



Amir congrats Egypt on July 23rd revolution anniversary
Page 2



Kuwait Finance House reports net profit attributable to the shareholders of the bank of KD 363.1 million for H1 2026
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HOUTHIS ATTACK SAUDI TANKERS, RAISES IRAN WAR STAKES

‘Strike two’ at Abdaly border leaves only material damage

No casualties reported; firefighters contain blaze

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (Agencies): Kuwait’s Ministry of Defense has confirmed that the Al-Abdaly border crossing in northern Kuwait was targeted twice by hostile drones on Thursday, causing material damage but no casualties.

The Ministry said the Al-Abdaly crossing came under a second hostile drone attack on Thursday, reporting damage to facilities but affirming that no injuries were recorded.

Defense Ministry spokesman Col. Saud Al-Atwan stated that specialized military teams promptly responded to the renewed attack and secured the site

in coordination with relevant authorities.

Al-Atwan reiterated that explosive ordnance disposal units and other technical teams have been deployed to inspect the area and ensure it is clear of drone remnants and any potential hazards.

He reaffirmed that Kuwait’s armed forces will continue to perform their duties with the highest levels of professionalism, readiness and vigilance to safeguard the country’s security and stability.

The Kuwait Fire Force said firefighting teams managed to extinguish a blaze that broke out in the north of the country following the drone strike.

KFF spokesman Brigadier Mohammad Al-Ghareeb said crews from Sab-

biya and Abdaly fire stations responded, noting that the incident resulted in material damage only.

Army intercepts hostile drones amid Iranian attacks

Kuwait’s General Staff of the Army had earlier announced that air defense units were intercepting hostile drones amid what it described as heinous Iranian aggression.

The statement clarified that explosions heard by residents were the result of air defense systems engaging these drones. It urged the public to follow safety guidance issued by relevant authorities.

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Mercury nears 50°C again this weekend

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department forecast that Kuwait’s weather during the weekend will be extremely hot during the day and hot to warm at night, with relatively high humidity, especially in coastal areas.

The acting Director of the Meteorological Department Dhirar Al-Ali told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the country is being affected by an extension of the Indian monsoon low-pressure system, accompanied by an extremely hot air mass and light to moderate northwesterly winds.

He explained that Friday’s daytime weather will be extremely hot, with northwesterly to variable light and moderate winds ranging from 8 to 32 kilometers per hour. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 46 and 48 degrees Celsius, while sea conditions will be light to moderate, with waves between one and three feet.

Friday night will be hot to warm, with northwesterly to variable light and moderate winds ranging from 8 to 28 kilometers per hour. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 31 and 33 degrees Celsius, with light to moderate seas and waves between one and three feet.

Saturday’s weather will be extremely hot during the day, with relatively high humidity in coastal areas. Winds will be northwesterly to variable, light and moderate, ranging from 8 to 30 kilometers per hour. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 47 and 49 degrees Celsius, with light to moderate seas and waves between one and three feet.

Saturday night will be hot to warm, with light to moderate northwesterly winds ranging from 12 to 32 kilometers per hour. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 32 and 34 degrees Celsius, with sea waves between two and four feet.



HH the PM chairs the ministerial committee meeting on following up major development projects.

PM keeps development projects on track

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired Thursday a meeting of the ministerial committee tasked with following up on major development projects in the country.

His Highness the Prime Minister was briefed on progress rates in pro-

ject implementation and their designated timelines, ensuring the highest levels of efficiency and transparency in line with the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Minister

of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, along with several ministers and senior officials.

Two ministries unite

Commercial cheats face final checkout

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: The Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry had a meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Interior to discuss ways to strengthen coordination in conducting inspection campaigns to track down violators in different parts of the country, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Director of the department Faisal Al-Ansari disclosed that they talked about the mechanisms of cooperation between the two sides, ensuring the participation of the Interior Ministry in the inspection campaigns, thereby, streamlining procedures and supporting the inspection teams.

He affirmed that strict measures will be taken against those proven to have committed grave commercial violations, up to the point of immediate deportation in accordance with legal procedures.

He said the Commercial Control Team reviewed the operational mechanism of the Joint Operations Unit, which oversees and monitors the activities of 71 cooperative societies, in addition to the food supply centers, which distribute subsidized food items to citizens.

He indicated that work is underway to link the Ministry of Interior to the Joint Operations Unit to monitor the security aspects of the campaigns.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry honored the representatives of its Interior counterpart in appreciation of their efforts in supporting the inspection operations and contributing to the success of the recent campaigns.

Assistant Director General for Criminal Investigation Affairs in the Governorates Brigadier Abdulwahab Al-Badr, Director for Investigations in Hawally Governorate Colonel Jamal Al-Faraj, and Director General of the Capital Security Directorate Brigadier Abdul Aziz Al-Omar were honored in recognition of their role in strengthening coordination and supporting the monitoring and inspection efforts.

Vehicle border exit ban rumor hits roadblock

Residents must settle traffic fines before exit: Mol

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: The Ministry of Interior denied reports circulating on social media, claiming that all vehicles with outstanding traffic violations were banned from leaving Kuwait through

border crossings, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the ministry explained that the current procedures apply only to vehicles subject to judicial or precautionary impoundment and vehicles with expired insurance policies, in accordance with established legal procedures. Vehicles with registered traffic violations are not

included in these measures.

Citizens exiting through border crossings were not required to settle traffic violations, but residents must pay outstanding fines before leaving the country. The ministry urged the public to verify information, avoid sharing unconfirmed reports, and rely only on official sources for accurate information.



Dr. Ali bin Safaa, Ambassador of Yemen to Kuwait

Yemen’s envoy ‘warns’ of Red Sea flashpoint

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Yemeni Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Ali bin Safaa said the fire that engulfed a commercial vessel belonging to a Saudi company in the Red Sea on Thursday morning is a dangerous escalation threatening the international maritime security.

In a statement to the newspaper, Bin Safaa asserted that the attacks carried out by the Houthi militia are no longer isolated incidents, as they have become

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Gulf Bank reinforces its commitment to youth empowerment at the INJAZ Internship Fair '26



Zain brings real-world business challenges to Kuwait University’s Capstone Program



NBK sponsors the ALT summer program to develop youth skills & enhance future readiness

New law shines light on Kuwait shadow markets

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: In a decisive legislative move aimed at restructuring the local economy, the new “Commercial Concealment Law” has emerged at the forefront of the structural reforms underway in Kuwait.

The draft law seeks to address long-standing and deep-rooted distortions that have hindered the efficiency of the local market and limited its ability to achieve sustainable, natural growth.

The step has been widely welcomed and has sparked extensive discussions among economists and investors interviewed by the daily.

Economic and real estate expert Qais Al-Ghanim affirmed that the state is taking serious and effective steps to address structural imbalances in the national economy. However, he emphasized the importance of involving private-sector experts in the drafting of the law.

He stressed that it is the government’s responsibility to establish balanced legal frameworks that protect



Al-Ghanim

the economy without harming the private sector or restricting its growth.

Al-Ghanim explained that the government is currently working to attract foreign investment to Kuwait. Vital sectors and operational businesses, such as grocery stores, auto repair shops, and laundries, face real challenges and difficulties in their management. Daily skilled labor work highlights the role of experienced expatriates as real partners who contribute both capital and expertise to the management and operation of businesses. Expatriates currently manage a significant share of the small business sector.

He highlighted the need for regulations that govern commercial relationships between citizens and residents, which would positively contribute to the economic and business environment.

Al-Ghanim concluded by noting the government’s ongoing efforts to create an attractive investment environment and draw foreign capital in order to diversify sources of national income.

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Kuwait and Oman align on energy future, reaffirm ties

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (KUNA): Minister of Oil and Chairman of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Tareq Al-Roumi stressed Thursday the shared commitment of Kuwait and Oman to further strengthen co-operation and coordination, particularly in the oil and energy sectors, supporting their strategic partner-

ship.

The Ministry of Oil said in a statement that Al-Roumi made the remarks during a meeting with Omani Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Saleh Al-Kharousi on the conclusion of his diplomatic mission.

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Ministry of Oil photos
Minister of Oil and Chairman of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Tareq Al-Roumi during a meeting with outgoing Omani Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Saleh Al-Kharousi.



Fajr 03:33 Asr 15:30
Sunrise .. 05:03 Maghrib .. 18:46
Zohr 11:55 Isha 20:16



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince



HH the Prime Minister



Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi

Amir congrats Egypt on July 23rd revolution 'versary

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Thursday a cable of congratulations to Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi on the anniversary of the July 23 Revolution.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir praised the historical and firm relations between Kuwait and Egypt, wishing the Egyptian

President good health and wellness and to Egypt and its people progress and prosperity.

Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Thursday a cable of congratulations to Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi on the anniversary of

the July 23 Revolution, wishing him continued health and wellbeing.

Prime Minister congratulates

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations Thursday to Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi on the anniversary of the July 23 Revolution.

Amiri Diwan thanks mourners

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (KUNA): On behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Al-Sabah Family, the Amiri Diwan thanked on Thursday all citizens and residents who offered

condolences over the demise of Sheikhha Nuzha Salem Sabah Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.

The Amiri Diwan prayed to Almighty Allah to bestow mercy upon the deceased's soul and grant her highest place in heavens.



KUNA photo

Kuwait Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Boodai receives the Czech Ambassador to Kuwait Juraj Chmiel.

Boost in trade, economy eyed

Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Boodai met Thursday with Czech Ambassador to Kuwait Juraj Chmiel to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a statement to KUNA that the two sides reviewed issues of mutual interest and explored opportu-

nities to expand cooperation in priority sectors, particularly trade and the economy, in a way that serves their shared interests.

The meeting also included an exchange of views on a number of issues of common interest aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation and coordination across various related fields. (KUNA)



KUNA photo

The 22nd Arab Conference of Heads of Immigration and Passport Authorities concluded in Tunis with participation from several member countries, including Kuwait.

Call for Arab regional confab on human peddling

TUNIS, July 23, (KUNA): The 22nd Arab Conference of Heads of Immigration and Passport Authorities concluded in Tunis with participation from several member countries, including Kuwait, alongside the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and Naif Arab University for Security Sciences.

Conference recommendations included pre-

paring a plan to create a unified Arab database on document forging methods, said the Council's General Secretariat in a statement.

Participants at the conference asked the General Secretariat to organize a regional conference to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling, in coordination with the UNODC.

The conference called on member states

that have not yet adopted biometric passports to start using them, due to their security features that limit forgery, while encouraging member states to share expertise in issuing biometric passports.

The two-day conference aims to strengthen Arab cooperation in the field of travel document forgery.

Women entitled to adequate housing – Asst. FM

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (KUNA): Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah reaffirmed on Wednesday Kuwait's commitment to promoting women's right to adequate housing; a fundamental right linked to human dignity, family stability, and social and economic empowerment.

This came during a meeting with Head of Women's Housing Committee at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare Sheikhha Bibi Al-Yusuf Al-Sabah, UN Secretary General's Representative and Resident Coordinator in Kuwait Ghada Al-Taher, and representatives of UN agencies at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare headquarters.

Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah praised the Committee's efforts to address Kuwaiti women's housing needs and strengthen housing stability and equality.

She highlighted the committee's role in monitoring women's housing challenges and developing data to support reports, reflecting Kuwait's commitment to empowering women and providing suitable housing solutions.

Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah stressed continued cooperation with the UN to advance inclusive housing and women's empowerment in support of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and Kuwait Vision 2035



Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah

Nod to formation of vehicle grants panel

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Adel Al-Zamel issued a decision on the formation of the Vehicle Allocation Committee, chaired by acting Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Services and Main Workshops Eng. Falah Al-Subaie.

The committee will assume the responsibilities stipulated in Ministry of Finance Circular No. 1/1994, and its meetings, decisions and recommendations will be subject to the provisions of the circular.

The committee chairman is authorized to grant final approval for the decisions and recommendations.

Meanwhile, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) approved the recommendation regarding the tender for major maintenance works in the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Ministry of Public Works buildings.

CAPT also approved the publication of an addendum to the tender for the supply and installation of three 132/11 kV main substations for the Cloud Data Centers project in various locations in the country, along with the power supply and accessories.

CAIT seeks SAB nod for 'paperless gov't' project

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: The State Audit Bureau (SAB) recently returned the project documents for Contract No. 67, known as the 'Paperless Government' project valued at KD9.992 million, to the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT).

Sources indicated that CAIT returned the project documents to SAB last Wednesday for the second time, asking approval for the contract and commencement of implementation.

The project is in line with the ongoing efforts of the government to improve services by utilizing the most advanced technologies in the field of commu-

Kuwait welcomes ban on import from Israel

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (KUNA): Kuwait welcomed the decisions by the Netherlands and Belgium to ban imports of products from Israeli occupation settlements, describing the measures as a vital step consistent with international law.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the decisions are in line with United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2334 (2016) and the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) advisory opinion issued on July 19, 2024, which found Israeli occupation settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories to be illegal.

The ministry commended the Dutch and Belgian governments for adopting a position in line with international law and called on the international community and the UNSC to fulfill their responsibilities by confronting occupation settlement policies, which it said undermine prospects for peace.

The ministry reiterated Kuwait's longstanding support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

nications and information technology.

The project aims to realize one of the main objectives of the development plan -- the development of an interconnected and transparent government, in which the digital transformation of government operations and services is a fundamental policy.

The project aims to digitize all government transactions and eliminate paper transactions, thereby, raising the efficiency of government services.

It is worth mentioning that CAIT previously obtained approval from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to offer the tender to a company, with an implementation term of three years.

Other Voices

The commercial charitable society

By Ahmad alsarraf

THE Muslim Brotherhood did not come to Kuwait merely to collect donations for charitable work, but for far more sinister reasons. Their intentions and objectives were clear from the early beginning, and the evidence for this is abundant and well-known.

The Muslim Brotherhood does not consider itself a political party, a civil movement, or a voice representing Muslims; it is all of these entities combined. The Muslim Brotherhood, which is almost one century old, is a political and ideological machine whose stated goal is to establish a state governed by Islamic law and to Islamize all aspects of life. This goal cannot be achieved without major structural changes.

As a result, we have seen the Brotherhood, since its founding in 1928, carrying out assassinations with financial support from the British Suez Canal Company.

Among the victims were prime ministers, high-ranking officers, judges, and ministers. The writings, statements, publications, and positions of the Muslim Brotherhood leaders, starting with the founder Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and others, clearly reveal what they seek to achieve.

Therefore, we are not dealing with a charitable organization, but rather a branch of a massive military, political, and ideological machine whose name has been associated with bloodshed since its inception. This is why many governments - Arab, Gulf, and Western - have sought to ban the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood or designate it a terrorist organization.

After the suspension of certain articles of their constitution, I expected the Muslim Brotherhood's stance to change, but this did not happen. The Muslim Brotherhood suffered a blow with the dissolution



alsarraf

of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students, which had been a primary source of recruits for the group, as a result of its illegal status.

Previously, sincere elements within the government had attempted to curb the Muslim Brotherhood's influence by halting their "charitable" activities abroad, given their highly dubious nature.

The Muslim Brotherhood's situation has not changed significantly, and their threat remains, despite the decline in their influence, due to the absence of political representation. These members of parliament played a negative role in the escalation of political tensions to their current state.

Although some entities call for adherence to the law, the Muslim Brotherhood has been keen to exploit its influence to achieve its own interests and obtain privileges and exemptions not available to others, such as prime locations, commercial activities, projects, and its charitable organizations and branches.

The Muslim Brotherhood was able to lease a school building for only KD 20 per month, which is a clear indication of its abuse of power. The truth came to light a few days ago when the Ministry of Social Affairs withdrew and canceled the contracts for more than 1,700 industrial plots due to serious violations committed by their occupants, including two plots used by a charitable organization. The beneficiaries had sublet the plots to practice trade and craft without obtaining any licenses.

I don't know how this charitable organization was allowed to exploit its "religious and political" influence to obtain two "industrial" plots in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area and commit so many violations.

Perhaps the reason is that they feel safe because they have been allowed, in flagrant violation of the law, to publish political publications, issue political statements, participate in political activities, support candidates in elections and spend on their campaigns, and interfere in the affairs of other countries for six decades.



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diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Trade, oil at great risk if Iran regime extends war

“THE Iraqi government is powerless against the considerable influence of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias. These militias at times make political decisions as though they are the ruling authority, while the government remains unable to disarm them or hold those responsible for cross-border attacks accountable,” columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“These militias possess drones and missiles, and the Iraqi government

fears that confronting them could trigger internal unrest. The continuation of the status quo further entrenches a “dual state” model, in which the official government and the militias share political decision-making power.

“Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Abdullah Saleh faces a complex test over the country’s future. Can the government exercise its sovereign authority, or will the influence of the militias remain the decisive factor shaping Iraq’s domestic and foreign policy in the coming period?”

“The factions refuse to relinquish their weapons. The so-called “Islamic Resistance in Iraq,” which includes many militias linked to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, insists it will not disarm. Kataib Hezbollah has also called on the government to submit to its demands.

“In a further attempt to embarrass the Prime Minister and sabotage his visit to America, the same militias reaffirmed their allegiance to Iran and its religious leadership. The message is clear - Tehran’s influence in Iraq remains strong and is backed by weapons beyond the control of the Iraqi state.

“Kataib Hezbollah, one of the most hardline and pro-Tehran militias in Iraq, issued a warning to the Iraqi government and its officials, calling on them to submit to the resistance.

“Funeral processions for the former Iranian Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, extended into Iraq, drawing significant public participation. The processions underscored Iran’s considerable influence in Iraq and suggested that a segment of the Iraqi population remains loyal to Iran’s religious leadership, regarding it as a spiritual authority whose guidance should be followed.

“What is driving the current US attacks against Iran? Iran has used the Strait of Hormuz to blackmail global markets and threaten international navigation. US President Donald Trump warned that the United States would strike bridges and power plants in Iran if no agreement was reached. Iran continued its threats and blackmail. As a result, on Friday, July 17, US aircraft launched a series of airstrikes targeting several bridges in southern Iran.

“The choice of bridges as military targets reflects the US assessment of their importance to Iran’s transportation network, where they play a major role in the movement of troops and supplies. The United States has intensified its military operations near the Strait of Hormuz in an effort to weaken Tehran’s ability to disrupt navigation in the Gulf. Iran has not limited its actions to disrupting shipping but has also attacked commercial vessels, resulting in deaths, injuries, and missing crew members.

“Iran responded by launching a new wave of attacks on Kuwait, in flagrant violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Kuwait and the other Gulf states are not parties to the conflict between the United States and Iran.

“Several US-aligned countries in the region have also been affected. Members of the Kuwaiti army were injured, a number of power generation units were damaged, and a Kuwaiti oil facility sustained significant material losses.

“The attacks on Kuwait originated from Iraqi militias allied with Iran. Qatar, Bahrain, and Jordan have also come under Iranian attack. In addition, Iran has threatened to close the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, alongside the Strait of Hormuz, with the support of the Houthis in Yemen.

“Iran may be seeking to expand the scope of the war in order to raise the cost for its adversaries. If so, the world could face an unprecedented maritime crisis with serious consequences for oil markets and international trade.”

Also:

“On one occasion, a heated discussion took place regarding a decision that concerned everyone. Those present exchanged opinions and disagreed, while one person remained silent throughout,” Kuwaiti writer **Sami Abdulmohsen Al-Ruwaished** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“After the meeting ended, everyone discovered that this person possessed information that could have completely changed the course of the discussion, but he chose to keep it to

himself. When asked why, he replied, “I chose silence.”

“Many people associate silence with wisdom, to the point that silence in some situations has become a virtue that needs no explanation.

“Undoubtedly, there are situations where silence is more beneficial than words. However, the problem arises when silence becomes a permanent choice, or a means of avoiding confrontation or taking responsibility.

“In work environments, we sometimes see an employee who notices a clear flaw but doesn’t speak up. In everyday life, someone might realize that a friend or relative is heading towards a wrong decision, yet they simply observe.

“In both cases, silence isn’t always a sign of wisdom. It may stem from a fear of confrontation, a desire to avoid embarrassment, or a belief that the matter isn’t worth intervening in.

“Interestingly, many major problems don’t begin with a bad decision, but rather with the absence of a voice that should have been heard at the right time.

“Administrative history is replete with instances where information was available, but no one dared to voice it, or did so too late.

“Wisdom isn’t measured by the number of words we say or refrain from saying, but by our ability to recognize the appropriate moment for each.

“There are words that can ruin a situation, but there are also silences that can. Speaking too hastily can be a mistake, but hesitating to express an opinion can be another, equally damaging one. Therefore, the question isn’t always - Should I have spoken? The more important question might be - What did the situation lose because of my silence?

“Not all silence is wisdom, just as not all speech is recklessness.”

□ □ □

“The speech delivered by Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi to a gathering of businessmen, economists, and intellectuals in Washington during his recent visit was perhaps unprecedented for an Iraqi prime minister since the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime in 2003,” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Al-Zaidi was clear and forthright when he acknowledged that he is not a politician but an economist. This admission is commendable, as it may strengthen his credibility and earn greater respect and trust among the businessmen, university professors, intellectuals, and many Iraqis living in America who attended the gathering.

“Al-Zaidi spoke to them as though he were one of them when he said, “I will accompany you on tours of Iraq. Iraq possesses the resources for success - oil reserves, gas, and silicon sand for glass production, yet there is still no glass factory in Iraq.”

“Al-Zaidi did not discuss partisan politics, Iraq’s internal political divisions, or its neighbors and foreign relations. Nouri al-Maliki, a veteran politician and the first prime minister of the first democratic government after the fall of the

Ba’ath regime, said he met with al-Zaidi and had an extensive discussion about his vision for Iraq. Maliki stated that he would support al-Zaidi for the premiership. Through this endorsement, he removed the biggest obstacle facing politicians seeking the position. Was Maliki sincere, or was al-Zaidi’s statement merely a gesture of courtesy?

