas, Industrial, and Power sectors. The largest value of projects awarded in Qatar was in the Oil Sector, which reached USD 491 Mn during Q2-2026, followed by the Construction Sector with an aggregate project award value of USD 293 Mn. Meanwhile, the aggregate value of contracts awarded in the Water Sector surged by 320% y-o-y to reach USD 147 Mn as compared to USD 35 Mn in Q2-2025. Notable projects awarded in Qatar during Q2-2026 included the USD 110 Mn project for the completion of the remaining works on the construction of the strategic trunk sewer from Sheehaniya to Doha North Sewage Treatment Works (DN STW) and the development of a sewage terminal pumping station at DN STW – P02.

Oman

The total value of contracts awarded in Oman witnessed y-o-y jump of 341.7%, reaching USD 5.9 Bn in Q2-2026 against USD 1.3 Bn in Q2-2025, according to data from MEED Projects. Conversely, aggregate value of projects awarded in the Sultanate remained stable only recording 0.2% q-o-q marginal decline underlining the Oman project market’s resilience during the instability period. The y-o-y improvement in contract awards in the Sultanate was principally attributable to the jump in contracts awarded in the Power Sector which reached USD 4.5 Bn during Q2-2025 as compared to no contracts awarded in the Power Sector during Q2-2025. Moreover, the total value of projects awarded in Oman’s Gas Sector improved 30.0% y-o-y to reach USD 355 Mn. In comparison, the aggregate value of contracts awarded in the Transport Sector declined by 24.3% y-o-y to reach USD 349 Mn in Q2-2026 against USD 461 Mn in Q2-2025. Notable projects awarded in Oman during the quarter included the USD 2.3 Bn 15-year performance-based contract awarded to a consortium led by SUEZ. The project is entailed to provide basic water and wastewater services to roughly 43% of the Sultanate’s population.

GCC Projects Market Outlook

The recent efforts to resolve the conflict in the region have bolstered the outlook for the GCC projects market in both the short and long term. According to data compiled by MEED Projects, there are currently USD 2.05 trillion in upcoming projects across the GCC, of which Saudi Arabia accounts for over 50%, followed by the UAE with 26.1% of the regional total.

From a sectoral perspective on the GCC project’s outlook, the GCC Construction sector is poised to capture the largest share of upcoming projects (39.5%), followed by the Transport sector at 16.3%, and the Power sector, which is expected to account for 15.6%. Saudi Arabia represents 63% of the total value of Power projects currently under planning and execution phases in the GCC in 2026, followed by the UAE, which accounts for 35%. One of the largest planned and un-awarded GCC Power projects that are out to bid in 2026 includes the USD 6 Bn King Abdullah City for Atomic & Renewable Energy (KA-CARE) nuclear power reactor package 1 in Saudi Arabia. Overall, the majority of the GCC’s upcoming projects are currently in the Design stage, representing a total value of USD 855.1 Bn worth of projects. This is followed by the Study stage, which accounts for USD 566.2 Bn worth of projects, and then the Bid Evaluation stage, which encompasses USD 209.2 Bn worth of projects.

Ongoing support for Diraya campaign

KFH urges vigilance against fraudulent online links

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) warns customers to remain cautious when dealing with fraudulent on-line links, reaffirming its commitment to customer protection and secure banking practices. This warning comes as part of KFH’s ongoing support for the Diraya campaign, launched in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) to promote banking awareness.

In a press release, KFH stated that the new

form of online scam involves sending a message with a suspicious link tricking victims to click the link to visit a particular website or participate in a survey. Once they click the link, their devices will be hacked, enabling the hacker to access and exploit their personal data for harmful purposes.

KFH urged customers to stay vigilant and refrain from disclosing their personal information to requests received through e-mails, text messages, or phone calls, as they attempt to obtain customers’ banking information to

steal their funds or data.

KFH advised customers to be careful when receiving links as these links could lead to theft of sensitive banking information. The bank also recommended that customers protect their bank accounts by avoiding the storage of confidential information, such as card numbers or passwords, on their mobile phones. Additionally, customers were urged not to share their OTP with anyone and to log out of the bank’s application or website promptly after finishing a transaction.



Trump targets Canadian autos, dairy

US imposes 50% tariffs on Canadian imports

WASHINGTON, July 21, (AP): President Donald Trump on Monday imposed 50% tariffs on most Canadian goods, declaring that Canada has unfairly discriminated against American autos, alcohol and dairy products.

The move could unleash a new wave of economic chaos, with risks of higher inflation and further fraying of relations between two nations that had been closely woven together before Trump’s return to the White House. The administration official previewing the action said that Canada was one of the only nations other than China that retaliated against Trump’s previous tariffs and must be held accountable.

The official insisted on anonymity on a call with reporters to preview the president’s actions and said that Trump signed three proclamations to launch the tariffs under Section 338 of the 1930 Trade Act. Several Democratic lawmakers last year proposed repealing the section because they said Trump could use it to destabilize the economy.

The new 50% tariffs would exclude energy products, potash, fish and critical minerals, but they would include goods that had previously been protected from import taxes by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or USMCA. That 2020 trade pact was not renewed by the U.S., triggering a new set of negotiations that could run until 2036.

The White House said in a fact sheet that the tariffs would go into effect in 30 days, meaning there is time for negotiations as Trump has not always followed through on his announced tax hikes on imports.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said in a statement that his government believes in the “benefits of free and fair trade,” having signed “more than 20 new economic and security partnerships.” He said Canada is prepared to negotiate with the Trump administration.

“This trade dispute has raised costs for families, particularly in the U.S.,” Carney said. “Canada stands ready to engage intensively to address outstanding issues with the U.S. to the mutual benefit of our citizens.”

Still, the tariffs could escalate into a wider trade war as Canada seeks to defend its economy. Ontario Premier Doug Ford saw a possible showdown ahead.

“If these tariffs proceed, Canada should respond tariff for tariff, dollar for dollar,” Ford posted on social media.

Candace Laing, CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, said the Trump administration’s moves were “regrettable” but the two countries need to use the 30-day window before the tariffs start “to make meaningful progress in advancing formal talks.”

Chris Swonger, CEO of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, also called for a deal: “We encourage policymakers on both sides of the border to pursue a negotiated solution that restores market access for U.S. spirits and avoids further harm to the U.S. hospitality sector.”

But the use of a Great Depression-era law to impose the tariffs broadens some of the risks, as those tariffs could be applied to other U.S. trading partners, not just Canada, and inject “massive uncertainty” into the global economy, said Scott Lincicome, vice president of general economics at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank.

“We crossed the Rubicon,” Lincicome said. “The invocation of 338 is the nuclear option for Trump tariffs.”

The new tariffs carry serious political and economic risks for Trump ahead of the November midterm elections for control of Congress. His “Liberation Day” tariffs last year in April provoked a financial market meltdown over concerns about inflation and a recession, prompting him to walk back the rates for a period of negotiation.

The Supreme Court ruled this February that Trump had lacked the legal authority to impose the tariffs by declaring an economic emergency, causing the administration to find alternative ways to raise import taxes based on a series of legal authorities.

Tariffs are taxes on imports, which companies can then pass along to consumers in the form of higher prices. The president maintains that the costs created by tariffs will cause manufacturing to relocate to the U.S., though there is little evidence of that in the economic data.

“These new taxes will raise prices on American families and likely lead to retaliation against the very industries Trump purportedly wants to protect,” said Rep. Suzan DelBene, D-Wash., who is chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign

Committee.

The latest import taxes could worsen Trump’s weak ratings on the economy. He promised voters when running for the presidency that he would bring prices down, but the annual inflation rate has risen since he became president because the tariffs and the war in Iran are pushing up oil prices.

The Trump administration official said the president had also requested that his aides look into additional tariffs on Canada because its wildfires hurt air quality in the U.S. He had publicly threatened to do so in social media posts.

At the World Cup final on Sunday, Trump watched the game with Carney. The Trump administration official said their time together at the game was not a working visit to discuss trade and tariffs.

Trump claims in the proclamations that Canada discriminates against American autos, alcohol and cheese relative to other nations, but his argument rests in large part on retaliatory actions taken by Canada after the U.S. president imposed tariffs on Canada under the pretext that it should do more to stop fentanyl smuggling.

Trump noted in his autos proclamation that Canada maintained, starting in April 2025, a 25% tariff on the imports of U.S. motor vehicles that did not qualify for preferential treatment under the USMCA.

The White House said that, regarding alcohol, all but two Canadian provinces and territories halted the purchase and retailing of American alcoholic beverages beginning last year, which was also a response to Trump’s tariffs and taunts of making Canada the 51st state.

But Trump has long objected to Canada’s treatment of U.S. cheese, saying in his proclamation that Canada discriminates against the U.S. compared to Europe on dairy products.

Trump and Carney have had a frosty relationship, with Carney, a former central banker, who pledged to go “elbows up” for Canada during his election campaign last year.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January, Carney called out Trump – without naming him – by saying that the “most powerful” countries are using the economy to coerce less powerful nations.

Trump responded at the time by saying: “Canada lives because of the United States.”

Africa faces biggest share of future hunger burden

Conflicts and energy shocks threaten progress against global hunger, UN agency head warns

ROME, July 21, (AP): Conflicts and disruptions to global energy markets could push millions more people into hunger by driving up fuel, fertilizer and food costs, the head of the Rome-based International Fund for Agricultural Development warned, as a new United Nations report showed global progress against hunger remains fragile.

The U.N. food security report, released Tuesday, found global hunger has eased modestly in recent years, but projected more than 500 million people could still face chronic hunger by 2030. Africa is expected to bear the largest share of that burden.

In an interview with The Associated Press on July 10, IFAD President Alvaro Lario said geopolitical tensions and potential disruptions to shipping and energy supplies, including uncertainty surrounding the Strait of Hormuz during the Iran war, could leave an additional 9-18 million people facing hunger if the shocks persist.

“We are in a current era where we have the highest number of conflicts and are still increasing,” Lario said. “Whenever there is a conflict, also hunger, displacement, refugees increase.”

Conflict remains one of the biggest obstacles to reducing hunger worldwide, Lario added.

Wars and geopolitical tensions can disrupt shipping, energy supplies and agricultural inputs, increasing costs across food systems already strained

by inflation. Lario stressed that hunger and conflict often reinforce one another, creating a cycle that is difficult to break without greater stability.

Higher energy prices are already affecting fertilizers and agricultural production, he said. The impact is especially significant for small-scale farmers, many of whom rely on diesel fuel to pump water, harvest crops and transport goods to market.

Rising fuel costs increase production expenses and can feed directly into higher food prices.

The new report identifies affordability as one of the world’s biggest food security challenges. While food production continues to grow, roughly a third of the global population still can’t afford a healthy diet. In low-income countries, that figure rises to about 77%, according to Lario.

“The biggest challenge is no longer simply producing enough food, but making healthy diets affordable,” he said.

Climate change is adding further pressure to food systems and rural livelihoods.

Lario noted that floods, prolonged droughts and extreme heat are increasingly disrupting agriculture around the world and have become a common reality for many communities.

Governments should focus on resilience and adaptation before disasters strike, rather than relying solely on emergency responses afterward, he said.

“This is just becoming the new normal,” Lario said. “We are seeing floods in many countries. We’re still seeing droughts that have been expanding for four or five years.”

The fund is increasing investments in climate-adaptation programs aimed at helping rural communities withstand floods, droughts and extreme heat, he said, arguing that support is urgently needed for the millions of small farmers who produce much of the world’s food.

The report highlights Africa as the world’s most pressing food-security challenge. For the first time, the continent has overtaken Asia as the region with the largest number of hungry people, and nearly 60% of the world’s chronically undernourished people could live there by 2030.

Lario attributed the shift partly to rapid population growth and slower economic gains than in parts of Asia, and he called for greater investment in agriculture, infrastructure and food systems.

African countries currently import nearly \$100 billion worth of food each year, he said, underscoring the need for stronger local production, storage, distribution and regional trade networks.

Conflicts, energy-market disruptions and climate extremes threaten to derail progress unless governments invest in more resilient food systems, Lario said.

Borrower defaults surge as student loan repayments restart

WASHINGTON, July 21, (AP): Defaults on student loans have surged across the United States, reaching record levels as borrowers struggle to keep up with payments.

The numbers have spiked since payments came due again following a lengthy pause intended to provide relief during the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, around 9.5 million people – 1 in 5 federal student loan borrowers – are in default, meaning they are more than nine months behind on their payments.

While credit scores can suffer when borrowers are just a few months behind, entering default brings the possibility of more serious consequences, including garnished wages or Social Security payments. For now, the Trump administration has held off on such involuntary collections.