“Politicians often struggle to tolerate the presence of their rivals. During his historic first visit to Washington, al-Zaidi met with US President Donald Trump in a meeting that was notably free of jokes and sarcasm. Al-Zaidi said he was young and had not followed those past events. It was as if he wanted to convey to Trump, “We are the generation of the present era, Mr. Trump.”

“Al-Zaidi is scheduled to tour the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Here in Kuwait, we hope that he will begin his tour with a visit to Kuwait, especially given the many issues that can be discussed, including the numerous painful and sorrowful stories, as well as the many joyful ones.

“Kuwait is neither strange nor new to Iraqi merchants and businessmen from the south, the center, and the Kurdish regions. The two countries share deep and close ties. Even during the most difficult periods, there were no barriers between them. There are strong family ties between the two countries, and Iraqis have also long traveled to Kuwait for shopping and to purchase their needs. This was the case in previous eras, including during the Maliki and Republican periods.”

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Ahmad Al-Dawas



Hassan Ali Karam

Roads, infrastructure, water network discussed

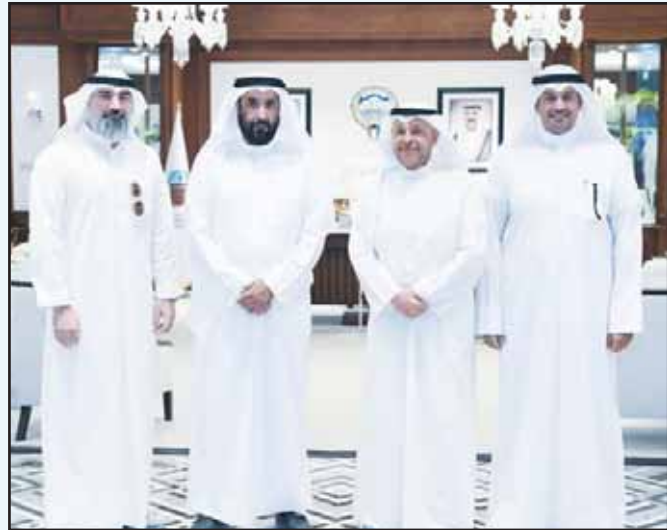
KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah on Thursday met with Director General of the General Directorate of Roads Engineering at the Ministry of Public Works Eng. Khaled Dhawi Al-Osaimi, Director of the Implementation Department Eng. Abdulaziz Karam, and Chief Engineer in the Water Projects Sector at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Eng. Mazid Al-Badhali.

They discussed issues about roads, infrastructure and water network projects in Farwaniya Governorate, including the water supply project in the residential area in Khaitan.

They also looked into the progress of ongoing projects and talked about ways to strengthen coordination among government agencies to accelerate the implementation of these projects and overcome challenges that could emerge during the execution phase.

Sheikh Athbi stressed the importance of maintaining close coordination among government entities and intensifying efforts to complete development projects within the approved timelines in order to support infrastructure development and advance sustainable development in the governorate.

The representatives of the government agencies expressed their appreciation for the commitment of the Governor to closely follow up the development projects, while reaffirming their continuous cooperation in serving the public and meeting the needs of residents in the governorate.

Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives the guests in his office.

Eye surgery for one

2 Kuwaiti youths hurt as argument leads to fight

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: An argument between two young Kuwaiti men in Nuzha escalated into a physical altercation, leaving both parties injured, reports Al-Anba daily.

One of the men is currently receiving treatment at Amiri Hospital and is scheduled to undergo eye surgery.

According to security sources, the Operations room of the Ministry of Interior received a report about a fight in Nuzha. One of the young men went to Faiha Police Station and reported that he had been assaulted. About 15 minutes later, the other man arrived at the station and filed a similar complaint. Authorities determined that both men were the parties involved in the altercation.

Initial investigations revealed that the dispute began in the Nuzha Park parking lot when one of the young men blocked the other’s vehicle as he was attempting to leave. The argument escalated into a physical altercation, resulting in one of them suffering an eye injury that required surgery at Amiri Hospital. The other man also submitted a medical report regarding the injuries he sustained during the fight.

The Public Prosecutor ordered the case to be registered and assigned the General Department of Criminal Investigation to conduct further investigations into the incident.

GCC seek cooperation boost in traffic affairs

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: A delegation from the Ministry of Interior represented Kuwait in the 54th meeting of the Directors General for Traffic Affairs and 52nd meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Traffic Systems Development and Linkage Team at the GCC Secretariat General headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The delegation included Assistant Director General for Education and Coordination in the General Traffic Department Brigadier General Khaled Al-Adwani, Director of the Information Systems Department Colonel Bashar Al-Sayed Hashem and First Lieutenant Suleiman Al-Shammari.

During these meetings, they discussed ways to develop traffic systems, exchange expertise in traffic management, and assess modern technologies and smart systems that raise traffic safety standards and prevent road accidents.

They also looked into the progress of the Gulf Traffic Systems Linkage Project, while agreeing on the need to continue coordinated efforts to create a safe traffic environment.

Court extends jail-term for Kuwaiti spy to ‘life’

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: The State Security Court of Appeals overturned the 10-year prison sentence imposed on a citizen involved in the case of espionage with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah, and then sentenced him to life imprisonment, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Public Prosecution charged the citizen with attempting to spy for foreign entities with the intent to harm the interests of Kuwait by communicating and meeting with the leaders and members of Hezbollah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.

According to the case file, the defendant underwent training in carrying and using weapons, as well as operating drones, under the supervision of the members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah.

The State Security Department at the Ministry of Interior monitored the terrorist activities of the defendant and gathered evidence that led to his arrest and referral to the prosecution.

Farwaniya co-op board members ‘shown door’

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyasah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: The State Security Court of Appeals overturned the 10-year prison sentence imposed on a citizen involved in the case of espionage with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah, and then sentenced him to life imprisonment, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Public Prosecution charged the citizen with attempting to spy for foreign entities with the intent to harm the interests of Kuwait by communicating and meeting with the leaders and members of Hezbollah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.

According to the case file, the defendant underwent training in carrying and using weapons, as well as operating drones, under the supervision of the members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah.

The State Security Department at the Ministry of Interior monitored the terrorist activities of the defendant and gathered evidence that led to his arrest and referral to the prosecution.

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The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) announced that its emergency teams, in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, sealed a shop selling cigarettes to consumers under the legal age (21 years old), and closed it immediately. It also closed a health institute for violating ministerial decisions regarding the prohibition of cash transactions. The ministry said that the emergency team of the Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates, in coordination with the Juvenile Protection Department at the Ministry of Interior, found a shop selling cigarettes to consumers under the legal age (21 years), in violation of the regulations, and as a result the shop was immediately closed.

Customs thwart drug trafficking

Maid, expat among hash smugglers

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Inspectors at the Air Cargo Department of the General Administration of Customs (GAC) thwarted an attempt to smuggle approximately 9 kilograms of a narcotic “Chemical” liquid, which was tightly concealed inside shampoo bottles in a shipment that arrived from the United Kingdom.

In a press release, GAC explained that the seizure was carried out in accordance with the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, and was aimed at strengthening customs control and combating attempts to smuggle prohibited substances.

Inspectors became suspicious of the shipment, the inspection then revealing the narcotic substance. The necessary legal procedures were then initiated.

GAC affirmed its continued commitment to enhancing control at all customs entry points to counter all attempts to smuggle prohibited substances, thereby contributing to the protection of community security and safety.

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Maid among peddlers: The Drug Control General Department (DCGD) referred three expatriates - two domestic workers holding Article 20 visas and one unemployed expatriate holding an Article 18 visa - to the Public Prosecution on charges of drug trafficking, reports Al-Anba daily.

A total of six kilograms of various narcotics, including crystal meth, hashish, and Lyrica, from the expatriate’s residence in Salmiya.

According to informed sources, the Criminal Investigation Department received information about an Asian expatriate woman placing suspicious items near an abandoned vehicle in a vacant lot in Salmiya. Anti-narcotics officers were dispatched to the location, where they found the woman and seized packets containing narcotics.

Ahmadi Municipality issues 350 safety violation notices

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: The Safety Department of Ahmadi Municipality issued 350 warnings to properties found in violation of safety regulations and requirements during intensive inspection campaigns conducted in June, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Engineer Khaled Al-Otaibi, Director of the department, stated that the inspection teams completed 363 field reports during the same period, issued 60 safety permits and 45 hygiene certificates for construction projects and private residences, and released 33 bank guarantees.

He urged property owners to comply with municipal regulations, implement all required safety measures, and promptly remove construction debris.



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‘Switch off lights, AC not in use at home and work’

Preserve national resources: MEWRE

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy reviewed methods for rationalizing electricity and water consumption in workplaces and homes.

It emphasized the importance of adopting sound practices and promoting social responsibility to preserve national resources

es and support sustainable development goals.

This was highlighted during an awareness lecture titled “Save for Sustainability,” organized by the Media and Awareness Team for Rationalization at the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) headquarters, in the presence of Nazaha Chairperson Dr. Rana Al-Fares and a number of employees.

The lecture addressed the most important daily practices that help reduce electricity and water consumption, emphasizing the importance of applying them in workplaces and

homes.

The Media and Awareness Team for Rationalization affirmed its continued cooperation with government entities to implement awareness programs and initiatives aimed at promoting a culture of conservation, while appreciating the attendees’ interaction and participation in the discussions.

It is worth noting that the lecture was presented by members of the ministry’s Media and Awareness Team - Eng. Khadija Mishari, Eng. Anfal Al-Failakawi, Eng. Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim, and Eng. Dalal Al-Mansouri.

‘Noor 9’ fair showcases rising Kuwaiti photo talent

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (KUNA): The 9th edition of the “Noor” Photography Exhibition opened Wednesday at The Avenues Mall, showcasing a compelling collection of photos taken by emerging members of the Kuwait Photography Society.

Organized in collaboration with The Avenues management, the four-day event features 56 photographs by 38 male and female lens artisans, documenting vibrant scenes, heritage, and landscapes across Kuwait and international destinations.

Opening the exhibition, Chairperson of the Kuwait Photography Society Dr. Souad Al-Hamar emphasized that the showcase provides an important public platform to nurture young talent, highlight creative versatility, and celebrate visual storytelling.

The exhibition invites visitors to explore a diverse array of photographic styles-ranging from landscape and architecture to cultural documentary-fostering broader artistic engagement within the community.



A large crowd turned up at the photo exhibition in The Avenues Mall.

KUNA photo

Kuwait mourns passing of former education minister

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Former Minister of Education Dr. Suleiman Sa’adoun Al-Bader Al-Qenaei, who headed the ministry following the liberation of Kuwait, passed away on Wednesday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The late minister played a significant role in managing the education sector during one of the most critical periods in Kuwait’s history.

He was instrumental in the re-opening of schools and the restoration of the educational environment, enabling students to return to classrooms after Kuwait’s liberation from the Iraqi invasion. During his tenure, programs were also implemented to rehabilitate damaged educational institutions.

Minister of Education Engineer Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei mourned the passing of Dr. Suleiman Bader Al-Qenaei.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Education affirmed that the deceased was one of the most prominent educational figures who dedicated his life to serving education in Kuwait, leaving behind a distinguished academic and educational legacy and a lasting impact.

The ministry highlighted his significant



Suleiman Al-Bader

contributions to educating and preparing generations of Kuwaitis, based on his belief in the vital role of education in building individuals and advancing the nation.

The ministry recalled, with deep appreciation and gratitude, the deceased’s dedication and selflessness.

It extended its sincere condolences and sympathy to his family, relatives, and all members of the education sector, praying that God Almighty grants him mercy, a place in Paradise, and grants his loved ones patience and comfort.

MoE grants Grade 12 students 3 days to appeal exam results

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: The Ministry of Education announced the opening of the appeals process for Grade 12 students in the Science and Arts streams, as well as religious education students, regarding the results of the second-round exams for the 2025/2026 academic year, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release, the ministry stated that the appeals process will remain open for three days, from Thursday until Saturday, with each student allowed to submit appeals for a maximum of three subjects.

The ministry clarified that appeals must be submitted online only through the Ministry of Education’s website via the Student Services section.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education announced on Wednesday that the results of the summer course exams for the second semester for Grade 12 students in the science, literature, and religious education sections for the 2025/2026 academic year are now available on the ministry’s website, the ministry’s application, and the Sahel application, reports Al-Seyassah daily.



KUNA photo

Distribution of devices for reading Holy Quran underway at the IICO premises.

‘Insight and Hope’ project implemented

IICO distributes devices for reading the Quran in Braille

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (KUNA): The International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) distributed Al-Furqan devices for reading the Holy Quran in Braille to 30 visually impaired individuals.

This is part of the ‘Insight and Hope’ project implemented by the Al-Irada Volunteer Team for People with Disabilities in order to empower people with disabilities and enhance their integration into society.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Thursday, Director of the Volunteer Work Department at IICO Ammar Al-Kandari pointed out that the provision of these assistive devices, at a cost of more than \$53,000, guarantees the independence of people with disabilities and it is one way of meeting their needs.

Al-Kandari explained that the Al-Furqan device is not just a technological tool, because it also eases access to the Holy Quran for the visually impaired and strengthens their connection to it. He affirmed that the IICO remains committed

to supporting initiatives that have a lasting effect on the lives of beneficiaries.

He then expressed his gratitude to the donors, who generously contributed to funding the project. He also commended the Al-Irada Volunteer Team for their efforts in serving people with disabilities and implementing programs designed for them.

On the other hand, Al-Iradah Volunteer Team Leader Hisham Al-Kandari informed KUNA that the ‘Insight and Hope’ project stems from the sense of social responsibility towards people with Disabilities, and a commitment to provide assistive devices that enable the blind to recite the Holy Quran and grasp its meanings easily and smoothly.

He stated that the project confirms the importance of partnership between charitable organizations and volunteer teams in implementing initiatives, which improve the quality of life for people with disabilities and empower them to actively participate in society.

Kuwait issues \$6bn in US dollar denominated sovereign bonds

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: The State of Kuwait issued \$6 billion in US Dollar denominated sovereign bonds in three tranches in international capital markets, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This is the most significant sovereign financing transaction in global markets this year, reflecting the continuous confidence of international investors in Kuwait and an affirmation of its strong credit rating and financial position.

The issuance comprised three tranches -- \$3 billion with three-year maturity, \$1.5 billion with five-year maturity, and \$1.5 billion with 10-year maturity. These tranches are priced at final spreads of 70, 75 and 85 basis points above comparable US Treasuries respectively.

The issuance witnessed exceptional investor demand, as the total order book exceeded \$18 billion -- more than three times

the issuance size. This is one of the largest combined order books for a multi-tranche sovereign bond issuance in 2026.

Investors from the Americas accounted for 48 percent of the issuance, followed by the United Kingdom and Europe at 28 percent, MENA region at 16 percent and Asia at four percent.

Investors from other international markets constituted the remaining four percent of the total issuance, proving the broad investor base and geographical distribution of demand for Kuwaiti sovereign bonds.

Finance Minister Yaqoub Al-Sayed Youssef Al-Rifai stated that the resounding success of this issuance is a manifestation of the continuous confidence of international investors in the State of Kuwait and a confirmation of the strength of its credit rating and financial position.

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	Price
One night stay in a Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons inclusive of Breakfast	BHD 46.000 / Net
One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast	BHD 102.148 / Net

Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	Price
One night stay in a Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons inclusive of Breakfast	BHD 53.361 / Net
One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast	BHD 119.173 / Net

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Scenes from the ceremony honoring outstanding athletes for the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 sports seasons, held under the patronage and attended by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



Prime Minister honors Kuwait's sporting elite

771 athletes earn state recognition as champions inspire nation

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (KUNA): Under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, a ceremony was held Wednesday to honor outstanding athletes for their 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 seasons.

Organized by the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and Ministry of State for Sports Affairs, the event took place at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC).

During the ceremony, His Highness the Prime Minister conferred awards upon outstanding athletes representing various Kuwaiti sports federations, clubs, and governing committees.

In a statement following the ceremony, His Highness the Prime Minister commended the athletes' achievements as a source of national pride, noting that their performance reflects the determination and resilience of Kuwait's youth in raising the national flag across international sporting arenas.

His Highness emphasized that the state's recognition extends to the technical, coaching, and administrative bodies whose efforts were in-



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attends the ceremony honoring outstanding athletes for their achievements during the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 sports seasons.



PM Diwan photos

strumental in securing regional and international podium finishes.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to providing a supportive environment that fosters sustainable athletic excellence, adding that investing in national youth talent remains a cornerstone of Kuwait's strategic sports development.

In his address, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Minister of State for Sports Affairs Dr. Tariq Al-Jalahma stated that the honoring serves as a national gesture of appreciation for the athletes' dedication.

He reaffirmed the ministry's man-

date to bolster institutional support and enhance Kuwait's global standing in sports.

For his part, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Youth and Sports Bashar Abdullah Al-Salem noted that the event delivers a message of profound gratitude to national athletes across all disciplines for their dedication to representing the nation.

The ceremony was attended by Minister Al-Jalahma, Chairperson of Salwa Al-Sabah Sports Club Sheikhha Naema Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Acting Director Gen-

eral Al-Salem, as well as leaders of sports federations, clubs, and senior officials from the Public Authority for Youth and Sports.

Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs, Dr. Tariq Al-Jalahma, lauded on Wednesday His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's support to the sports sector.

The remarks came during a gala held today honor the outstanding athletes in 2026 held under the auspices of His Highness the Premier and in his attendance at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center

(JACC).

Minister Al-Jalahma underscored that His Highness the Premier's patronage and attendance of today's ceremony shows the political leadership's commitment to empowering Kuwaiti youth and athletic talent.

He stated that the high-level patronage reflects the leadership's keenness to cultivate athletic excellence and motivate national competitors to represent the State of Kuwait prominently across regional and international arenas.

Organized by the Public Author-

ity for Sports, the event honored 771 distinguished athletes representing 39 sports organizations for their outstanding accomplishments throughout 2026.

Minister Al-Jalahma described the ceremony as a national gesture of appreciation for the athletes' dedication.

He emphasized that strategic investment in human capital within the sports domain remains a cornerstone for institutional performance, capacity-building, and long-term sector development.

He added that the Public Authority for Youth and Sports continues to execute a comprehensive vision aimed at optimizing the athletic ecosystem, fostering elite performance, and bolstering national representation on global stage.

For his part, the Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Youth and Sports, Bashar Abdullah, noted that honoring these achievers reinforces an institutional culture of recognition and excellence across the sports community.

Reflecting on his prior career as an international footballer, Abdullah highlighted the rigor, efforts, and perseverance required to reach honoring podiums. He reiterated the Authority's commitment to providing an ideal environment for Kuwaiti athletes, enhancing competitive standards, and unlocking national sporting potential.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait and

Al-Roumi praised the ambassador's efforts to strengthen the longstanding fraternal ties and expand bilateral cooperation, particularly in the oil and energy sectors, wishing him success in his future assignments.

Al-Kharousi expressed appreciation to Kuwait's leadership, government, people and oil sector for their support throughout his tenure, reaffirming the strong relations between the two countries and wishing Kuwait continued progress and prosperity.

New law

Meanwhile, economic expert and food security consultant Mohammed Al-Furaih affirmed that the government's approval of the draft decree-law on combating commercial concealment represents a significant strategic step that directly serves the national economy.

He explained that the draft law seeks to address long-standing distortions in the local market. One of the most serious distortions is the illegal practice of some expatriate workers managing and operating companies and shops for their own benefit while paying the citizen who holds the licenses minimal annual sums. The strict implementation of this law would create broad opportunities and open new avenues for employment and investment for Kuwaiti youth, particularly in the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) sector.

Al-Furaih dismissed concerns that the law could negatively affect capital flows, emphasizing that combating commercial concealment would not undermine efforts to attract foreign direct investment (FDI).

He noted that Kuwait already has a comprehensive and independent legislative framework that regulates and supports foreign investment.

Al-Furaih said the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) ensures that serious investors enter the market through official channels, creating added value for the economy and preventing unregulated or informal business practices.

In addition, economic expert and former head of the Kuwait Contractors Association, Dr. Salah Boursli, expressed support for the new anti-commercial concealment law, affirming that it represents a strategic and serious step toward curbing the "shadow economy" and eliminating the structural distortions affecting the local market.

Dr. Boursli explained that the primary beneficiary of implementing this law will be the national economy, followed by Kuwaiti youth and entrepreneurs. The law would directly contribute to creating a fair and transparent investment environment. It would open broad prospects for the growth and success of national small and medium-sized enterprises.

The law's positive impact would extend to consumers by ensuring the quality of goods and services, as commercial establishments would be subject to direct government oversight and required to comply with official quality standards.

Yemen's envoy

part of an Iranian agenda targeting regional security and global trade.

He stressed that targeting the commercial vessel is a blatant violation of international laws and norms, and threatens the security of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, which are among the most important maritime routes for the global economy.

He stated that the Houthi militia employs political and religious slogans and claims to be confronting Israel and the United States to gain public sympathy, but in reality, it is implementing an Iranian agenda to destabilize the region. He revealed that the Houthi militia exploits military reactions in the media to portray itself as a defender of the nation and to cover up its crimes within Yemen.

He cited the indications of coordination between the Houthis and armed groups and pirates on the African side, threatening to transform the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden into an area of influence used for political and economic blackmail and the imposition of a fait accompli.

He stressed that relying on foreign interventions has proven to be of limited effectiveness, explaining that they have managed the crisis without resolving it, and have instead given the Houthi militia an opportunity to continue promoting its narrative.

He added that the Houthi group is experiencing a period of weakness and internal vulnerability as a result of increasing public and tribal rejection. He called on the legitimate Yemeni government and the Arab Coalition, led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to capitalize on this phase to eliminate the militia and restore state institutions.