Despair is on the rise, advocates say.

“Folks are struggling to make ends meet and cover all the rising costs of everything else. The growing student loan bills are making things worse and folks are falling behind,” said Aissa Canchola Bañez, policy director for the advocacy group Protect Borrowers.

Here are some takeaways from an Associated Press analysis of student loan defaults.

The U.S. Education Department allowed borrowers to suspend federal student loan payments during the economic tumult of the pandemic. Though payments technically started coming due again in 2023, the Biden administration provided a one-year buffer period that ended in the fall of 2024.

Loans couldn’t enter default during this time, and federal programs

designed to help delinquent borrowers and debt forgiveness initiatives brought millions out of default.

Starting in June 2025, with the pause having ended nine months prior, borrowers began defaulting again for the first time since the pandemic.

Since then, the number of defaulted borrowers has exploded from 5.3 million to around 9.5 million, according to data from the Office of Federal Student Aid. Out of \$1.7 trillion in federally backed student loans nationwide, \$233.3 billion is in default.

Another wave of defaults could be on the way. The Trump administration has eliminated the most generous income-driven repayment plan, Saving on a Valuable Education, or SAVE, as part of its overhaul of the federal student loan system. The millions of borrowers who had been enrolled in SAVE now will face the strain of paying more each month.

Starting this month, new borrowers pick between one standard repayment plan and one income-driven option, as opposed to having several options. The Education Department has described the changes as a simplification of a “fragmented and confusing” system.

Many of the states with the highest concentrations of defaulted borrowers are in the South, an AP analysis found.

Mississippi has the nation’s highest default rate at 28.3%, and others near the top include Louisiana, Alabama, West Virginia, Oklahoma, Georgia, South Carolina and Texas. Rounding out the 15 states with the highest default rates are Alaska, Arizona, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, New Mexico and Nevada.

Of those states, New Mexico was the only one Republican President Donald Trump didn’t win in 2024.

Why TIPS can protect against inflation, and when they hurt

By The Associated Press

Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities were introduced in 1997 to provide inflation-protected interest and principal payments. Unlike other bonds, which generate returns in nominal terms, TIPS act as a direct hedge against inflation.

TIPS are bonds issued by the US Treasury with maturities of five, 10, or 30 years. They pay a fixed rate of interest every six months, but the amount varies based on changes in the principal value.

Every six months, the Treasury updates the principal to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index. If inflation goes up, the principal value increases.

Investors holding TIPS to maturity will receive either the adjusted principal amount or the original principal amount, whichever is greater.

TIPS have indeed outpaced inflation over longer periods. Bonds in most maturity ranges have also outperformed other investment-grade bonds.

But volatility has been higher, as well.

Over the trailing 20-year period through May 31, TIPS with maturities of 10 years or more have been nearly twice as volatile as those with maturities of five to 10 years, but returns have also been lower.

The main reason?

TIPS can be highly sensitive to changes in interest rates. Like other bonds, their principal value declines during periods of rising interest rates, and that may or may not be offset by adjustments for higher inflation at the same time. Interest rate risk can be particularly pronounced for TIPS because issuance has historically been weighted more toward long-term bonds; as a result, most TIPS benchmarks have relatively long durations.

On the extreme end, TIPS with maturities of 10 years and more have lost as much as 41% of their value during interest rate spikes.

When interest rates spiked during the 2013 taper tantrum, TIPS lost significantly more than other investment-grade bonds. And their limited liquidity was a major liability during the global financial crisis in September and October 2008, when TIPS lost nearly 12% of their value.

Investors have several options for investing in TIPS.

First is purchasing an individual bond through TreasuryDirect or a brokerage account.

Constructing a TIPS ladder, which is a series of bonds with staggered maturity dates, is another option. Investors seeking a steady stream of income during retirement, for example, could purchase 30 separate sets of TIPS with maturity dates ranging from one year to 30 years from now. Coupons from the bond portfolio

and cash flows from maturing bonds can be used to cover each year’s living expenses.

TIPS funds are a bit more straightforward because they don’t require purchasing individual bonds, although they also lack the cash flow-matching properties of a ladder.

In addition, iShares now offers a series of target-maturity TIPS ETFs with maturity dates up to 2036.

If you’re investing in a TIPS fund, I recommend using one with a short- or intermediate-term maturity and holding it for at least two to six years, as outlined in Morningstar’s Role in Portfolio Framework.

For individual bonds, you’ll want to match up the timing of when you’ll need the proceeds with the maturity date of the bond. Although the principal value will still fluctuate, interest rate risk is a nonissue if you hold the bond to maturity.

If you’re a younger investor, you may not need any exposure to TIPS. Human capital – or the present value of all the earnings you’re going to generate during your lifetime – is likely your largest asset. Because wages normally increase over time to keep up with inflation, this human capital provides a built-in hedge against higher prices for goods and services. Also, your investment portfolio is probably heavily weighted toward stocks, which are one of the best ways to offset long-term inflation risk.

Investors approaching retirement or already in retirement have a greater need for an inflation hedge to protect their fixed-income holdings. Based on Morningstar’s Lifetime Allocation Indexes, it’s reasonable to allocate 20% to 40% of a portfolio’s fixed-income assets to TIPS.

Individuals who construct a ladder of these bonds to support spending during retirement may be able to allocate a higher percentage of their portfolio to TIPS, but this strategy is designed to be self-liquidating. In other words, a 30-year TIPS ladder will end up with a portfolio balance of zero by the end of year 30. That means retirees concerned about longevity risk or who want to leave money behind for heirs will want to keep some assets invested outside the TIPS ladder to fund those goals.

It’s also important to note that both interest payments and increases in the principal value for TIPS are subject to ordinary income tax. As a result, TIPS are best held in a tax-sheltered account, such as an IRA.

Finally, TIPS aren’t always a compelling portfolio addition. At times, they’ve had negative real yields, which would lead to a loss of spending power over time despite the inflation adjustment.

New York Times accuses gov't of sweeping bid to expose confidential sources

Trump administration's subpoena push went beyond reporters

WASHINGTON, July 21, (AP): US President Donald Trump's administration sought phone records of several New York Times journalists and even those of some of their relatives, according to a motion unsealed Monday - an unusually aggressive attempt to unmask the confidential sources of reporters who wrote about Trump's Qatari-gifted Air Force One jet.

The push by the Republican president's administration to compel the identity of sources in the form of additional subpoenas comes at a time when the executive branch's relationship with the press is increasingly contentious. The efforts, described in a letter-motion filed by the Times over the weekend, were more expansive than previously known, the newspaper noted, and also covered a time frame that exceeded the news articles in question.

"Two of the subpoenas seek records beginning on January 1, 2026, long before the events that are purportedly the basis for the Department's investigation," lawyers for the Times wrote in the letter. "That timeframe strongly suggests that the Department is using this investigation not to focus on any purported concerns arising from the July 8 and 9 articles, but instead to forage for information about the Journalists' source relationships more broadly."

The phone records subpoenas are on top of grand jury subpoenas served July 10 on three journalists that sought to compel testimony from the reporters about the identify of their sources. The Times has separately challenged those grand jury subpoenas and U.S. District Judge Arun Subramanian is scheduled to hear arguments Thursday. The judge has also frozen enforcement of the phone records subpoenas pending a ruling on the newspaper's motion to quash those.

Lawyers for the newspaper noted that some of the phone records subpoenas were issued on the same day as the grand jury ones, an additional one was issued on July 14 and another was issued on July 16 - after the



US President Donald Trump walks down the stairs of Air Force One upon his arrival at Joint Base Andrews, Md., Sunday, July 19, 2026. (AP)

Times had already moved to quash the grand jury subpoenas.

In arguing for the phone records subpoenas to be spiked, the Times said the government had acted in "bad faith" and had ignored its own protocols by not giving the journalists advance notice that records were being sought and by demanding the information "without first conducting any serious investigation."

The newspaper's lawyers said the additional subpoenas call "into question the accuracy" of testimony

given last week by Jay Clayton, the U.S. attorney in Manhattan, where the grand jury subpoenas were issued. At his confirmation hearing to be the Trump administration's director of national intelligence, Clayton said that "we followed the protocols" and that the government had taken "the least intrusive possible" steps possible.

The Justice Department has justified the grand jury subpoenas by saying that "reporters are not the targets, those leaking classified information are."

The additional subpoenas included a request for phone records of one reporter's mother and two of the journalists' spouses. The motion noted that the mother in question is a mental health professional with confidential client relationships and that one of the two spouses is the general counsel of a law firm.

"The disclosure of additional subpoenas for confidential newsgathering information of the Journalists is deeply concerning, revealing yet another instance of the alarming pat-

tern of conduct detailed in the Motion to Quash," the news organization's lawyers wrote.

"These actions demonstrate abuse of the grand jury process, continued bad faith attacks on the Journalists, violations of the Department's own internal regulations and disregard for the law in this Circuit intended to protect critical First Amendment interests," the motion stated.

In a response posted Tuesday morning, the Justice Department said that it had complied with its own

regulations in issuing the subpoenas and that it had taken investigative steps before seeking them. The department said it was authorized to delay disclosure of the subpoenas but had decided to alert lawyers for the journalists to give them an opportunity to challenge.

"Any subpoenas served for a phone number not used by one of the movants was a result of information in a law enforcement database indicating that the phone number was associated with the movant," lawyers for the department said, "If the Government determines that these phone numbers were not used by the movants, the Government will not pursue the corresponding subpoena(s)."

The grand jury subpoenas, delivered to reporters at their homes, marked a dramatic escalation of the Trump administration's crackdown on media leaks that free press advocates swiftly condemned as a government effort to intimidate news organizations. It followed an FBI search earlier this year of a Washington Post reporter's home and the seizure of her electronic devices.

The new jet in question, a present from Qatar that Trump's administration spent \$400 million to retrofit and upgrade, recently entered service. But Trump used an older model Air Force One jet to leave a NATO summit in Turkey earlier this month.

The Times, citing anonymous sources, reported that the switch had come at the urging of the Secret Service and that the newer plane lacked some of the advanced security features of the older Air Force One aircraft, including antimissile capabilities. On social media, Trump denied security concerns.

Trump's administration has clashed with the press, from newspapers to TV networks to the Voice of America, on multiple fronts since he returned to office last year. The methods include lawsuits, administrative actions and public threats.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees the press' ability to operate free of governmental restrictions.

The Conversation

How America's newspapers lost their voice

The Conversation is an independent and non-profit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.



By Ken Paulson

Middle Tennessee State University

Hazel Brannon Smith was almost certainly the most unpopular woman in Mississippi when she wrote an editorial in 1963 lambasting the racist White Citizens Councils in the Lexington Advertiser, a newspaper she owned.

"The hierarchy of rulers in this totalitarian-like organization permit no deviation from its official line - and those who believe in and stand for the traditional American concepts of human liberty, dignity, and decency, do so at their own peril," she wrote in an editorial that was both poetic and dangerous.

The councils constituted a network of white supremacy groups throughout the South, often with deep ties to prominent local citizens. They had already been targeting Smith with economic pressure, not for being a full-throated integrationist - she wasn't - but for editorials in which she insisted on adherence to the rule of law, demanded fairness for all and encouraged peaceful race relations.

Smith paid a steep price for her courage.

Death threats, arson in her pressroom, boycotts and even the firing of her husband as a hospital administrator did not temper her fight for liberty and justice. She became the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing, in 1964.

Smith's story is inspiring, yet by no means an isolated instance. But the long history of newspaper editorials may now be about to end, a casualty of both changing news values and economic pressure.

Since the birth of this nation, newspapers large and small have published their own opinion pieces challenging the powerful, calling for reform and demanding accountability. The editorials weren't always constructive. There were plenty of editorials criticizing Smith, and others were partisan attacks. But many reflected care for the community and calls for a better future.

Editorials - in their ideal form - are essentially letters from the newspaper itself to its readers explaining a problem, outlining the facts and then concluding what would be in the best interests of the community. You can agree or disagree, but the end result is that you gave it some thought, which is what the editorial writer intended anyway. Typically, the opinion is written by one journalist in consultation with the publisher, editor and knowledgeable colleagues, and relies in good part on the newspaper's own reporting.

In 1841, publisher Horace Greeley pioneered the standalone editorial page in the New York Tribune. The innovation, which separated the newspaper's views from news articles, was widely adopted by other publishers.

Over the past 185 years, newspaper editorials have played a role in virtually every important social and justice movement in American history. William Lloyd Garrison's call for the abolition of slavery in the Boston-based Liberator and the battle for women's suffrage spearheaded by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in The Revolution in New York City presaged and helped inspire similar calls for justice in the pages of local papers across America.