He explained that the recent decisions of Presidential Leadership Council Chairman Dr. Rashad al-Alimi regarding the resumption of oil exports and economic initiatives refuted the Houthi narrative and demonstrated that the group is the one imposing siege on the Yemeni people by disrupting exports and damaging the national economy. He called for an Arab-Gulf initiative to support the legitimate government politically, militarily, and on the ground, and to enable the Yemeni Armed Forces to recapture strategic ports and borders, most importantly the port of Hodeidah. He stated that the true solution to the Red Sea security issue begins with restoring stability in the Yemeni territory.

He also emphasized the importance of strengthening maritime security coordination between the Gulf states, Yemen, Egypt and African countries bordering the Red Sea in order to counter the Houthi media disinformation and expose their connection to the Iranian project.

'Strike two'

The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry on Thursday condemned in the strongest terms the continued heinous Iranian aggression on the country, the last of which on Al-Abdaly border crossing

earlier in the day.

In a press release, the ministry termed this aggression as blatant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty, a direct threat to its security and stability and the safety of its citizens and residents, and a serious breach of international law, the UN Charter and UN Security Council Resolution 2817.

It stressed that the continuation of these blatant aggressions reflect an unjustifiable, and systemic escalation that is of direct and dangerous threat to regional safety and stability.

It reiterated that the State of Kuwait reserves its inalienable and legitimate right to take all necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty and protect its security and stability in accordance with UN Charter Article 51.

Regional condemnation

The United Arab Emirates strongly condemned renewed Iranian missile and drone attacks targeting Bahrain, Kuwait and Jordan, describing them as a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of three brotherly countries and a threat to their security and stability.

The UAE Foreign Ministry affirmed full solidarity with Bahrain, Kuwait and Jordan and support for all measures taken to preserve their security and stability.

The Sudanese government likewise condemned recent missile and drone strikes targeting Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan and Iraq, calling them a grave threat to regional security and stability and a violation of state sovereignty.

Khartoum reiterated its categorical rejection of any hostile acts that breach territorial integrity and affirmed full solidarity with the affected countries in protecting their security and sovereignty.

Kuwait condemns Houthi attack on Saudi vessel

Separately, Kuwait on Thursday strongly condemned an attack by Iran-backed Houthi militias against a Saudi ship sailing in the Red Sea, calling it a blatant violation of international law and a direct threat to maritime security, global trade and energy supplies.

The Foreign Ministry expressed full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and support for all measures Riyadh may take to protect its sovereignty, security and interests, and called for the immediate cessation of such attacks and respect for rules guaranteeing safe and free navigation in international waterways.

Kuwaiti-Saudi diplomatic coordination

Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held a telephone call with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud on Thursday to discuss the latest regional developments.

The Foreign Ministry said the talks focused on the recent escalation and its repercussions, as well as ways to bolster diplomatic efforts aimed at maintaining regional security and stability.

Bahrain's stance on Red Sea attack

Bahrain on Thursday strongly condemned the terrorist attack by the Iran-backed Houthi militia targeting a Saudi-owned vessel in the Red Sea, which caused a fire in the ship's forward section but no injuries.

Its Foreign Ministry described the incident as a serious threat to maritime

security, trade and energy supplies and called on the international community—particularly the UN Security Council—to take deterrent measures and protect navigation in key waterways such as the Strait of Hormuz and Bab Al-Mandab.

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas on Thursday called on the Houthis to cease attacks on ships in the Red Sea following an attack on a Saudi vessel by the Iran-backed group.

In a statement, Kallas said recent threats by the Houthis to impose a maritime blockade on Saudi Arabia "pose a direct threat to regional stability and constitute a dangerous escalation."

She said the attack on an oil tanker in the Red Sea was "unacceptable, illegal, and further inflames an already volatile situation in the region," stressing that navigation must remain unimpeded in the Strait of Hormuz as well as in the Red Sea.

Kallas called on the Houthis to cease all actions that endanger international shipping and the lives of seafarers and to comply with international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as UN Security Council Resolutions 2216 on Yemen and 2722 and 2826 on freedom of navigation.

She affirmed that the European Union's naval operation ASPIDES "remains firmly committed to protecting freedom of navigation for all in the Red Sea and surrounding international waters," in line with its defensive mandate and Operation Plan.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Jasem Al-Budaiwi affirmed that the brutal Iranian attacks on GCC states and Houthis' threats to shut down Baba al-Mandab Strait require an immediate accountability and an international decisive decision which ensures the respect of international law rules and the freedom of navigation as well as protect vital infrastructure related to energy and natural resources.

Al-Budaiwi made the statement while delivering a speech during a high-level session of the UN Security Council held in New York, GCC Secretariat said in a statement earlier Wednesday.

The wise management of natural resources, in line with the principles of good governance, transparency, the rule of law and international cooperation, constitutes a fundamental pillar for achieving development and prosperity, Al-Budaiwi added.

He warned that exploiting these resources as a tool of war or political pressure, or targeting the infrastructure associated with them and disrupting their supply routes, leads to destabilization and harms the global economy as well as international peace and security.

GCC states made the good governance of their natural resources the foundation of their national and collective sovereignty.

These states have about 30 percent of world oil reserves and 20 percent of natural gas, thus making them a reliable partner in preserving the stability of global energy market even at crises and geopolitical fluctuations, he noted.

GCC states have continued to function the revenues of their natural resources in diversifying their economies and investing in human, infrastructure

and innovation, along with expanding renewable energy projects and low-emission hydrogen, he said.

Natural resources security is closely associated with the protection of vital infrastructure, international maritime routes and global supply chains, he affirmed.

Al-Budaiwi reiterated that any attack on these routes or disruption to navigation not only threatens the interests of exporting countries, but also has a direct impact on global energy security, global supply chains, and the stability of international markets.

He strongly deplored the hostile remarks by Houthi militias and their threats to shut down Bab al-Mandab Strait.

He stated that these threats constitute a violation of international law and a direct threat to international navigation and the safety of one of the most strategic route in the world.

He affirmed GCC states' standing with measures Saudi Arabia takes to safeguard its security, sovereignty and vital interests.

In addition, Al-Budaiwi reviewed what he described as Iran's dangerous practices in the Strait of Hormuz, including targeting commercial vessels, laying naval mines, attempting to impose mandatory shipping routes within Iranian territorial waters, and repeatedly threatening to close the strait.

He noted that these acts have caused direct harm to international trade and global supply chains, and have resulted in the suffering of more than 20,000 sailors of various nationalities.

The 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) guarantees the right of passing in international straits and prohibits the suspension of this right, he pointed out.

Finally, Al-Budaiwi stressed GCC states' success in functioning their natural resources to achieve sustainable development and enhancing prosperity, along with preserving the stability of global energy markets and providing development and humanitarian support.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels said they attacked two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea on Thursday, potentially widening the Iran war as international oil topped \$100 a barrel.

The Houthis have threatened to shut down another key trade route, with the world economy already reeling from Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Iran and the U.S. have meanwhile stepped up their attacks as they vie for control of the strait, through which a fifth of the world's oil and gas transited in peacetime, setting off a scramble for alternative routes.

As the U.S. carried out a 12th night of strikes across Iran, President Donald Trump threatened "major military punishment" against the Houthis if their attacks on ships continue.

"If they do this again, the U.S. will hold Iran responsible, in that the Houthis are a Surrogate and/or Proxy of Iran, and major military punishment will be inflicted upon Iran and, of course, the Houthis, themselves," Trump wrote on social media.

As the rhetoric escalated, so did the economic fallout. The price of Brent crude oil, the international standard, spiked more than 6% Thursday, to about

\$100 a barrel. That is the highest level since May, before the two sides reached a preliminary peace agreement last month that has since collapsed.

Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi of Iraq, which has close ties to both the U.S. and Iran, was in Tehran on Thursday to call for peace and dialogue, and he promised not to allow Iraqi territory to be used for attacks on Iran, his office said. Al-Zaidi met with Trump earlier this month in Washington.

An Arab diplomat said Gulf states are increasingly pessimistic about finding an off-ramp. The diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation, said regional countries like Pakistan and Turkey continue to push for de-escalation.

The Houthis' SABA news agency said the rebels had struck two tankers, the Encelia and the Layla, in the Red Sea, leading to fires on both. There were no reports of casualties.

It was their first reported attack on a vessel since they announced a blockade of Saudi-linked shipping through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait earlier this week in retaliation for the kingdom's blockade on Yemen and a recent attack on the international airport in Yemen's rebel-held capital, Sanaa.

Bab el-Mandeb, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is a vital shipping chokepoint connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. Around 12% of the world's trade, including a fourth of global container traffic, passes through there, moving between Europe and Asia via Egypt's Suez Canal.

The state-run Saudi Press Agency reported an attack set the Encelia ablaze overnight in the Red Sea. It did not mention the Layla.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations Center, UKMTO, said it received a report of a tanker being struck by "an unknown projectile" 130 kilometers (80 miles) southwest of Al Shuqaiq, Saudi Arabia, in the Red Sea.

The Houthi attacks put at risk oil shipments from Saudi Arabia's Yanbu port on the Red Sea and present a "double whammy" on top of the disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, said maritime data and analysis firm Lloyd's List Intelligence.

Saudi Arabia has diverted millions of barrels a day of oil exports to Yanbu via an overland pipeline as the war has bottled up the Persian Gulf.

The Houthi threats "raises questions on the viability of this route," Lloyd's said in slides accompanying an online webinar Thursday.

The rebels say they are blockading Saudi Arabia, but during their announced blockade of Israel, at the height of the war in Gaza, they targeted many vessels with little or no connection to that conflict, disrupting global trade.

Iran says it has the right to manage traffic and potentially charge fees in the Strait of Hormuz, which was open to all and toll-free before the war. It has attacked ships using a route through the strait that is overseen by U.S. forces and intended to be outside Tehran's control.

In response to Iran's attacks, the U.S. began the widening campaign of strikes across Iran and restored a naval blockade of Iran's ports.

Tropical Storm Bertha makes landfall in Louisiana and moves toward Texas

WASHINGTON, July 23, (AP): Tropical Storm Bertha made landfall in Louisiana and was southwest of New Orleans while moving west toward Texas early Thursday morning, after closing beaches on the Gulf Coast from the Florida Panhandle to Mississippi.

The storm made landfall Wednesday afternoon in St. Bernard Parish about 40 miles (65 kilometers) east of New Orleans. The storm was forecast to reach the upper Texas coast on Thursday before dissipating inland in Texas by Friday.

Early Thursday, the storm was about 110 miles (175 kilometers) southwest of New Orleans and about 120 miles (190 kilometers) southeast of Lake Charles, Louisiana, moving west at 12 mph (19 kph) with maximum sustained winds of 45 mph (75 kph), the National Hurricane Center said.

The wind and storm surge were the main threats for the Deep South states. Parks and piers were closed up and down the coast, as were some low-lying roads. A tropical storm warning stretched from Alabama to Louisiana, including New Orleans where extreme heat was adding to misery.

Onlookers watched the storm surge at the Lake Pontchartrain estuary, with kids splashing in the floodwaters as Bertha approached the Louisiana Coast. Residents mowed their lawns even as streets filled up with water.

Tropical storm force winds were felt as much as 160 miles (260 kilometers) from the center of the storm, the hurricane center said. A wind gust of 44 mph (71 kph) was

recorded at New Orleans Lakefront Airport on Wednesday afternoon. The strong gales knocked over a Waffle House sign onto a car in Panama City Beach, Florida.

But the heaviest rains were staying offshore, reducing the risks of flooding, the center said.

The storm is unlikely to leave behind widespread damage, Louisiana State Climatologist Jay Grymes said, adding that the impact should be manageable for coastal communities.

Gov. Jeff Landry called the forecast “encouraging” but also warned residents to be prepared for some flooding.

Storm surges up to 3 feet (1 meter) were possible in Louisiana and Alabama, forecasters said. Rain totals were forecast between 1 and 4 inches (3 to 10 centimeters), with higher amounts possible in isolated areas.

Elsewhere in the US, a line of storms on Tuesday generated reports of tornadoes stretching from Cincinnati to New Jersey. Torrential rains caused flash floods that swamped homes, washed out bridges and led to water rescues in West Virginia, authorities said.

Southern Louisiana was under tropical storm and extreme heat warnings for much of Wednesday - a rare double dose of suffering, the National Weather Service said.

It was the first time in at least two decades that’s happened in the area, the weather service said, citing records that date back to 2005.

Bertha is the second tropical storm of the Atlantic hurricane season. Tropical Storm Arthur in June brought heavy rainfall to the southeastern US.



Children play near breaking waves on West End Pier on Lake Pontchartrain as Tropical Storm Bertha approaches the Louisiana Coast on July 22, in New Orleans. (AP)

Dems argue money should be spent at home

House Republicans adopt \$95 billion package for Iran war and Trump’s priorities

WASHINGTON, July 23, (AP): The House adopted a Republican-only \$95 billion budget proposal Wednesday, a long-shot effort to fund the Iran war and other White House priorities over objections from Democrats and a few GOP holdouts in a final push before the midterm elections.

House Republicans were divided over the plan, with conservatives wary because there are no offsetting budget cuts. But Speaker Mike Johnson plunged ahead, viewing the go-it-alone process as the best chance to usher President Donald Trump’s priorities through the split Congress, despite skepticism in the Senate.

The vote tally was 216-214, with two Republicans and one independent joining Democrats in opposition.

“Just bullets and bombs to finish the job,” said Rep. Jodey Arrington, R-Texas, the chairman of the Budget Committee.

Democrats argued the money should be spent at home, particularly on efforts to lower costs for Americans.

“Republicans plan to spend tens of billions of dollars on Trump’s failed war in Iran,” said Rep. Pete Aguilar of California, chairman of the House Democratic caucus, this week. “Think about what we could spend with these resources instead.”

Congress is at a standstill over the US war against Iran - unable to stop Trump’s military strikes, but not having authorized the use of American military force - and politically torn over having to provide billions of taxpayer dollars to pay for it. Most Americans disapprove of Trump’s Iran strategy, according to a recent AP-NORC poll.

The budget battle comes as Trump attended the dignified transfer of four service members killed in the Middle East, bringing the military death toll to 18. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth told senators at a fiery hearing this week that the Pentagon is running short of cash, despite a massive \$150 billion one-time allotment in last year’s big budget bill.

Even as the House action advanced the resolution, Johnson’s strategy faces uncertainty in the Senate.

The package has \$60 billion for the Pentagon and \$13 billion for other national security needs, \$12 billion for farmers struggling under Trump’s tariffs and \$10 billion for voting law changes aligned with the SAVE America Act and proof-of-citizenship requirements that are Trump’s top priority.

Republicans are relying on the budget reconciliation process, which enables approval on a majority vote in Congress, bypassing the Senate’s



US Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., heads to the chamber for a series of votes on President Donald Trump’s priorities, at the Capitol in Washington on July 22. (AP)

ability to filibuster the measure to stall or kill it.

Once rare, the reconciliation process is now Johnson’s preferred strategy for pushing proposals through Congress. It’s the way Republicans approved Trump’s big tax breaks and spending cuts bill last summer and funded Homeland Security this year over Democrats’ refusal to fund Trump’s mass deportation agenda.

“No matter how you feel about current events, these funds are necessary to ensure our fighting forces remain ready, our troops are paid and our nation is safe,” said Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama, the Republican chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

But House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries said, “Republicans have literally ripped food from the mouths of hungry children, seniors and veterans to sustain the Trump war machine.”

Among those opposed was Rep.

Kevin Kiley of California, a former Republican turned independent, who said he felt any war funding bill should be bipartisan. He also wanted to ensure Congress had a “much higher level of involvement” in bringing the war to an end, and he said this proposal did not set that process in motion.

Republicans Rep. Thomas Massie of Kentucky and Rep. Warren Davidson of Ohio also voted against.

This is the third time GOP leaders have relied on reconciliation, dubbing this version 3.0, and it’s a lengthy process. If the House approves the budget resolution, it next goes to the Senate for a round-the-clock session to consider politically tough amendments - something senators would rather avoid in an election year.

The budget resolution sets out instructions for the various committees to draft legislation, which Johnson hopes could be done this summer, with final voting on the package once lawmakers return after the August recess.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune has been noncommittal on the House package that also divides his own GOP majority, with some Republican senators preferring more money for the military and others demanding the costs be offset with cuts elsewhere.

“We’ll see,” Thune said this week.

Thune’s focus, at the moment, is avoiding another government shutdown. He wants the Senate to approve a stopgap funding measure, called a continuing resolution, to provide routine government funding before lawmakers leave for the summer break.

If senators are unable to reach agreement on government funding, Thune has said he may hold onto the House’s budget resolution and use it later in the fall as a way to push the resolution through the Senate over objections. He wants to prevent a federal shutdown when current funds expire, Sept. 30.

“It’s a possibility that, if necessary, we could pull that budget resolution passed by the House and use it to fund government,” Thune said. “I hope that’s not necessary.”

Thune has also clashed with Trump over the president’s push for the SAVE America Act, which would require proof of citizenship for voting. The measure, while popular among Trump’s most ardent supporters, does not have enough support among Senate Republicans for passage.

It’s already against the law for non-citizens to vote in federal elections and experts warn the proposed new rules could make it more difficult for eligible Americans to cast ballots.



View of the burned area in Muriel, Guadalajara province, Spain on July 22 after a wildfire scorched tens of thousands of hectares in one of Spain's largest wildfires in recent years. (AP)

Authorities evacuate more than 10,000 in France

Crews battle one of Spain biggest-ever wildfires

BARCELONA, Spain, July 23, (AP): Firefighters in central Spain battled a wildfire that has burned over 32,000 hectares (79,000 acres) in one of the country’s largest blazes on record.

The fire in rural Guadalajara comes less than two weeks after a deadly blaze devastated a small expat community in southern Spain. That small but extremely virulent fire killed 13 people, including several foreigners, in one of the southern European country’s deadliest wildfires.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez on Wednesday visited the fire-ravaged area in Guadalajara, and called for a pact between political parties to fight climate change.

“Year after year we clearly see how climate change kills and destroys wealth in our communities,” Sánchez said in the village of Tama-jón, located less than two hours by car northeast of Madrid. “This isn’t politics. It is science, it’s about facts.”

Some 34 villages have been evacuated in the area but there are no reported serious injuries or deaths. Over 200 firefighters were supported by land vehicles and aircraft on

Wednesday.

Spain this year has already suffered 22 major forest fires, defined as a fire that burns over 500 hectares (1,235 acres.)

The Socialist leader said over 100,000 hectares (247,000 acres) had already been scorched through the first half of the year, matching the total yearly average for Spain over the last decade.

Spain’s Minister for Ecological Transition, Sara Aagesen, described the Guadalajara fire as “one of the largest in the recent history of our country” and the largest ever for the region of Castilla La Mancha.

The Guadalajara blaze is the second-largest on record in Spain’s history after some 37,000 hectares (91,000 acres) were burned last year in the northwest of the country, according to data from the ecological transition ministry, as cited by EFE news agency.

Regional authorities said firefighters supported by water-dumping aircraft had so far protected homes in all 40 villages in the burned area, 90% of which belongs to a national park. Firefighters hope to have the nearly week-old fire under control by Friday, said Emiliano García-

Page, regional president of Castilla La Mancha.

Miguel Ángel Moreno, mayor of the village of Zarzuela de Jadraque, said its 100 residents were evacuated Friday, with 14 taking refuge at a Red Cross shelter.

Also:

PARIS: More than 10,000 people were evacuated overnight in southwestern France as a wildfire raged Thursday near the coastal town of Lège Cap-Ferret, which is popular with tourists, on the Atlantic Ocean.

Local authorities said the fire has spread over more than 2,000 hectares (4,900 acres), though no injuries have been reported.

The Gironde prefecture said that some 500 firefighters have been deployed to tackle the flames and bring the fire under control, as “the situation remains unfavorable.”

As a precautionary measure, more than 10,000 people have been evacuated, including many tourists staying at eight holiday camps and campgrounds in the region, southwest of Bordeaux. In addition, more than 1,000 residents living in residential areas along the forest edge have also been evacuated.

‘US ready to help end senseless war in Ukraine but no quick deal ahead’

MANILA, Philippines, July 23, (AP): US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Thursday that the Trump administration is poised to help end the “senseless war” in Ukraine but acknowledged there is no quick path to a deal, saying diplomacy will require sustained effort and new ideas.

Rubio, who held talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov, said Moscow and Kyiv should have the incentive to end a “very bloody war” that has devastated both sides.

Rubio alluded to how US-mediated talks have stalled, calling them “unsuccessful or at least unfruitful” in the past but insisted that President Donald Trump was committed to the work “if conditions and factors have changed to make that possible.”

“That’s been the challenge - an end that both sides can accept. And we’ve tried and we’ll continue to try to see if we can, you know, find a middle ground that brings this about. And we’re prepared to play that role if the opportunity presents itself,” Rubio told reporters.

Rubio met Lavrov and several other leaders, including China’s foreign minister, on the sidelines of an annual gathering by foreign minis-



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, (left), attends a meeting with Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, (right), on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foreign Ministers Meeting in Pasay, Metro Manila on July 23. (AP)

ters of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Manila.

America’s top diplomat said the US is focused on Asia even as it steps up fighting with Iran, seeks a pathway to end Russia’s war in Ukraine and pressures the Cuban government

to make changes.

Three days of closed-door talks that started Tuesday have centered on the escalating war in the Middle East and tensions in the South China Sea, where a new clash flared Thursday.

Hungary’s Orbán declares resistance movement against Magyar govt’s ‘tyranny’

BUDAPEST, Hungary, July 23, (AP): Hungary’s former prime minister Viktor Orbán declared on Wednesday that he and his far-right Fidesz party will lead a peaceful “resistance” movement against what he called the tyrannical exercise of power by the country’s new center-right government.

Orbán was defeated in a blowout election in April by Prime Minister Péter Magyar and his pro-European Tiszsa party, ending his 16 years in office. Since then, Orbán’s nationalist Fidesz party has struggled to recover.