And when President Franklin Roosevelt ordered the internment of American citizens of Japanese descent in 1942, just one newspaper - The Bainbridge Review, on Bainbridge Island, Washington - called it out as the unconstitutional act it was. The paper saw the rounding up of citizens in its own community and would not stand silent.

During my career as editor-in-chief of USA Today and daily newspapers in Wisconsin, Florida and New York, I've reviewed thousands of editorials. I can tell you that on the local level, newspaper editorials tend to be about more mundane and yet essential topics like supporting local schools, monitoring the use of taxpayer dollars and calling out ineffective government processes.

In his book "Outrage, Passion & Common Sense" on historic editorials, journalist Michael Gartner began by quoting legendary journalist William Allen White on their importance:

"The editorial is the soul of the newspaper. Maybe the heart and the soul. And on a good newspaper that knows and understands and loves its hometown, or its home country, the editorial is the heart of the town, or nation as well."

Unfortunately, in a trend that began four years ago, editorials are quickly disappearing. Nominations for the Pulitzer Prize for editorials peaked in 1995 with 101 entries, but declined to just 25 this year, according to Pulitzer Prizes administrator Marjorie Miller. This led to combining editorials with other opinion pieces into a single category moving forward.

Some news companies have concluded that local editorials aren't in their interests. Editorials and endorsements have largely been jettisoned, along with the men and women who used their institutional knowledge to look out for their communities.

Gannett, now USA Today Co. Inc. and the largest newspaper company in the U.S., and Lee Enterprises, the third largest, led the scaling back of local editorials beginning in 2022.

Gannett was candid about its reasons, saying that editorials were "frequently cited" by readers as a reason for canceling their subscriptions. Speaking truth to power was affecting the bottom line.

A group of Gannett editors were also quoted as saying, "Readers don't want us to tell them what to think," according to The Washington Post.

In my experience, that's a straw man. Good editorials don't dictate. They're actually a balancing of ideas, looking out for a community with the perspective of a long-time and loyal resident who has seen it all. In fact, USA Today pioneered dual editorials, one offering its view, the other a differing perspective.

Granted, local editorials will yield fewer online clicks than major news or sports stories. But recent research indicates that readers remain hungry for the public accountability of government officials.

"As they have for the past four decades, most Americans say criticism from news organizations keeps political leaders from doing things they shouldn't," a Pew Research study found in 2024.

Despite the steady decline in daily newspaper editorials, I believe there remain ways for news organizations to restore the spirit of editorials in an economical and high-impact model. Some suggestions for today's newsrooms:

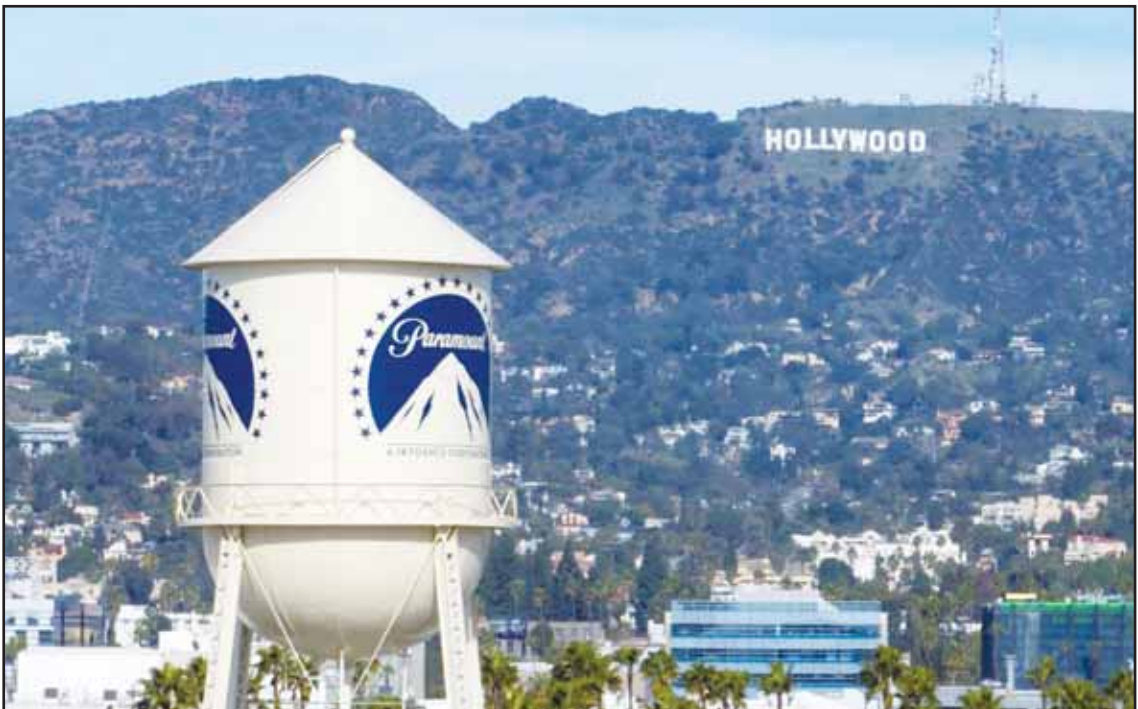
1. Publish editorials on an as-needed basis. They don't have to appear daily, but if published only when something absolutely needs to be addressed, the community will take notice. Give them the authoritative local take that no one else can.

2. Create a community editorial board composed of civic-minded residents with distinct and diverse viewpoints and open minds. Identify the most important issues facing your community and ask the board members to explore them, looking for consensus, but acknowledging legitimate points from all sides. Publish an editorial at least once a month and promote it heavily.

3. Collaborate with any other news outlets in your town to reinstate endorsement interviews. In a decades-long tradition, newspapers routinely invited incumbents and those running against them to discuss why they would best serve the community. Ask the tough questions and leave it to each outlet how to use the end product. That could lead to differing endorsements by different outlets or simply a comprehensive Q&A that the entire community sees. Public officials would be hard-pressed to skip the interview if their opponents' views are getting broad local exposure.

Any one of these approaches would help reinstate the accountability of public officials at a fraction of the costs once incurred by legacy news media.

In 1791, the first generation of Americans demanded that freedom of the press be part of the Constitution, counting on journalists to serve as a check on corruption and the abuse of power. Some debts are never fully paid. (AP)



The Paramount Pictures Water Tower is observed in Los Angeles on December 18, 2025, with the Hollywood sign in the background. (AP)

States win first round against deal

Judge pauses Paramount-Warner merger

NEW YORK, July 21, (AP): A federal judge on Monday ordered Paramount and Warner Bros. Discovery to halt their \$81 billion merger for at least two weeks, allowing states that are challenging the deal more time to see their case through in court.

Twelve states, led by California, sued to block Paramount's pending buyout of Warner last week - alleging that such a combination would "extinguish competition" in Hollywood and lead to fewer choices for consumers, particularly moviegoers and cable customers across the U.S.

The states' top prosecutors called on Warner and Paramount to not close the transaction until after a court had time to fully evaluate their claims. And when the companies refused, they filed for a temporary restraining order - which is what District Judge Araceli Martínez-Olguín granted on Monday. That opens the door to a potential preliminary injunction that the states are also seeking to effectively block the deal.

"This is a critical first win in our case to ensure this megamerger never sees the light of day," California Attorney General Rob Bonta said in a statement Monday. "History tells the tale of what happens when a few people have great power over markets that are central to Americans' lives: fewer opportunities for more people, worse products and services for all people."

A Warner-Paramount tie-up would bring together two of the five last legacy studios in Hollywood - as well as a host of TV networks, titles filling streaming libraries and news operations. Warner's HBO Max, fan favorites like "Harry Potter" and even CNN would come under the same roof of Paramount-owned CBS, movies like "Top Gun" and the Paramount+ streaming service.

Paramount, which was bought out

by Skydance just last year, has vowed to vigorously defend its acquisition - and touts regulatory greenlights the deal has received elsewhere, including from President Donald Trump's administration last month.

On Monday, Paramount said the states' antitrust arguments "are without merit" or "any basis in modern market realities" - and maintained that its merger with Warner will benefit consumers and workers alike. Timing for next steps also falls in line with the company's previous requests.

The temporary restraining order granted Monday halts the deal from progressing for at least 14 days, although the pause could be extended for up to 28 days. The court has set Aug. 3 as a date for a hearing on the states' preliminary injunction motion, but that schedule could also be pushed back.

The clock is ticking. Ahead of Monday's decision, the companies proposed wrapping up a preliminary injunction hearing by the end of August, leaving time to make a possible appeal by Sept. 30 - a date on the top of Paramount's mind because it's pledged to pay shareholders added "ticking fee" compensation amounting to about \$7 million per day if the deal isn't closed by then.

But the states called such a timeline unprecedented and unfair. They maintain that payments Paramount might have to incur after Sept. 30 were the risk of a decision the company made on its own - and argued in a hearing held Friday that commencing a trial in April 2027 would allow enough time for discovery and presenting proper evidence.

Including billions of dollars in debt, Paramount's proposed purchase of Warner is currently valued at nearly \$111 billion based on outstanding shares.

Paramount has repeatedly pointed to tech and streaming companies' growing

reach across the entertainment industry - and argues that merging with Warner would particularly help it compete with bigger rivals like Netflix. Last week, it said the states' challenge would help shield Netflix and others "who have harmed the market for theatrical exhibition" from meaningful competition.

The states' case doesn't focus on streaming. It alleges that a combined Paramount-Warner merger violates federal antitrust law because of what the companies' combined reach would become across three markets: theatrical movie distribution, theater releases of bigger blockbusters and the licensing of basic cable channels.

Their complaint says a combined Paramount-Warner could control nearly a third of both the theatrical film distribution market as well as basic cable programming. The states argued this would create a "media behemoth" with enough power to both raise prices for consumers and threaten workers' wages, while reducing production and quality of content.

In terms of movie theater releases, Paramount's lawyers have pointed to a growing list of blockbuster hits from studios that are not in Hollywood's "big five," such as A24 and Amazon's MGM. The states maintain the core legacy studios - which beyond Warner and Paramount include Disney, Universal and Sony - still make up the vast majority of the market.

Beyond California, states challenging the deal include Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon and Washington.

Outside of the U.S., Paramount has touted greenlights from regulators in countries like China, Canada and Australia. But regulatory reviews are also ongoing in the European Union and the U.K., which has separately suggested it may intervene.



Kenny Baker, from left, Anthony Daniels, Peter Mayhew, Carrie Fisher, Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill are seen during the filming of the CBS-TV special, “The Star Wars Holiday,” in Los Angeles, Nov. 13, 1978. (AP)

‘Star Wars’ prop sets record

Skywalker’s lightsaber sells for \$3.75 million at auction

LOS ANGELES, July 21, (AP): A lightsaber with Luke Skywalker’s severed hand from “The Empire Strikes Back” has sold for \$3.75 million at auction.

Heritage Auctions announced the results of its Hollywood & Entertainment Signature Auction on Monday.

The lightsaber, used onscreen by Mark Hamill in the climactic Cloud City fight where Darth Vader declares “I am your father” in the 1980 “Star Wars” sequel, included a severed hand effects rig used for when Vader sliced it off.

Heritage said the price was the highest ever fetched for a prop used in a “Star Wars” film.

A Wicked Witch of the West hat worn by actor Margaret Hamilton in 1939’s “The Wizard of Oz” brought in \$550,000 at the auction, and the cocoa-

colored top hat worn by Gene Wilder as the title character in 1971’s “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory” went for \$350,000.

Daenerys Targaryen’s chest with dragon eggs inside from the first season of “Game of Thrones” brought in \$312,500.

Two rugs essential to the convoluted plot of “The Big Lebowski” also sold. The one belonging to Jeff Bridges’ the Dude that “really tied the room together” and is soiled at the beginning of the 1998 film went for \$350,000. And the nicer one that he takes from his wealthy namesake outdid it with a price of \$375,000. The rugs went for far more than expected. Bidding began on each at \$15,000.

The items’ buyers and sellers were not identified.

A lucky find pays off

Chamberlain’s finals jacket brings big auction windfall

PORTLAND, Ore., July 21, (AP): A warmup jacket worn by Wilt Chamberlain during the 1972 NBA finals that was bought by a teenager for \$3.07 at an Oregon thrift store sold for \$89,600 at auction on Monday.

Quinn Brown had been eyeing a massive bin of clothes at a Goodwill store outside Portland in January when he saw someone toss a Lakers jacket with Chamberlain’s name on it back on the pile. Brown, who resells used clothes online, quickly grabbed it.