At a news conference outside party headquarters in Budapest, Orbán said a constitutional amendment passed last week by Tiszsa’s majority in Parliament - which removed Hungary’s Orbán-era president and set a 12-year term limit for members of Parliament - had “dismantled the rule of law and eliminated the system of checks and balances.”

The term limit, which applies retroactively, returns Hungary to a status similar to the final years of its Communist dictatorship in the late 1980s, Orbán asserted, “when there was no democracy in Hungary, there was no rule of law.”

He said the term limit would exclude around half of his party coalition’s sitting members from running in the next national elections set for 2030.



Hungary’s Prime Minister Viktor Orbán attends the electoral campaign closing rally of the governing Fidesz in Budapest, Hungary, on April 11. (AP)

“This new political system is not a democracy, it is tyranny,” Orbán said.

Since taking office in May, Magyar’s administration has gone to work dismantling what he calls Orbán’s “mafia” by removing numerous political appointees as well as heads of institutions viewed as having facilitated Orbán’s autocratic government.

Nothing is more important than the welfare and future of our youth!: Modi

India protest movement holds capital sit-in as police crack down on demonstrators

NEW DELHI, July 23, (AP): Thousands of young protesters were camped on the streets of India’s capital New Delhi on Thursday, defying new restrictions in the latest show of strength for a movement that has become one of the big-gest challenges to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government.

India’s “Cockroach” protests began more than a month ago over alleged leaks in some of the country’s most competitive entrance exams for medical colleges and government jobs. The movement has since expanded beyond exam grievances, drawing professionals and families while channeling broader frustration.

Thursday’s demonstrations at Jantar Mantar, a designated protest site in New Delhi, followed overnight clashes in which police used tear gas and batons to disperse crowds, the second such confrontation this week.

On Monday, thousands of protesters had defied restrictions and marched toward Parliament before police broke up the demonstration with tear gas and batons.

Protesters regrouped by Thursday morning, returning to the protest site despite roadblocks, while authorities suspended Delhi Metro services at 16 stations across central New Delhi in an effort to limit access to the demonstrations.

The issue of exam leaks has become a powerful symbol of frustration for millions of young Indians. Protesters are demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, examination system reforms and compensation for families of students who died by suicide after exam paper leaks.

Facing mounting pressure, Modi addressed the issue publicly for the first time Thursday, announcing fast-track courts to handle examination paper leak cases. Fast-track courts are special courts created to speed up cases in India’s notoriously slow justice system.

“Nothing is more important than the welfare and future of our youth!,” Modi wrote on X.



A protestor sits on the hood of a police car during a demonstration demanding educational reforms as part of the Cockroach Janta Party’s ongoing protest movement in New Delhi, India on July 22. (AP)

The announcement failed to calm protesters, who said Modi was not addressing their demands for accountability and reform.

“Rather than providing solution which is convenient for him, he should work toward a solution which is convenient for the nation and set an example,” law student Daksh Bhargava said.

Leaders of the Cockroach Janta Party, which launched the protest move-

ment, said they would not end the demonstrations until the education minister resigned. Staying true to the movement’s tongue-in-cheek style, its founder, Abhijeet Dipke, responded by posting a meme of Pradhan captioned, “Hi, my name is Nothing.”

The Cockroach movement began as online satire campaign in May and moved to the streets in June through smaller protests across cities. It gained momentum after prominent activist Sonam Wangchuk joined the demonstration and began a hunger strike that has lasted more than three weeks. Police forcibly transferred Wangchuk to a hospital over the weekend.

For many young Indians, the protests have become one of the few visible expressions of dissent in a country where demonstrations against Modi’s government have led to a broader crackdown on activists, opposition figures and public protests.

The movement’s rapid growth beyond student groups reflects wider frustration among young Indians and echoes a broader trend across South Asia, where young people have driven anti-government movements in recent years.

The movement also has gained a following among Indians of all ages over concerns about government accountability, unemployment and economic opportunity.

Opposition parties have backed the protests, using the issue to challenge the government in Parliament. Demonstrations and solidarity events have been held in other Indian cities, reflecting how the movement has spread beyond the capital.

India has one of the world’s youngest populations, with millions entering a labor market that has struggled to create enough secure, well-paying jobs. Despite years of rapid economic growth, many young people say their prospects have not improved.

As one of the country’s largest voting blocs, India’s youth could also become an increasingly important political force ahead of future elections.

FBI chief holds talks in Cambodia over closer security cooperation to combat online scam crimes

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, July 23, (AP): FBI Director Kash Patel held talks with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet on Wednesday on joint efforts to combat international online scam operations that cheat victims out of billions of dollars each year.

A report issued Tuesday by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime estimated that scams caused estimated losses in the Asia-Pacific region alone of as much as \$114 billion in 2025. It warned that even as authorities conduct raids on industrial-sized scam centers mostly located in border regions of Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia, criminals have responded by shifting to other parts of the world or operating on a smaller scale.

Patel arrived in Cambodia from neighboring Thailand which co-hosted a two-day summit with the US this week on scam centers that was attended by representatives of nearly 20 countries and hundreds of law enforcement officials.

The head of the top US law enforcement agency met with Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul for talks on joint cooperation to



In this photo provided by Agence Kampuchea Press (AKP), US FBI director Kash Patel, (left), meets Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet at his offices in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on July 22. (AP)

tackle scam centers and other trans-national crimes, such as human trafficking and drug trafficking, particularly through information sharing and intelligence exchanges.

Cybercrime has flourished in Southeast Asia where law enforce-

ment is weak, particularly in Cambodia and Myanmar. Scam centers are also linked to human trafficking. Thousands of foreign nationals who are employed to run “romance” and cryptocurrency scams to swindle victims are often recruited with false

job offers and then forced to work in conditions of near-slavery.

Cambodia this year claims to have accelerated a crackdown on the scam operations, whose proliferation there is “a top priority for the US government,” according a US Embassy statement. Washington appreciates Hun Manet’s pledge to counter this problem and is coordinating closely with the Cambodian government to battle the problem, it said.

The embassy said Patel’s visit “reinforces the need for strong, joint efforts to combat transnational cybercrime, including increased efforts to hold high-level scam bosses accountable and for improved information sharing regarding complicit officials and scam compound owners.”

The US also “fully supports efforts to ensure justice for victims and criminal accountability for online scam operators, those who enable or protect them, and those complicit in related human trafficking crimes,” it added.

Cambodia will host an international conference on combating cyber scams in September, Hun Manet said in a post on his Telegram social media account.

Thai authorities hunt for suspects after attack in south kills 5 soldiers

BANGKOK, July 23, (AP): Thai authorities said Thursday they are searching for the people responsible for an attack in the country’s troubled deep south region that killed five soldiers and injured several civilians.

About 10 attackers opened fire and threw pipe bombs at soldiers at a security check point near a residential area in Narathiwat province Wednesday evening before fleeing, according to the regional Internal Security Operations Command. It said six civilians were injured during the attack, including a 10-year-old boy who remains hospitalized in stable condition.

Photos released by authorities showed a group identified as the attackers, dressed in black clothing and hats and riding on the back of a black pickup truck. Security officials said the truck was later found abandoned and set on fire about 21 kilometers (13 miles) away from the scene.

They said the attackers had stolen three AK-47 rifles, three bullet proof vests and three mobile phones from the soldiers, who were members of the country’s paramilitary Ranger force, which operates as an auxiliary to



This image taken from video provided by Internal Security Operations Command Region 4 shows a group of the alleged attackers riding on a back of a black pickup truck before they opened fire and threw pipe bombs at soldiers at a security checkpoint in Narathiwat province, Thailand on July 22. (AP)

the regular army and is usually deployed in border regions.

Narathiwat, along with Yala and Pattani, are Thailand’s southernmost provinces and are the only ones with Muslim majorities in the predominantly Buddhist nation. Since 2004, the provinces have been the site of a Muslim separatist insurgency that killed thousands.

Nicaragua’s parliament moves to abolish elections under Ortega’s order

MEXICO CITY, July 23, (AP): Nicaragua’s lawmakers said they will carry out a plan by President Daniel Ortega to abolish elections in the Central American country, prompting renewed criticisms Wednesday by the international community.

The move was announced in a statement Tuesday by Nicaragua’s congress, which is firmly in the hands of Ortega and his wife and co-President Rosario Murillo. It said the latest constitutional overhaul will ensure Nicaragua’s “peace, security and stability.”

The legislature was following through on Ortega’s announcement from the weekend that “there won’t be anymore elections,” reflecting both his effort to extend his nearly 20-year rule and remove any chance of the opposition gaining power.

Under Ortega, the government has carried out a sweeping crackdown on dissent following a violent suppression of protests in 2018. Authorities have jailed opposition politicians, religious leaders and others, and also shut down thousands of civil society organizations in the country.

The congress has repeatedly amended the constitution to concentrate power in Ortega’s hands and



Nicaraguan police have their picture taken with President Daniel Ortega, in Masaya, Nicaragua, July 13, 2018. (AP)

eliminate any shred of democratic independence and dissent in the country.

Ortega’s remarks on Sunday, during a speech marking the anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution, effectively canceled Nicaragua’s next elections. The vote was originally scheduled for November 2027 after the government-controlled congress voted in January 2025 to extend the five-year presidential term by one year.

Volker Türk, the UN high commissioner for human rights, on Wednesday sharply condemned Nicaragua’s developments, saying that “people of all political viewpoints must be allowed to vote and run for office.”

“These latest developments further deepen the severe restrictions on fundamental freedoms, the dismantling of civic space, and the steady erosion of the rule of law,” Türk said in a statement.

June 1 trial date set for Venezuela’s former leader Maduro in US drug trafficking case

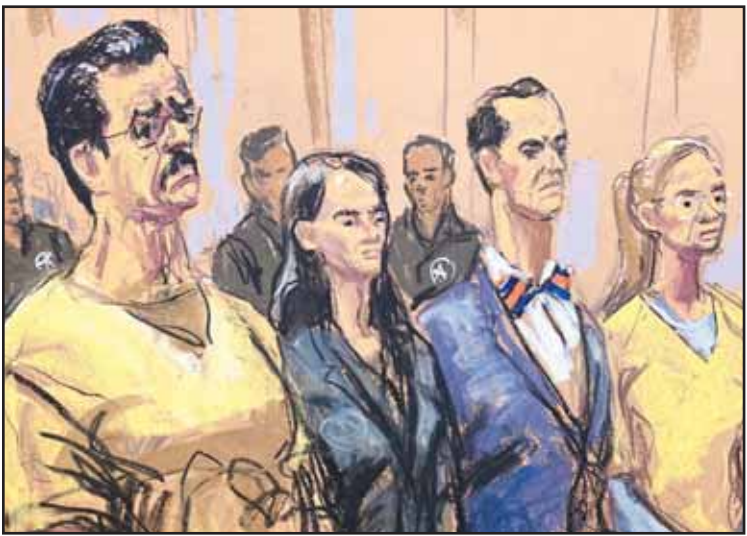
NEW YORK, July 23, (AP): Former Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro and his wife will go on trial on drug trafficking charges next June, a judge said Wednesday, as their lawyers continue to object to the U.S. military action that snatched them from power.