The jacket was auctioned by Sotheby’s, which had estimated its value between \$150,000 and \$250,000 before bidding closed Monday. It received a total of 48 bids, according to the auction house.



This undated photo provided by Sotheby’s shows a warmup jacket worn by Wilt Chamberlain during the 1972 NBA Finals that was found in an Oregon thrift store. (AP)

urements of a different jersey worn by Chamberlain, a towering figure at 7 feet, 1 inch (2.2 meters) tall, and discovered that they nearly aligned.

“I really just wanted to make sure, because it was so hard to believe at the time,” he said, adding that he had only ever read about such serendipitous thrift findings.

When he posted a photo of the jacket on social media, Sotheby’s contacted him about consigning the jacket to the auction house. Brown agreed, and an armored van came to pick it up.

Sotheby’s then did its own photo verification and determined that the jacket was worn by Chamberlain during the 1972 finals, in which he was named the finals MVP.

“Photomatching a piece of game-worn clothing to a specific Finals series, for a player of this era, is genuinely exceptional,” Sotheby’s website says. “As photomatched items worn by Chamberlain become exceedingly rare, this jacket is a piece of sports history.”

It is not the first Chamberlain item from the 1972 finals to fetch a hefty sum under the hammer: A game jersey he wore during the series sold for \$4.9 million at Sotheby’s in 2023, the fourth most expensive NBA jersey ever sold by the auction house.

As for his thrifed find, Brown said: “That was as good as it gets.”

90-year-old wreck resurfaces

ZAGREB, July 21, (Xinhua): The wreckage of a cargo ship believed to have sunk nearly 90 years ago has resurfaced in the Danube River near Opatovac in eastern Croatia, local officials said on Monday.

The discovery, made as the river’s water level continues to fall to record lows, has drawn strong public interest. The local municipality has posted photos of the wreck online to gather information from residents, historians and anyone with knowledge to help identify the vessel.

According to Croatian news agency Hina, Mayor of Lovas municipality Lea Vidic said she had received information suggesting that the ship’s sinking was reported in a newspaper article published in 1937.

Local residents recall spotting faint outlines of the wreck about 15 years ago, but say it has never

been so extensively exposed, Vidic said. If water levels continue to decline, more of the ship is likely to emerge, offering a rare opportunity to document a piece of the region’s river history, she added.

The Danube River has fallen to unprecedented low levels across eastern Croatia. The Croatian Meteorological and Hydrological Service recorded a water level of minus 108 cm at the Batina measuring station last week, the lowest since records began and 24 cm below the previous historic low of minus 84 cm set in 2022.

The unusually low water level has revealed other remnants of the past. Recently, two unexploded World War II-era aerial bombs were uncovered near Batina and safely removed by police.

Parliament seeks deal before recess

France moves to block social media for kids

PARIS, July 21, (AP): French lawmakers are racing against the clock to reach a compromise that would allow a bill banning social media for children under 15 to possibly enter into force at the start of the new school year in September.

With Parliament’s summer recess looming, time is running out. Seven members of the National Assembly and seven senators were set to meet Monday in a joint committee to seek an agreement that could be voted later this week. The European Commission has found that the latest version of the bill was not fully compatible with EU law.

French President Emmanuel Macron has strongly backed the ban, which could become one of the final major measures adopted under his leadership before he leaves office next year.

The main point of divergence between the National Assembly and the Senate concerns the scope of the platforms to be banned. The National Assembly voted to prohibit all online social networking services, whereas the senators wanted to establish a blacklist. The ban won’t cover online encyclopedias, educational or scientific directories, or platforms for the development and sharing of open-source software.

The bill, which also bans the use of mobile phones in high schools, had been devised to be compliant with the EU Digital Services Act. The law



Three boys use their phones while sitting outside a school in Sydney, Monday, Dec. 8, 2025. (AP)

imposes a set of strict requirements designed to keep internet users safe online.

While sharing the goal of better protecting minors, the EU Commission however found that the proposed legislation overlaps with the EU act and asked French authorities to amend the draft. The Senate argues that the blacklist itself was not challenged by the EU Commission, claiming that only provisions giving too much power to the French regulatory authority for audiovisual and digital communication are problematic.

“Everyone must rise to the importance of the issue at stake, which is nothing less than protecting the physical and mental health of our children,” the Senate said in a statement.

Should an agreement be reached, the bill could go before both chambers for a final vote as early as Tuesday. The law can’t be passed before Aug. 10

because of the notification period required by EU law.

According to France’s health watchdog, one in two teenagers spends between two and five hours a day on a smartphone. In a report published in December, it said that some 90% of children aged between 12 and 17 use smartphones daily to access the internet, with 58% of them using their devices for social networks.

The report highlighted a range of harmful effects stemming from the use of social networks, including reduced self-esteem and increased exposure to content associated with risky behaviors such as self-harm, drug use and suicide. Several families in France have sued TikTok over teen suicides they say are linked to harmful content.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen earlier this month called for limits to be placed on children using social media. A special EU panel looking into the challenge recommended forbidding access for those under 13 until tech companies can prove their platforms are safe.

Growing awareness of the dangers social media poses for young, developing brains has shown up in a wave of new restrictions globally. Australia, the U.K., Turkey, Indonesia and others have passed bans on kids under 16 or 15 from using platforms like TikTok, YouTube and Instagram.

Food

Canal House excerpt features a simple herb-butter finish

The secret to perfectly grilled beef tenderloin

NEW YORK, July 21, (AP): We love the lively heat and distinctive smokiness from cooking over a bed of glowing red and white-hot coals any time of the year, which is why we have a whole chapter on grilling in our cookbook “Canal House: Cook Something.”

We are partial to charcoal grilling in a kettle grill, but if we are short on time or feeling a little lazy, we’ll fire up the gas barbie (less fun, less flavor, but more controllable). Either way we follow a few basic tenets when we get our grill on.

Stick by the grill and pay close attention. Flare-ups happen fast, and the black carbon coating from grilling directly over fire tastes acrid. Tame unwanted flames not with a water spray bottle, but by moving the food to a cooler spot on the grill, or by taking it off the grill until the coals quiet down. Resist fussing with food on the grill until grill marks are well established; this helps reduce sticking. Grilling well requires making friends with fire and being a good companion.

When we’re grilling a hunk of meat, we usually keep the seasonings quite simple to begin, then slather on some flavorful compound butter at the end.

Serves 12

Compound Herb Butter:

- ½ pound (2 sticks) room-temperature salted butter
- ½ cup chopped fresh herbs (one or a combination of your favorite herbs)
- 1 small finely chopped shallot or trimmed scallion
- 1 minced garlic clove
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

Grilled Tenderloin:

- 1 whole beef tenderloin, 6 to 7 pounds
- 1 to 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 to 3 tablespoons coarsely ground black pepper



This image released by Voracious shows a recipe for beef tenderloin from “Canal House: Cook Something: Recipes to Rely On” by Christopher Hirscheimer & Melissa Hamilton. (AP)



This image released by Voracious shows the cookbook “Canal House: Cook Something: Recipes to Rely On” by Christopher Hirscheimer & Melissa Hamilton. (AP)

Salt

Beat the butter in a medium bowl with a wooden spoon until smooth and creamy. Add the herbs, chopped shallot or scallion, and minced garlic. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, and stir until well combined. You should have about 1 cup of herb butter.

Pat the tenderloin dry with paper towels. Using a sharp knife, trim off any fat. Slide the blade under the long silvery membrane, trimming it off. Fold under about 6 inches of the thin end of the meat, which should make it about as thick as the rest of the filet so it will cook evenly. Tie the tenderloin into a neat package with kitchen string, then rub it all over with oil. Rub with pepper, pressing

it into the meat, and season with salt.

Prepare a medium-hot charcoal or gas grill. Grill the filet over the hottest part of the grill, turning it once a brown and charry crust develops. Brown all over, then move it to a cooler spot on the grill to finish cooking until the internal temperature reaches 120°F for rare and 130°F for medium-rare. Grilling time will vary depending on your grill and the heat. Start checking the internal temperature after 20 minutes.

Let the tenderloin rest on a cutting board for 15 minutes. Snip off the string, slice the meat and serve warm with a smear of Compound Herb Butter. Or let it cool, wrap and refrigerate for up to 3 days before serving it cold and sliced.

The Conversation

Yemeni cafés redefine American coffee culture

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

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By Sally Howell

University of Michigan-Dearborn

The mayor of Dearborn, Michigan, Abdullah Hammoud, declared the city the “Coffee Capital of America” in November 2025.

Hammoud’s declaration was inspired by the recent cultural phenomenon of Yemeni coffeehouses. Yemen is where coffee was first brewed as a beverage, and these local coffeehouses reflect that rich cultural heritage.

Three businesses headquartered in Dearborn - Qahwah House, Qamaria Coffee and Haraz Coffee House - now operate between their 121 stores in 14 states, including Ohio, Illinois, Texas, Maryland, Virginia and Tennessee.

New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani and his wife, Rama Duwaji, had their first date at a Qahwah House in Brooklyn in 2021, one of 27 offshoots of the original.

As an author and public historian, I have documented the rise of the halal food industry in Michigan and paid close attention to how Yemeni coffeehouses, founded by Middle Eastern immigrants, have become cultural institutions grown in Michi-

gan but affecting the entire nation.

Arab American coffeehouses have a long history rooted in the diaspora. In the early decades of the 20th century, small coffeehouses in Detroit gave immigrant men from today’s Lebanon and Syria the opportunity to catch up with fellow migrants, speak Arabic and hear news of home.

In these coffeehouses, they could learn about work and housing opportunities and enjoy dining on familiar foods, like kibbee, a spiced lamb with cracked wheat; bamiyah, an okra stew, or spinach pies prepared by other Middle Eastern immigrants. In some cases, Muslims and Christians would gather inside coffeehouses to worship or celebrate religious holidays together.

These early coffeehouses helped establish Arab community enclaves in places like Detroit and Dearborn. They were frequently male-only, smoke-filled spaces. Churches, mosques, restaurants, night clubs and civic organizations frequently grew out of the social ties forged over a cup of strong coffee.

Immigrants from Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen continued to create coffeehouses like these throughout metro Detroit in the 20th century, and they still attract recent refugees and other immigrants from Yemen, Iraq and Syria in the 21st.

Contemporary Yemeni cafes ap-



A carafe of jubani, a Yemeni decaffeinated coffee drink made with cardamom, cinnamon and coffee husks. (Valaurian Waller/The Conversation)

peal to a much larger public audience. Both men and women are welcome, while smoking and hookah are not.

No alcohol is served, making these cafes halal, or permissible for Muslims, as well. The cafes provide an important third space - a kind of neutral meeting space where people can gather outside the home, work or school.

In Arab enclaves like Dearborn, these spaces allow men and women to socialize separately or together, and they take the pressure off individual households by shifting the demands of frequent hosting into public spaces.

Interestingly, in Dearborn, several coffeehouses have begun making space available in back rooms for prayer.

“We would rather our customers pray here than leave the premises for a mosque,” one proprietor explained

to me. “Here, they are likely to buy a second cup of coffee once they are finished, and one for the friends who pray alongside them.”

Modern Yemeni coffeehouses offer distinctive brews of coffee and tea. The drinks are seasoned with traditional infusions of cardamom, ginger, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon or qishr, which are coffee husks. They are served in delicate finjans, or small glass cups without handles, and artful half-size demitasses as well as the more common takeout cups.

They also serve a variety of pastries, some familiar like baklava and tiramisu, and others that are unique to Yemen like sabaya, a buttery, flaky pastry smothered in honey, and khaliat al-nahl, a cheese-filled Yemeni honeycomb bread.

Some Americans are encountering Yemeni coffee for the first time in one of these new cafes, which are appreciated for their quiet atmosphere, attentive service, the quality of the beverages provided and their distinctive decor.

Qahwah House, for example, decorates its cafes with photographs of the Yemeni countryside, focusing on the regions where coffee is grown, and on the processing of coffee. They include maps of Yemen, artifacts like coffee pots that are symbols of traditional hospitality, and artifacts related to the shipping and production of coffee. (AP)



A woman holds a fan in front of a bottle-fed baby at the Great American State Fair, during an extreme heat wave on July 3, on the National Mall in Washington. (AP)

Human-caused climate change making heat waves longer

How to keep babies safe when temperatures soar

WASHINGTON, July 21, (AP): Infants, toddlers and young children need outdoor activity to build strong bodies and minds, but they also require extra care in the heat.

In the summer months, those twin imperatives can make parents anxious. How long should kids be out? How do I know they're OK? What should I avoid?

Human-caused climate change is making heat waves longer, stronger and more widespread. Much of the U.S. sweltered last week under a heat dome.

That shift makes questions about keeping babies safe more pressing, said Dr. Katherine Williamson, a pediatrician with Rady Children's Health in Orange, California.

"We talk about drowning and choking with toddlers, and now we're starting to add in heat," she said. "It's become something that's more commonplace as a potential injury."

Here is why children are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses, and some do's and don'ts to keep them safe:

Children sweat less than adults and have a higher metabolism that make them hot faster. In extreme heat, their higher surface area-to-mass ratio increases heat absorption.

Kids also tend to spend more time outdoors.

On hot days, parents need to be vigilant about the signs of heat illness. A lack of tears or regular wet diapers could indicate your baby is dehydrated.

Parents should feed infants in smaller quantities more frequently to make sure they are getting enough fluid.

Though not necessarily signs of illness, fatigue and flushed skin likely means your child needs a break to cool off. Williamson said increased irritability could also indicate your child is too hot.

Avoid going out during the hottest parts of the day, dress kids in loose,

light-colored clothing, apply sunscreen and make sure they are getting enough fluids. Water-rich fruits such as watermelon and strawberries are great snacks in the heat.

"If you're hot, your baby sure is going to be hot," said Dr. Debra Langlois, a pediatrician at the University of Michigan Health C.S. Mott Children's Hospital.

Langlois said parents and other caregivers should limit the amount of time infants and toddlers are outside in hot weather, but she doesn't advise remaining strictly indoors at any point.

That advice seems counterintuitive. After all, doesn't it make sense to shield children from the sun?

But blankets and other coverings, even thin ones, prevent air from circulating and trap heat that can raise the temperature in the stroller. Instead, use a canopy for shade.

Williamson also advises parents to check metal parts that can heat up and burn children.

Even in the shade and with open windows, car temperatures can rise dramatically in a short amount of time. In 2025, 31 children died of heat stroke in vehicles, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The agency recommends caregivers leave a purse or other personal item in the back seat, write a note or place a stuffed animal on the passenger seat to ensure they don't forget a child inside.

If you return to a parked car with your baby on a hot day, ensure the metal parts of the car seat are also not too hot. For extra comfort, use a sun shade to keep the interior cooler and turn on the air conditioning in advance.

To cool a hot car, experts recommend opening the windows for 10 to 20 seconds while running the air conditioning.

Global warming makes deserts hotter, drier and dustier

How hot does it get in the desert? A climate scientist explains blazing heat

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

By Shuang-Ye Wu
University of Dayton

Curious Kids is a series for children of all ages. If you have a question you'd like an expert to answer, send it to CuriousKidsUS@theconversation.com.

How hot does it get in the desert? - Henry, age 5, South Bend, Indiana

When you think of a desert, you probably imagine giant waves of sand dunes beneath a blazing Sun. You'd be picturing a hot desert, like the Sahara in Africa.

Some of the most scorching temperatures recorded on Earth have been in deserts. The hottest air temperature on the Earth's surface was 134 degrees Fahrenheit (56.7 degrees Celsius) in Death Valley, California. The highest ground temperature was 177.4 F (80.8 C) in the Lut Desert in Iran.

For comparison, a very hot bath is around 110 F (43 C). So these temperatures are way beyond anything safe for your skin.

What makes some deserts so broiling hot, and why do they exist in the first place? It has to do with how Earth's atmosphere moves around our planet and interacts with what's on the ground.

Climate scientists like me define a desert not by temperature but by how much precipitation it gets - any form of water falling from the sky, whether rain, snow or hail. If an area receives less than 10 inches (250 millimeters) of precipitation a year, it is officially a desert.

There's nothing in this definition about being hot. In fact, there are cold deserts, too. The biggest desert on Earth is Antarctica, where the average winter temperature can be as low as -75 F (-60 C) in the interior highlands.

Antarctica counts as a desert because it rarely snows there. It's covered by a large ice sheet that's the result of tiny amounts of snow accumulating over tens of millions of years.

The equator is an imaginary line wrapped around the middle of the Earth, separating it into two halves: the Northern and Southern hemispheres. Lines of latitude are imaginary rings parallel to the equator that further divide up

the hemispheres. Latitude is measured in degrees, starting at 0 degrees at the equator up to 90 degrees at each pole.

If you look at a globe, you'll notice an interesting pattern. Most of the world's hot deserts - including the Sahara, the Arabian Desert and Australia's Great Victoria Desert - are lined up within two horizontal belts around the Earth that lie at roughly 30 degrees north and 30 degrees south of the Equator.

These locations are not a coincidence. They're related to how the atmosphere moves around Earth.

Globally, the equator gets the most direct sunlight, so the air near ground level there becomes warm and rises. At the poles, the air is very cold and sinks. This continuous rising and sinking motion creates a giant loop of moving air for each hemisphere, almost like a slow moving conveyor belt in the atmosphere.

Because the Earth spins, the giant moving air loop gets twisted and broken into three smaller loops for each hemisphere. As a result of this atmospheric motion, air generally rises at the equator and latitudes around 60 degrees and sinks at the poles and latitudes around 30 degrees.

When air rises, it expands and cools. As its temperature goes down, water vapor condenses to form precipitation. When air sinks, it compresses and warms up, causing water to evaporate and creating dry conditions.

That's why deserts are found around 30 degrees and near the poles. Those are the places where atmospheric motion causes the air to sink - resulting in dry desert conditions. The deserts near the 30 degrees latitude line can get incredibly hot for three reasons.

The first reason can be found in the clouds. In most parts of the world, moisture in the air forms clouds. On a cloudy day, you might notice that clouds block the Sun's light, helping create cooler temperatures. Because desert air is extremely dry, it lacks this protective shield. With no clouds to provide shade, all of the Sun's incoming solar energy reaches the Earth's surface, heating the ground at full intensity.

Another reason behind these deserts' high temperatures is what you find below your feet. At the beach, you might notice that the sand feels much warmer than the ocean on a hot day. That's because of the difference in their specific heat, a term scientists use to describe how much energy something needs to change its temperature.

Water has a very high specific heat and therefore takes a lot of energy - and

hence a long time - to warm up. Conversely, rocks and sand have low specific heats; they absorb the energy from the Sun and warm up very fast. For the same reason, they can't hold onto that warmth when the Sun goes down. Once night falls, all that heat escapes right back into space. This is why a desert can go from roasting at noon to freezing at midnight.

A final reason those hot deserts stay hot has to do with the way water removes heat when it evaporates. In nondesert places, plants release water into the air, cooling the surrounding area. Scientists call this phenomenon evaporative cooling. It's the reason you can feel cold when you get out of a pool even on a warm day.

In deserts, the ground is dry and there are very few plants, so almost no evaporative cooling happens. Without this natural cooling system, the Sun's heat stays trapped at ground level, making the daytime desert feel scorching.

Because our planet is warming up due to human activities such as burning fossil fuels - coal, oil and natural gas - and cutting down forests, deserts are experiencing some major shifts.

In many parts of the world, global warming makes deserts hotter, drier and dustier. It also makes them spread outward into places that used to have more plants. When regular land turns into a dry desert, it's called desertification.

Climate change doesn't affect every place the same way, though. In some desert regions, shifting wind patterns are actually bringing more rain than usual, leading to a partial greening of the desert. This has been observed in the Thar Desert in India and Pakistan, the southern fringe of the Sahara Desert and some deserts in northern and northwestern China. Such major shifts in desert conditions change the ecosystem, making it harder for native animals and plants, which are adapted to the desert environment, to survive.

Deserts are some of the most extreme, beautiful and finely balanced places on Earth. Understanding how the atmosphere and the land work together reveals how even the hottest places on our planet are connected to the rest of the world.

Hello, curious kids! Do you have a question you'd like an expert to answer? Ask an adult to send your question to CuriousKidsUS@theconversation.com. Please tell us your name, age and the city where you live.

And since curiosity has no age limit - adults, let us know what you're wondering, too. We won't be able to answer every question, but we will do our best. (AP)



Shorebird Crew Lead Mary Bertschi of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service tracks down a juvenile oystercatcher that took off running at Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuge in South Kingstown, RI on June 19. (AP)

Oystercatchers, known for sharp bills eyes, making a comeback thanks to conservation

SOUTH KINGSTOWN, R.I., July 21, (AP): On a pristine Rhode Island beach teeming with noisy seabirds, a group of biologists armed with nets sneak up on a pair of American oystercatcher chicks.

But just as they move in to capture them, one of the football-size birds, with bright-orange bills and long legs, scampers into a coastal salt pond. The other briefly takes to the air, sending the team running across the mile-and-a-half-long (2.4-kilometer-long) beach in pursuit.

"There is a problem. They can fly," Alan Kneidel, a senior conservation biologist with the environmental group Manomet Conservation Sciences, said as he watched the team go after the chicks.

Eventually, the US Fish and Wildlife Service biologists tracked down both birds. They bundled them each into white pillow cases and gingerly carried them to a sand dune where body measurements were taken and bands clipped onto their long, peach-colored legs.

The banding in the 787-acre (318-hectare) Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuge is part of a nationwide effort to restore the oystercatcher's population along the

coasts of the Americas. The birds were largely wiped out in New England by the turn of the 20th century due to hunting and egg collecting but their numbers are rising.

About \$10 million was raised over a decade and 35 coastal organizations in 16 states joined in the effort. Much of the campaign focused on educating beachgoers about the presence of the quirky birds known for their piercing calls and habit of using their razor sharp bills to crack open oysters and mussels. Measures were also implemented to protect their ground nesting sites from predators and pets on beaches, sand dunes, salt marshes or tide wrack deposits.

From 2008 to 2023, oystercatcher numbers increased by 45% along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Their recovery is especially significant, given a 2023 study found that most shorebird populations in North America were declining.

"It's amazing and it's a great conservation success story," said Maureen Durkin, a federal wildlife biologist who led the banding effort and works at the Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

"It does really demonstrate how

much you can accomplish when there is a dedicated group of partners that can come together and identify the needs of the species and implement conservation actions," she said, adding that it also showed conserving imperiled species "is not easy and takes a sustained and committed effort."

Kneidel said a critical part of the conservation plan was determining that "chick survival was the big thing driving the declines." Then, individually-tailored plans were drawn up from organizations in the American Oystercatcher Working Group, which was led by Manomet's Shiloh Schulte, a conservation biologist and field scientist who died last year in a helicopter crash in Alaska while on a mission to protect shorebirds.

His initial aerial survey showed their numbers had declined by double-digits.

"At one site, it might be recreational disturbance, at another site it might be predators, at another site it might be sea level rise or loss of dune structure that's causing overwash events that are causing nest failure," Kneidel said as he walked along the rocky Moonstone Beach, the sky filled with squeaking, least terns.

‘Ebola quarantine center for Americans up, working in Kenya despite court ban’

NAIROBI, Kenya, July 21, (AP): Kenyan activists on Monday accused authorities of violating a court order from last month halting the setting up of an American-backed Ebola quarantine center after reports surfaced that Americans were being quarantined in the country.

The center was meant to take in and quarantine Americans evacuated from Congo, where an Ebola outbreak that erupted two months ago has so far killed at least 930 people, out of the 2,344 cases confirmed there.

A US humanitarian organization, the Samaritan's Purse, said over the weekend that seven of its American staff from Congo were being quarantined in "large military tents" for 21 days in Kenya, adding that none had so far shown symptoms of Ebola.

The organization did not say where in Kenya their workers were quarantined but local media have reported that military tents in Laikipia Air Base would house the US-backed Ebola facility. The air base is about 185 kilometers (115 miles) north from Nairobi, Kenya's capital, near the town of Nanyuki.

Residents of Nanyuki have staged a series of protests against the facility recently, and two people have died



An ambulance drives past an ebola treatment centre in Bunia, Congo on July 20. (AP)

when the protests turned violent.

Both Kenya's Ministry of Health and the US State Department did not respond to requests for comment about whether Americans were being quarantined in Kenya. The Laikipia Air Base could also not be reached for comment.

Kenya - hundreds of miles to the east of Congo and with the country of Uganda between them - has no confirmed Ebola cases but is a key US ally in Africa. The United States has pledged \$13.5 million toward Kenya's Ebola preparedness efforts.

Kenyan President William Ruto has defended the planned US-backed quarantine facility, describing it as part of a partnership with the US. He said there were also plans to establish 24 additional Ebola preparedness centers across the country, with US funding.

However, a Kenyan court last month issued an order that barred the operationalization of the facility and Health Minister Aden Duale later ordered suspension of its construction.

Health

Fiji to explore medical cannabis industry: The Fijian government has revealed strong public support for exploring a medical cannabis industry, and the country may soon open its doors to this sector.

Following a national discussion on the future of cannabis-based medical products, Minister for Finance, Commerce and Business Development **Esrom Immanuel** said that 75 percent of respondents backed the initiative, reported Fiji Broadcasting Corporation.

Immanuel said the Nutraceutical and Medicinal Cannabis Task Force held 17 consultation meetings across Fiji, involving 518 participants and 12 government agencies.

He noted that the feedback would assist the government in assessing the potential of the industry and put the right systems in place if Fiji moves forward

Immanuel

with developing the sector. (Xinhua)

Laos aims to enhance healthcare quality: Laos will continue upgrading central and provincial hospitals while strengthening primary healthcare services in rural areas to ensure equitable access to quality medical care nationwide.

Speaking during the first extraordinary session of the Lao National Assembly's 10th legislature, Lao Minister of Health Baykham Khatthiya reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to improving healthcare services, particularly for people in remote and underserved communities, according to Lao Security Radio.

Baykham said central and provincial hospitals will be modernized to improve service quality and strengthen self-reliance in line with the government's goal of building an independent and sustainable healthcare system. At the same time, district hospitals, health centers, and village health volunteers will be further strengthened to expand health education, disease prevention, screening, and treatment services at the community level. (Xinhua)

Commissioner’s tenure marked by historic financial gains

WNBA’s growth surge under Engelbert amid strained relations

NEW YORK, July 21, (AP): The WNBA has grown at an exponential rate during Cathy Engelbert’s tenure as commissioner, a stewardship that at times has been tumultuous during her nearly seven years at the helm.

Engelbert, the second-longest tenured WNBA president or commissioner, helped negotiate a transformative collective bargaining agreement this past spring that gives the WNBA its first core of million-dollar player salaries.

“There’s not a lot of jobs where you can make over 30-plus millionaires instantly, right?” Engelbert said in a phone interview with The Associated Press heading into this weekend’s WNBA All-Star festivities in Chicago. “It just doesn’t exist in most companies, except if you’re like a stock-option company, and your stock does really well. Most of them are under the age of 30 and there are more to come.”

Even with the financial gains, the WNBA’s growth has come amid a strained partnership between the commissioner and players. Engelbert has been criticized for how she has handled various situations, including for being out of touch or not doing enough to help combat social media vitriol.

Engelbert will meet with the executive committee of the players’ union on Tuesday to discuss the recent uptick in online hatred and threats directed toward players.

New York Liberty All-Star Breanna Stewart, vice president of the WNBA players’ union executive committee, said there is a respect for Engelbert among the players, just not much of a relationship.

Her Liberty teammate, Sabrina Ionescu, said she talks more to NBA Commissioner Adam Silver than Engelbert.

While the commissioner continues to try and strengthen her relationship

with players, the business of the WNBA has thrived.

Engelbert was involved in talks that led to a record media rights deal worth over \$3 billion. The league has had record ratings, attendance and team valuations, and will expand to a record 18 teams by 2030.

“We’ve been in hypergrowth mode now for two or three years and companies, if you look back in time, you are not in hypergrowth mode forever,” Engelbert said. “We’re preparing ourselves now for the next version of ourselves, which probably isn’t as hypergrowth.”

From a business standpoint, though, the league has grown, including navigating the coronavirus pandemic that could have crippled the WNBA.

“Give Cathy credit, as she advocated for the season,” Seattle Storm owner Ginny Gilder said. “We had no idea what was going to happen.



In this file photo, WNBA commissioner Cathy Engelbert speaks at the WNBA basketball draft, April 13, 2026, in New York. (AP)

People had to make decisions. Cathy pushed the Board of Governors to not only have a shortened season, but to fully pay the players. Don’t bicker. We were going to figure out

the finances.”

Expansion fees have gone up five-fold over the past few seasons. Golden State paid \$50 million to join the league and Cleveland, Detroit and Philadelphia - all joining the league over the next four years - each paid \$250 million.

“Look at the financial side in such a short period of time - Cathy with all the work she did and the staff she hired deserves a tremendous amount of credit for that,” Gilder said. “If you look around the league from 2015 to 2020 to now, you know it is a completely new day.”

Valuations of teams were around \$5-10 million a decade ago and now the average is around \$460 million, Engelbert said.

“When you’re CEO, when you’re commissioner, you’re going to have good days and bad days. But if you just looked at the overall scorecard, you’d have to say we’re doing great,” Washington Mystics owner Ted Leonsis said.

It’s nearly impossible to turn on a major sporting event over the past few years without seeing a WNBA player featured in a commercial. From Gatorade to State Farm, Nike and CarMax, product ads feature some of the league’s top newsmakers, including Caitlin Clark, Angel Reese, A’ja Wilson and Sabrina Ionescu.

Engelbert said when Clark was drafted, it created a “domino effect, because they started seeing the value of putting players in their ads and then separately endorsing the players. I’m really proud of that because when I came to the league, absent a few sneakers ads, I don’t remember any players in spots. Maybe there were a few.”

The commissioner has seen the trend continue with younger players coming into the league, including Paige Bueckers, Azzi Fudd and Olivia Miles.

Mystics snap Valkyries run



Golden State Valkyries guard Kaitlyn Chen (2) attempts a two-point shot against the Washington Mystics during a WNBA basketball game in San Francisco, Monday, July 20, 2026. (AP)

Kuwait opens Asia U-18 qualifiers against Oman

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, July 21: Kuwait’s under-18 basketball team will launch its Gulf Youth Championship campaign, which also serves as the qualifying tournament for the FIBA Asia U-18 Championship, with a clash against Oman on July 25 in Doha.

According to the schedule released by the tournament organizers, Kuwait will meet Bahrain on July 26, take on hosts Qatar on July 27, and wrap up the round-robin competition against Saudi Arabia on July 29.

The top two teams at the Gulf championship will secure places at the FIBA Asia U-18 Championship, which will be held in Hyderabad, India.

The tournament was initially scheduled for July 17-22, but was postponed until this weekend because of the security situation in the region.

Kuwait completed its preparations with a training camp in Cairo, where the team played a series of warm-up matches against the Jordan and Egypt national teams, a Cairo clubs select team and Egyptian powerhouse Zamalek.

Under Serbian coach Marko, Kuwait will be looking to carry its preparations into the tournament, compete for the Gulf title and book a place at the Asian championship.



Logo of the Kuwait Basketball Association.

Lynx extends streak with win over Storm

SAN FRANCISCO, July 21, (AP): Kiki Iriafen had 23 points and 12 rebounds, Shakira Austin finished with 15 points and 15 rebounds, and the Washington Mystics rallied past Golden State for a 90-82 victory to snap the Valkyries’ nine-game winning streak.

Washington trailed 80-73 with 3:32 left before closing the game on a 17-2 run. Iriafen made a short jumper with 1:41 left that put the Mystics ahead 82-80.

Kaitlyn Chen had 20 points and six assists and made a 3-pointer midway through the fourth quarter before dishing out an assist on Kiah Stokes’ 3 the next time down for the Valkyries, who squandered opportunities down the stretch.

Veronica Burton had 12 points and seven assists and Kayla Thornton added 15 points as the teams split two games over three days. The Valkyries lost for the third time in their last 16.

Sonia Citron added 15 points and six assists for the Mystics, who lost 74-69 on Saturday night.

The physical game featured Washington rookie Cotie McMahon’s hard foul against Janelle Salaun with 1:16 to go in the third quarter. The play went to replay review and the Mystics guard received a technical for landing on Salaun’s hair with her foot.

Golden State had a four-game winning streak snapped at Chase Center, where thousands of fans lined up starting 4 1/2 hours before tipoff to try for a Hello Kitty plush giveaway for the first 10,000 in the building. Hello Kitty key chains quickly sold out in the team stores.

Iriafen made 8 of 12 shots, going 5 for 7 in the

first half on the way to 13 points as Washington shot 51.9% for a 36-35 lead at the break.

The Mystics host Las Vegas on Wednesday before the All-Star break, while the Valkyries won’t play again until after the break. Golden State visits Phoenix on July 29.

Lynx 105, Storm 102

In Seattle, Kayla McBride made six 3-pointers and scored 33 points, rookie Olivia Miles had 32 points, eight rebounds and eight assists, and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Seattle Storm for their sixth straight victory.

McBride, Miles and Courtney Williams combined for 30 of Minnesota’s 37 field goals. The three guards also went 18 of 18 at the free-throw line.

Williams finished with 21 points, and Natasha Howard had 12 rebounds and three steals for Minnesota (21-6). Miles was one point shy of her career high, set on July 13 against Phoenix.

Flau’jae Johnson scored 26 points and made five 3-pointers for Seattle (6-22). Zia Cooke added 18 points off the bench, and Natisha Hiedeman had 12 points and 10 assists.

Howard poked away Seattle’s inbound pass in the closing seconds, and McBride made two free throws for a 103-100 lead.

Aces 109, Tempo 83

In Toronto, A’ja Wilson scored 26 points, Jackie Young had a season-high 24 points to go with 12 assists, and the Las Vegas Aces beat the Toronto Tempo.

Wilson went 11 of 14 from the field and Young made four 3-pointers, the last to give Las Vegas a 99-79 lead with 3:39 left in the fourth.

Toronto was without coach Sandy Brondello, who was serving a one-game suspension for an

“inappropriate” comment she made about Atlanta star Angel Reese during the Dream’s 111-92 win on Friday. Associate head coach Olaf Lange led the team in Brondello’s absence.

NaLyssa Smith chipped in with 18 points for Las Vegas (18-7). Becky Hammon passed Richie Adubato and Pokey Chatman (134) into 13th place in WNBA history for career coaching wins.

Isabelle Harrison had a career-high 26 points to go with 11 rebounds for Toronto (10-16), which has lost three straight games and seven of its last eight. Maria Conde had 15 points and eight rebounds, while Marina Mabrey added 14 points.

Liberty 99, Wings 98 OT

In Arlington, Breanna Stewart had 33 points, 13 rebounds and eight assists, Sabrina Ionescu scored 12 of her 21 points in overtime, and the New York Liberty beat the short-handed Dallas Wings to snap a four-game skid.

After scoring just nine points in the third quarter - and trailing by 12 in the frame - New York responded with 24 points in the fourth to force overtime.

Ionescu took over from there, making all five of her shots to give New York a 97-93 lead with 1:20 left.

Arike Ogunbowale sank a 3-pointer to pull Dallas within 99-98 with 27.5 seconds left and New York had a shot-clock violation at the other end to give the Wings another chance. Ogunbowale had a good look from close range but her bank shot hit hard off the rim as time expired.

Ogunbowale scored 29 points for Dallas (17-9), which had a franchise-record six-game winning streak halted. Jessica Shepard secured her 17th double-double of the season with 13 points and 16 rebounds to tie Atlanta’s Angel Reese for league lead.

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, July 21, (AP): When Ryan Fox rolled in a 12-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole at Royal Birkdale to win The Open Championship by one shot in Southport, England, it was just past 5.30 a.m. in his homeland and the sun hadn’t yet risen.

Most New Zealanders woke Monday to a wintry morning and the news their small nation had its fourth major golf champion.

Those who followed Fox on television throughout the night were able to watch him lift the Claret Jug before heading bleary-eyed but happily to work.

Sir Bob Charles, who was New Zealand’s first major winner and the first left-handed golfer to win a major when he won the British Open in 1963, is now 90 and watched Fox’s found round in replay at a more congenial hour.

“I’m watching this in color. In my day, it was all black and white,” Charles told the New Zealand Herald newspaper of the TV coverage.

“I’m watching every hole that he’s playing. In my day, they only had about the last three or four holes.”

Charles praised Fox for the pace at which he plays the game which goes against a modern tendency toward slow play. Fox hesitated for barely 30 seconds over the final putt that allowed him to join Charles, Michael Campbell and Lydia Ko as a major-winner from New Zealand.

“Ryan is a refreshing player,” Charles told the Herald. “He plays the way the game should be played, the way it used to be played and should be played. And that is: you get on with it, and you don’t spend half an hour lining up every putt.



Ryan Fox of New Zealand kisses the trophy as he poses for the media with the Claret Jug trophy after winning the British Open Golf championships at Royal Birkdale golf club, in Southport, England. (AP)

“Our club has been privileged to watch Ryan develop from a fine young man with potential to a champion player and member,” Blair said.

Club chief executive Ian Chapman told the Stuff news website members will be queuing up to buy Fox a beer.

Michael Campbell, the 2005 U.S. Open champion, described Fox’s effort as “an incredible feat ... to beat the world’s best players in a difficult situation.”

“I got to experience that 21 years ago. It’s mind-blowing. It really changes your world and he’s up there with the best players in the world now,” Campbell said on the New Zealand Herald’s Ryan Bridge today podcast.

“We’ve got a great history in our family,” he said. “The other great thing is I had no pressure on me to follow in any of their footsteps. I don’t know if this tops their achievements, but it’s certainly right up there. I guess there’s no pressure on my kids going forward now!”

As if in tribute, the New Zealand cricket team completed a match and series win over the West Indies in the Caribbean just hours after Fox’s triumph.

At Fox’s home course, the Royal Auckland and Grange Golf Club, club captain Ian Blair said “you couldn’t find a nicer guy and more worthy champion golfer.”

“Let’s hope that Ryan can be a great example of how the game should be played now, even when you’re playing for, you know, \$100 million!”

New Zealand’s Parliament is in recess. Had it been in session politicians likely would have taken the opportunity to lavish praise on Fox, seeking some of his reflected glory.

Instead, New Zealanders rushed to social media to praise the 39-year-old Fox, a third-generation sporting champion within his family. His father, Grant Fox, was an All Blacks rugby star and winner of the 1987 Rugby World Cup. His grandfather, Merv Wallace, was a captain of the New Zealand cricket team.

Fox touched on the family his-

Australia’s ‘Big Four’ back for Bangladesh tests

BRISBANE, Australia, July 21, (AP): The so-called Big Four could be reunited in Australia’s bowling attack with Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon returning from injuries for a two-test cricket series next month against Bangladesh.

Pace bowlers Cummins, Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc and offspinner Lyon have been the long-time frontline attack for Australia but injuries have limited the frequency of all four combining in the same XI in recent series.

Australia’s selection committee chairman George Bailey on Tuesday said there was no certainties to start, but the returning bowlers are “all fit to go.”

“As you would expect, we won’t be locking in an XI this far out, but we do know that across this two-test series the depth is there,” Bailey said. “I’m sure that there will be (future) tests that that (Big Four) group play together.”

Cummins, Hazlewood and Lyon, he said, “have worked extremely hard, individually and with the



In this file photo, Australian bowlers Josh Hazlewood, left, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Starc, second right, and Pat Cummins, right, hold the Ashes trophy as they celebrate at the end of the last day of their Ashes cricket test match against England in Sydney. (AP)

(fitness) teams, over the past few months to return from their respective injuries.”

The inclusion of pace bowler Scott Boland and allrounders Cameron Green and Beau Webster give the 13-man Australia squad plenty of options.

“The volume of cricket and schedule across the next 12 months are likely to present further opportunities across all formats for many players,” Bailey said.

The first test against Bangladesh is set for Aug. 13-17 in Darwin, Northern Territory, and the second will be held in Mackay, Queensland state, Aug. 22-26, kicking off a 12-month period containing 20 test matches including tours of South Africa, India and England.

Opening bat Jake Weatherald was retained from the Ashes series win over England last season and is likely to open the innings with Travis Head.

Australia: Pat Cummins (captain), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Jake Weatherald, Beau Webster.

Spain returns home for royal welcome and parade in front of almost 2 million



Spain's King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia, accompanied by Princess Leonor and Infanta Sofia, pose with players from Spain's national soccer team at Zarzuela Palace in Madrid after the team was crowned World Cup champion. (AP)

We are filled with joy: De la Fuente

MADRID, July 21, (AP): Spain's World Cup-winning soccer team returned home and an estimated crowd of almost 2 million was on hand to greet the squad through the streets of Madrid.

The 26 players and their coaching staff met with the country's royals, and then with Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, after arriving in the Spanish capital a day after beating Argentina 1-0 in the final in New Jersey. "Thank you to the coaches and players for the style of play, the effort and the victory," Sánchez said. "We have truly enjoyed watching you play."

The squad then boarded an open-top bus for a raucous parade through central Madrid. "Stars shine together" was written on the bus, which also carried photos of the footballers.

Players - carrying the World Cup trophy and wearing shirts with the words Somos Campeones (We Are Champions) - danced and interacted with the fans along the route.

"It's been an emotional and proud experience to represent a wonderful country with such passionate and devoted fans," Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said before the parade started. "We are filled with joy."

The squad traveled down Madrid's historic avenues from near Moncloa Palace, the prime minister's official residence, to Cibeles



Fans crowd together as they wait for the arrival of players from Spain's national soccer team during celebrations in Madrid after Spain defeated Argentina in the World Cup final in East Rutherford, N.J., near New York. (AP)

Square, where authorities told local media that some 120,000 people were on hand for a ceremony.

Players were introduced one by one before entering the stage set up at the square. Each picked the song to be played when they came in. Alex Baena, celebrating his 25th birthday, entered with the World Cup trophy.

Coach De la Fuente was thrust into the air by his players after being introduced. The coach was among those who sang along to the song being played for them.

Striker Borja Iglesias featured as a D.J. at one point, with his teammates dancing on the stage.

Singers Aitana, Ana Mena and

Lola Índigo were among those entertaining the crowd and the players.

The ceremony ended with the whole Spain squad lifting the trophy again, just like at the awards ceremony on Sunday, but now in front of the local crowd.

Groups of fans had begun securing their spots near Cibeles late Monday morning ahead of the team's arrival, bringing umbrellas to protect against the sun and temperatures of up to 35 Celsius (95 Fahrenheit).

The square is where previous Spain teams and their supporters have typically gathered to celebrate. It's also the traditional celebration spot for Real Madrid

when it wins titles.

Officials estimated a total of 1.8 million people welcomed the team in Madrid.

Spain walked off with the trophy Sunday after Ferran Torres scored the winner in extra time to secure its second World Cup title - and first since 2010 in South Africa.

The team was congratulated by the leaders of the three countries that co-hosted the tournament - U.S. President Donald Trump, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney.

After the final whistle, Madrid erupted into celebrations, with thousands of supporters pouring into the streets from bars and restaurants, many draped in Spanish flags or wearing the team's colors.

Crowds packed the capital's Puerta de Sol and other major squares - singing, dancing and setting off flares while car horns blared.

Many celebrated Sunday's victory long into the wee hours of Monday morning.

"I'm very happy. I've slept three or four hours, but for the team, I'll do whatever it takes," 19-year-old Victor Alvarez said.

The men's victory, combined with the Women's World Cup won by Spain in 2023, makes the European nation the first to hold both titles simultaneously.

"Honestly, it was very exciting. We preferred not to go to any bar or anything, to experience it at home, focused and very happy, very joyful," 59-year-old civil servant Gema Rodero said.

Zidane set to take charge of France after Didier era ends

PARIS, July 21: Zinedine Zidane is reportedly set to become the new head coach of the France national team, with renowned transfer insider Fabrizio Romano claiming that the appointment has been finalised.

Romano stated on his Instagram account that Zidane has signed a contract to lead Les Bleus until mid-2030, although the French Football Federation has not yet made an official announcement.

The move comes after Didier Deschamps ended his 14-year spell in charge of France. Under Deschamps, France won the 2018 FIFA World Cup, reached the final of the 2022 World Cup, and finished fourth at this year's tournament.

French newspaper L'Équipe had also reported that Zidane was the expected successor to Deschamps, with the former France captain widely regarded as the leading candidate for the role.

Zidane brings extensive coaching experience from his two spells at Real Madrid, where he won three consecutive UEFA Champions League titles and two La Liga crowns between 2016 and 2021.

A legendary figure for both club and country, Zidane won the 1998 World Cup and Euro 2000 with France, while also lifting the Champions League with Real Madrid as a player in 2002.

His final appearance as a professional footballer came in the 2006 World Cup final defeat to Italy, when he was sent off after an incident involving Italy defender Marco Materazzi.



A legendary bond: Zidane and Mbappé exchange greetings as France looks toward the future.

FIFA investigates Argentina players

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J., July 21, (AP): FIFA opened an investigation Monday after Spain's celebrations on beating Argentina in the World Cup final took an ugly turn when players briefly clashed on the field. Video replays showed several players involved in a scuffle, including Argentina midfielder Leandro Paredes.

He appeared to shove Spain's Eric Garcia by the throat. When Spain substitute Gavi jumped in to intervene, Paredes pushed him to the ground.

Spain captain Rodri also seemed to be hit in the stomach by

Argentina defender Nahuel Molina as he ran past to join teammates celebrating the title win.

Molina later crowded Rodri, who was the target of a verbal confrontation by his former Manchester City teammate Nicolas Otamendi.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni and other players rushed in to deescalate the situation.

FIFA said in a statement its "disciplinary committee has appointed a Disciplinary and Ethics Prosecutor to investigate potential breaches of the (FIFA disciplinary code) with regard to the post-match incidents."

How Spain built soccer identity that conquered the world

MADRID, July 21, (AP): Spanish soccer has reached a level of its own.

Spain's World Cup victory on Sunday added to the nation's long list of recent triumphs across men's, women's and youth competitions, highlighting the dominance of a system that has stuck to a tactical identity and the development of collective talent.

The men's team is also the current European champion, the Olympic gold medalist and has reached the Nations League final twice - winning it once. The women's squad is the defending World Cup champion and a two-time Women's Nations League winner. It also made it to the final of the 2025 European Championship.

Spain is the first nation to hold both the men's and women's World Cup titles at the same time and is the only country with two men's World Cup triumphs this century. The nation also has won several youth tournaments in recent years with both the men's and women's teams.

The men's senior squad has been racking up titles since it was gradually revamped after the demise of a golden generation that won the nation's first World Cup in 2010 with the likes of Andrés Iniesta, Xavi Hernández, Sergio Ramos and Gerard Piqué.

Players such as Lamine Yamal, Pau Cubarsí, Rodri and Ferran Torres - the goal scorer in the 1-0 win over Argentina in Sunday's final - now are the ones representing a new generation that has taken La Roja back to the top.

"I'm very emotional looking back," Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said. "We've talked about it with the players; we have won everything, it's wonderful ... It's a generation of players that has been an example for Spanish sports, for young Spaniards, for Spain. Together we are stronger."

Spain hadn't gone past the last 16 of the men's World Cup since winning the title in South Africa in 2010. It has been in contention in nearly every competition it has played since De la Fuente's arrival in 2022 and it's 38-match unbeaten streak is the longest in men's international soccer.

Despite a very talented group of players, it has been Spain's collective performance that has impressed the most and the team hasn't had to rely on star players. It also has been thriving defensively, with a solid backline and a relentless pursuit to regain possession.

"We played against the best national squads in the world, but we were the best team in the world," De la Fuente said. "I'm very proud of this generation of players. They have grown with this idea, they've been loyal to this idea, they have given us an example of a group, of a team, of a family. I'm very proud of them. It's been an honor."

How can other teams possibly replicate the Spanish system?

"Go to work," former France player Thierry Henry, a commentator for Fox Sports, said after the final. "Think about how you want to go about it at every level and play the same way. This is why they are dominating world football on every level, men and women, it doesn't really matter, they go about it the same way."

The recent wave of success can be tracked to the surprise hiring of De la Fuente to replace Luis Enrique following the team's elimination against Morocco in the round of 16 of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. De la Fuente was relatively unknown at the time, but the Spanish soccer federation knew him well.

By hiring him, Spain was actually betting on its youth system as De la Fuente had been coaching Spain's younger national teams for some time.

The unusual World Cup ... and the Qatar benchmark

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

The 2026 FIFA World Cup, the 23rd edition of football's biggest tournament, has come to an end with Spain celebrating the title and the remaining contenders left to reflect on what might have been. Yet, beyond the identity of the champion, the lasting memory of this World Cup may be the controversies and challenges that followed it from the opening match to the final whistle.



Khaled Al-Enezi

The issues started even before the tournament kicked off, with several teams raising concerns over accommodation standards and the quality of services. Reports of problems at some team bases, including unusual incidents involving wildlife, added to the criticism, while questions were also raised about certain venues. The weather created further difficulties, as extreme heat, storms, heavy rain and lightning affected match preparations and tested players' fitness.

The first expanded edition featuring 48 teams also brought a new level of debate both on and off the field. The tournament was marked by several disputes, most notably allegations targeting FIFA and match officials over claims of favourable treatment towards Argentina, particularly after the controversial Egypt-Argentina encounter. The fallout sparked intense criticism and renewed discussions

about the consistency and transparency of officiating decisions.

The competition was also affected by visa-related issues in the United States, with some players, staff members and referees reportedly facing delays in reaching the tournament venues. Such complications created unwanted distractions for an event expected to represent the highest standards of global football.

For these reasons, this edition can arguably be described as the "unusual World Cup" - not simply because of the number of challenges, but because of several decisions that fuelled further debate. Among the most controversial was FIFA's decision to overturn the suspension of United States striker Folarin Balogun, allowing him to play in the round-of-16 match against Belgium. The decision triggered strong reactions, especially in Europe, with some calling for an investigation and others questioning the future of FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

The comparison with the 2022 World Cup in Qatar is inevitable. Doha delivered a tournament widely praised for its organisation, infrastructure, security, accessibility and professionalism. Teams, supporters and international media left Qatar with overwhelmingly positive impressions of a competition that set a high standard for future World Cups.

While the 2026 World Cup succeeded in producing a champion and unforgettable moments on the pitch, the controversies surrounding it often dominated the headlines. It will be remembered as a unique tournament - but perhaps not entirely for the reasons football fans would have wanted.

Brazilian, Cuban recruits boost Al-Nasr

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Al-Nasr has retained Montenegrin coach Darko for the 2026-27 season, reaffirming its commitment to stability as the club looks to challenge for domestic volleyball honors.

The club has also strengthened its roster with the signings of Cuban Kelly Bryant and Brazilian Renan Salton, adding experienced international talent ahead of the new campaign.

Locally, Al-Nasr has recruited Jassim Al-Sabbagha as an outside hitter and Mohammad Al-Ali as setter, continuing its efforts to reinforce the squad before the season gets underway.

First-team manager Mohammad Al-Daihani said the new arrivals would provide a major boost to the side, stressing that the club had carefully selected players capable of improving the team's overall quality and enhancing its chances of competing for every domestic title.

Al-Daihani also expressed his appreciation to the club's board and volleyball committee for their ongoing support and for ensuring the team has everything it needs, both technically and administratively, to succeed.

He added that Al-Nasr remains committed to continuity, pointing to the club's decision to retain both the coaching staff, led by Darko, and his own role as team manager. He said the club believes stability is a vital ingredient for sustained success and consistent title contention.



In this file photo, Al Nasr player goes for a spike as opponents defend.

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Spain's Lamine Yamal reacts during celebrations with his national team teammates at Cibeles Square in Madrid after Spain defeated Argentina in the World Cup final in East Rutherford, N.J., near New York. (AP) - See Page 15

Sports

Kuwait seals main-round qualification at Asian Junior Handball Championship



The junior team celebrates after sealing main round qualification.

Al-Adwani praises the Blues impressive showing

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

BEIJING, July 21: Kuwait secured qualification for the main round of the 19th Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship in China after a thrilling 30-29 victory over Qatar in the sixth round of the preliminary stage.

The Blues produced a determined display, showing strong fighting spirit and concentration throughout the match before holding on for a narrow one-goal win that confirmed their progress to the next phase of the competition.

Kuwait will complete its preliminary-round schedule today when it faces the United Arab Emirates in the seventh and final round, looking to claim another victory and carry positive momentum into the main round.

The closing round of the preliminary stage also features Saudi Arabia against Hong Kong, Qatar facing India, Oman meeting Chinese Taipei, Bahrain taking on China, and South Korea playing Japan.

Kuwait Handball Association secretary general Qaed Al-Adwani praised the team's impressive showing at the tournament, stressing that the players' success reflects their ability to compete strongly and deliver positive results on the continental stage.

Al-Adwani highlighted the squad's technical ability and mental strength, adding that the federation, alongside the national teams' coaching staff, remains committed to providing the best possible preparation for international competitions and maintaining the strong reputation of Kuwaiti handball.

He said the ultimate ambition is to challenge for continental honours, while urging the players to continue their strong performances in the main round and remain focused on their goal of competing for the championship title.

Poga ar still leads Tour de France

Evenepoel wins time trial for back-to-back victories

THONON-LES-BAINS, France, July 21, (AP): Time trial world champion Remco Evenepoel was fastest Tuesday as he won the 16th stage of the Tour de France to shave 28 seconds off Tadej Pogacar's commanding lead.

Evenepoel completed the 26.1-kilometer individual time trial in 32 minutes, 19 seconds, more than a minute faster than Mattias Skjelmose, the previous quickest, before the Belgian rider waited to see Pogacar cross the line with the second-best effort of the day.

It ensured back-to-back stage victories for Evenepoel after winning the 15th stage on Sunday. Monday was a rest day.

His teammate Florian Lipowitz crashed out, however. The German rider slipped going around a sharp bend near the finish and slid across the road into the sidewalk kerb. He was unable to continue with what looked like a shoulder injury.

"It's a bittersweet pill with this victory. I wish him all the best," Evenepoel said of his Red Bull-Bora-Hansgrohe teammate. "I will really miss him for the whole week."

Pogacar had a wobble going around the same corner but recovered to continue.

Tuesday's stage was the only individual time trial of the Tour, starting in Evian-les-Bains beside Lake Geneva with a 16.4K climb up the category 2 Côte de Larringes, then a technical descent before a straight road into Thonon-les-Bains.



Belgium's Remco Evenepoel celebrates on the podium after winning the sixteenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race, an individual time-trial with start in Evian-Les-Bains and finish in Thonon-les-Bains, France. (AP)

The race ends July 26 in Paris.

The agency carrying out early-morning anti-doping tests which left Tour de France riders frustrated maintains that correct procedures were followed.

Defending Tour champion Pogacar, the current race leader, and two-time winner Jonas Vingegaard were woken in the early hours of Sunday by officials for unannounced tests. Pogacar said his test was carried out at 5 a.m. and that Vingegaard's was at 2 a.m.

Vingegaard crashed near the end of Sunday's 15th stage, sustaining

a fractured collarbone which forced the Danish rider to abandon the race.

Pogacar and Evenepoel were both critical of the tests being done so early. Cycling's governing body, the UCI, has entrusted its Tour testing to the Swiss-based International Testing Agency since 2021.

"The ITA is conscious that night-time testing may be disruptive to riders' rest and recovery," the ITA said in an email to The Associated Press on Monday. "However, the ITA, on behalf of the UCI, has the responsibility to ensure the effectiveness of the cycling anti-doping

program and the integrity of cycling races."

Evenepoel said in his post-stage news conference that it was "very disrespectful" to wake riders up so early and called on cycling riders' association CPA to respond. CPA did not immediately respond to a request from comment.

Four-time Tour winner Pogacar took exception to how early Vingegaard's test was, suggesting that fatigue may have played a factor in his crash. However, the Slovenian star later said random-hour testing was valid if it improves transparency.

"I accept it, if this is necessary to still prove we are riding clean," he was quoted as saying by the cyclingnews.com website. "If this is necessary then I totally accept it and I commit to this. But it's a bit (expletive) when you sleep for four hours in one day in the middle of a three-week Tour."

The ITA said it acted within the parameters of what is allowed.

"Effective testing must, in limited and justified circumstances, be capable to occur outside standard daytime hours," the ITA explained, adding that testing is subject to safeguards established under the World Anti-Doping Code, UCI anti-doping rules and French law.

But some observers questioned why Pogacar and Vingegaard - who are world-leading riders - were tested on the same day and so early in the morning.

KFA chairman discusses academy plans with Wenger during WC final

NEW JERSEY, July 21: Kuwait Football Association (KFA) chairman Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef met with FIFA Secretary General Matthias Grafström and FIFA global football development chief Arsène Wenger during his attendance at the 2026 FIFA World Cup final between Spain and Argentina.

The discussions focused on preparations for Wenger's planned visit to Kuwait, where the former Arsenal manager will inspect the work being carried out at the Blue Academy, the KFA's grassroots development programme.

Wenger praised the KFA's efforts in nurturing young talent and its commitment to youth development through an academy that provides aspiring players with the opportunity to train and develop their skills in a suitable football environment.



Kuwait Football Association chairman Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef with Arsène Wenger.

World handball 'giants' await Club Champ'ship draw in Egypt

CAIRO, July 21: The draw for the 19th Men's IHF Handball Club World Championship will take place today, Wednesday, with teams set to discover their group-stage opponents.

The International Handball Federation (IHF) confirmed that the ceremony will be broadcast live on its official YouTube channel, giving supporters the chance to follow the group allocation process in real time.

Ahead of the draw, the IHF has revealed the seeding pots and rankings of the participating clubs, which will determine the road ahead for the teams in the prestigious tournament.

The championship will be hosted in Cairo, Egypt, from September 24 to October 1.

The 10 participating clubs are Al Ahly (Egypt) as host, Barcelona (Spain) as European champion, Burgan (Kuwait) as Asian champion, Montada (Morocco) representing Africa, Füchse Berlin (Germany) as Europe's representative, EC Pinheiros (Brazil) representing South and Central America, San Diego (USA) representing North America and the Caribbean, Sydney Uni (Australia) representing Oceania,



IHF Handball Club World Championship trophy.

Veszprém (Hungary) via invitation, and Zamalek (Egypt) via a wild card.

Meanwhile, the Bahrain Handball Association has confirmed that Manama will host the 42nd Gulf Clubs Handball Cup Winners' Championship from November 19-28, with leading Gulf clubs set to take part.

Sablitch begins pre-season work in Turkey

Al-Arabi welcomes new arrivals

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Croatian coach Goran Sablitch took charge of his first training session with Al-Arabi after joining the team at its pre-season camp in Turkey.

Sablitch expressed his pride at leading one of Kuwait's biggest clubs, saying he was excited about the opportunity to coach Al-Arabi and work with a team with a rich history.

The Croatian coach said he will focus on making the most of the training camp and implementing the preparation plan, adding that the squad is progressing well so far.

He stressed that his goal is to build a strong team capable of achieving the club's ambitions in the upcoming season.

Meanwhile, Al-Arabi's new foreign signings Nigerian Anayo Iwuala, Senegalese Jouhar Khadem Rasoul, Palestinian Zaid Qanbar, and Bader Tariq joined the squad in Turkey and took part in training.

Ethiopian Keenan Maleko is set to arrive once his Turkish visa procedures are completed, while Yousef Majed and Yousef Sabah are awaiting their passports before joining the camp. Talal Al-Matrood will link up with the team after finishing his academic exams.

Defender Hussein Ashkanani continues his rehabilitation programme in Turkey after a medical appointment was arranged to help prepare him for his return to action.



Croatian coach Goran Sablitch takes charge of his first training session with Al-Arabi.

Goalkeeper Abdulrahman Ajaj welcomed his move to Al-Arabi, thanking the club's board for their confidence and expressing his determination to help the team achieve its targets.

New goalkeeper Ahmed Adi also thanked the club for signing him, while Ali Dukhi said he is eager to justify the faith shown in him by the management and supporters.

Al-Arabi has added several local players to their squad and currently have six foreign players on their books, with one expected to leave on loan before the new season begins.

The club's foreign players are Jouhar Khadem Rasoul, Leonardo Sheldon, Lucas Chalon, Anayo Iwuala, Keenan Maleko, and Zaid Qanbar.

Messi returns to Argentina for rest after World Cup final loss

ROSARIO, Argentina, July 21, (AP): Lionel Messi arrived back in Argentina on Tuesday for a few days of rest following the World Cup final loss to Spain.

Messi's private jet landed near his hometown of Rosario from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, at 6:27 a.m. Although many fans were waiting with signs and flags, he did not make a public appearance.

Supporters only caught a brief glimpse of the SUV that met Messi on the tarmac to transport him and his family to the private neighborhood of Funes, roughly 300 kilometers (185 miles) north of Buenos Aires.

The Argentina captain reportedly traveled with his wife, Antonela Rocuzzo, and their three chil-

dren, all of whom had accompanied him throughout the tournament in North America. Waiting for him in Rosario was his 68-year-old father, Jorge, whose ongoing medical treatment for an undisclosed illness had been disclosed by the family during the World Cup.

Fans had gathered at the airport as early as 3:30 a.m. hoping to catch a sight of the star. Among them were two young girls in Albiceleste jerseys holding welcome signs, one of which read: "Messi: You're a legend. Thank you for bringing joy to our hearts. A whole country loves you!"

Messi is expected to rejoin Inter Miami in late July or early August for the ongoing MLS season

Fifteen members of Argentina's 26-player World Cup roster, led by head coach Lionel Scaloni, landed at Buenos Aires' Ezeiza Airport on Monday on a chartered flight.

The squad's arrival follows Sunday's 1-0 extra-time loss to Spain in the World Cup final in East Rutherford, New Jersey, decided by a Ferran Torres goal.

The match marked Messi's third World Cup final appearance following 2014 and 2022. He ended the tournament as the runner-up for the Golden Boot with eight goals, two behind France's Kylian Mbappé.

Mbappé tops the all-time World Cup goalscoring chart with 22, one more than Messi.