Judge Alvin K. Hellerstein set the June 1 trial date at the request of lawyers on both sides. Under the approved schedule, defense lawyers will begin filing requests in early September to challenge the indictment and the couple will return to the courtroom Nov. 17 for oral arguments on the motions.

Maduro, 63, and his wife, Cilia Flores, 69, have been held at a Brooklyn jail since U.S. forces seized them from their Caracas home in a middle-of-the-night raid and brought them to New York in early January.

Neither spoke during Wednesday’s 15-minute hearing as each sat separately at a defense table, surrounded by their lawyers. Both have pleaded not guilty. They face potential life prison sentences if a jury agrees that they were part of a conspiracy to send cocaine into the US.

As he was led into the courtroom, the bespectacled Maduro greeted the



In this courtroom sketch, from left, former Venezuela President Nicholas Maduro, attorneys Anna Estevao and Mark Donnelly, and Maduro’s wife, Cilia Flores, stand during a pretrial hearing in a drug trafficking case for Maduro and Flores on July 22, at Manhattan federal court in New York. (AP)

judge’s staff and shook hands with lawyers for him and his wife. Noticeably thinner in a tan jail suit and with his thick mustache, he seemed upbeat, smiling and chatting with his lawyer. He listened to a Spanish interpretation of the proceeding through headphones and clasped his hands in front of him in a prayerlike gesture. He had a black pen wedged in his right fingers and sporadically jotted notes on a white pad.



Archivists work to safeguard testimonies from victims of the internal armed conflict between 1960 and 1996, who sought reparations for the abuses they suffered, in Guatemala City on July 22. (AP)

Guatemala races to save 60,000 case files of testimony about abuses during armed conflict

GUATEMALA CITY, July 23, (AP): Manuel Botom Uz was just four years old when he and his siblings were attacked by the Guatemalan army in his Indigenous community in Quiché, in northwest Guatemala, in 1982 during the height of the country’s armed conflict.

His siblings were found and released to relatives, but he became one of more than 100 children who disappeared during the conflict from 1960 to 1996. More than 200,000 people were killed and some 45,000 disappeared during the conflict between the army and guerrilla groups. A UN truth commission concluded that the Guatemalan military was responsible for most abuses and that the Guatemalan state carried out acts of genocide against Indigenous people.

What little is known about Botom Uz comes from a government program known as the National Reparations Program, which collected testimonies of abuse. But the country is now in a race against time to safeguard the 60,000 case files before the end of the presidency of progressive Bernardo Arévalo in January 2028.

The testimonies, stored in hundreds of large blue plastic boxes organized by department, recount extrajudicial executions, murders, sexual abuse, forced disappearances, and the forced recruitment of men, women, and children in Guatemala during the armed conflict.

Workers trying to save the archive found “damp, piled-up boxes, incomplete, torn files,” recounted Erick Briones, an archive assistant.

It’s part of a UNESCO-funded project that seeks to recover the archive and, in the future, have it declared part of the Memory of the World Program, so that it can be protected and made accessible to everyone who wants to learn about the country’s history.

While Guatemala has brought some perpetrators to justice, the enduring influence of military officials and elites implicated in the period’s abuses from that period has hindered efforts. Arévalo has made reparations efforts a priority, but rights groups worry that his eventual successor wouldn’t do the same.

Under the last two presidents, Jimmy Morales and Alejandro Giammattei, the reparations program was largely abandoned, and Giammattei ordered it to be shut down with no provisions to preserve the testimonies contained.

Arévalo has sought to revive efforts to preserve evidence of past abuses from the armed conflict and provide reparations, including launching the first national registry of people who disappeared during that time.

“There was an intention, on the part of the Morales and Giammattei governments, to erase collective memory, to destroy a legacy built over many years based on the testimonies of the victims,” said Elvin Díaz, the presidential commissioner for human rights, who now oversees the archives.

“That is why it is important to recover that memory and the testimonies of the victims, to safeguard them, and for them to become part of the living memory of this country.”

In its initial report, the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, which visited Guatemala last month, stated that the governments of Morales and Giammattei carried out a “systematic policy of dismantling institutions for peace and justice.”

The national reparations program was mainly for humanitarian aid and reparations, but the information could also be used for criminal investigations, Díaz said.

The restoration project also plans to digitize the archive for universal access.

Growth of 6.1% compared to the same period last year while EPS reached 18.86 fils

Kuwait Finance House reports net profit attributable to the shareholders of the bank of KD 363.1 million for H1 2026

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Chairman of Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq announced that KFH achieved a net profit of KD 363.1 million for the first half of 2026 for the Bank shareholders, with an increase of 6.1% compared to the same period last year.

Earnings per share for the first half of 2026 reached 18.86 fils; an increase of 4.9% compared to the same period last year.

Net financing income for the first half of 2026 reached KD 649.4 million; an increase of 6.9% compared to the same period last year.

Total operating income for the first half of 2026 increased, supported by the increase in all core activities to reach KD 990.5 million; an increase of 9.9% compared to the same period last year.

As a result of disciplined cost management and expense optimization efforts, total operating expenses decreased by 2.1% compared to the same period last year.

Consequently, net operating income increased to KD 687.9 million, reflecting a growth of 16.2% compared to the same period last year.

Driven by the growth in total operating income and decrease in total operating expenses, the Group's cost-to-income ratio improved to 30.6% during the current period, compared to 34.3% in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Financing receivables at the end of the first half of 2026 reached KD 22.8 billion, an increase of 11.5% compared to the end of the first half of the previous year.

Total assets amounted to KD 42.2 billion at the end of the first half of 2026, a growth of 9.7% compared to the end of the first half of the previous year.

Shareholders' equity for H1-26 amounted to KD 5.8 billion, an increase of 4.2% compared to the end of the first half of the previous year.

Depositors' accounts for the first half of 2026 amounted to KD 21.6 billion, an increase of 9.4% compared to the end of the first half of the previous year.

In addition, the capital adequacy ratio reached 17.47%, which is above the limit required by regulators. This ratio confirms the solid capital base of KFH.

The Board of Directors has recommended to distribute a semi-annual cash dividend of 10fils per share.

Efficiency and Sustainability

Al-Marzouq said that KFH has renewed the confidence of its shareholders and customers by continuing to achieve the highest profits in the banking sector and acquiring the largest share of total profits in the Kuwaiti market. This underscores the success of efforts to maximize asset utilization, improve resource allocation efficiency, and strictly execute the approved strategy and plans, ensuring sustainable growth and profitability while enhancing the strength of the Group's financial position.

He highlighted that sustaining interim cash dividends provides shareholders with cash flow, boosting both the stock's attractiveness and confidence in the bank.

Operational performance

Al-Marzouq added that despite recent global and regional geopolitical challenges and subsequent economic pressures, KFH's H1 results demonstrated its resilience and capacity to manage risks efficiently. These outcomes also confirmed its strong capital base, comfortable liquidity, and robust operational performance, driving sustainable growth across most key financial indicators and balance sheet items.

Sustainable value



KFH Chairman Hamad Al-Marzouq

■ **Al-Marzouq:** Sustainable profitability and interim distributions reinforce shareholder confidence

KFH's strategy extends beyond profit generation to create sustainable, long-term value for customers, shareholders, and society

We have demonstrated adaptability and resilience in navigating economic changes

Strong Governance, a strategic vision, and a commitment to responsible growth



KFH Group CEO Yusef AlShamlan

■ **AlShamlan:** Sustainable growth driven by operational excellence and a resilient business model

Exceptional performance under challenging circumstances and integrated operations across all sectors

Pivotal role in providing essential financing to support national economic growth

Group operational synergy contributes to diversifying income streams and enhancing financial sustainability

Credit capabilities

AlShamlan underscored KFH's ongoing commitment to backing the national economy and the regional markets where the Group operates by steadily expanding its credit capabilities. By capitalizing on the synergy of its vast international network of more than 600 branches across 10 countries, KFH continues to deliver critical financing for major infrastructure developments as well as the SME sector.

He added that this reflects growing customer confidence, which diversifies income streams and enhances financial sustainability.

AlShamlan also emphasized ongoing efforts to maintain consistent performance across all business sectors and respond efficiently and flexibly to market fluctuations, strengthening KFH's position as a trusted financial partner.

Leadership

AlShamlan noted KFH ranked first in Kuwait and 12th regionally on Forbes' list of the 100 largest public companies by market value. According to S&P Global Market Intelligence, its market capitalization reached \$44.69 billion by the end of the first quarter of 2026, placing it among the top five banks in the Middle East and Africa. It was the only Kuwaiti financial institution to achieve a top five regional ranking.

Human capital

AlShamlan pointed out that KFH builds partnerships with global academic institutions to enhance employee capabilities, especially young national talent, creating leaders to achieve future aspirations. He highlighted this commitment by referencing the recent honoring of 100 employees who earned specialized professional certificates and graduated from Injaz scholarship program.

A comprehensive digital transformation model

AlShamlan explained that KFH continues investing in digital capabilities to enhance customer experience, boost operational efficiency, and mitigate risks.

He noted that KFH successfully established its digital services as a primary banking option, processing over 600 million digital transactions annually and offering more than 200 integrated services through KFHonline. The bank's comprehensive digital transformation model builds upon its strategic vision, evolving customer needs, and tangible operational results.

Global awards

AlShamlan pointed out that KFH won more than 25 awards and rankings during the first half of the year in recognition of its banking excellence. These include the "World's Best Islamic Financial Institution" from Global Finance, the "Best Digital Bank" from MEED magazine, the "Kuwait's Best Private Bank" from Euromoney, and the "World's Best Islamic Corporate Bank" from Global Finance. Additionally, KFH received numerous other international accolades that reflect the Bank's leading position in the global banking industry.

Key Financial Highlights – H1 2026

- Net profit attributable to shareholders: KD 363.1 million
- Growth rate: 6.1%
- Earnings per share (EPS): 18.86 fils
- Net financing income: KD 649.4 million
- Total operating income: KD 990.5 million
- Net operating income: KD 687.9 million
- Cost-to-income ratio: 30.6%
- Financing receivables: KD 22.8 billion
- Total assets: KD 42.2 billion
- Depositors' accounts balance: KD 21.6 billion
- Capital adequacy ratio (CAR): 17.47%

Praise be to Allah

363.1 KD Million

H1 2026 Net Profit Attributable to Shareholders

6.1% ↑



	30/06/2026	30/06/2025	%
Net Profit for Shareholders "KD Million"	363.1	342.1	6.1
Earnings per Share "Fils"	18.86	17.98	4.9
Total Financing Income "KD Million"	1,765.2	1,462.5	20.7
Net Financing Income "KD Million"	649.4	607.3	6.9
Total Operating Income "KD Million"	990.5	901.1	9.9
Net Operating Income "KD Million"	687.9	591.9	16.2
Total Assets "KD Million"	42,215	38,498	9.7
Financing Receivables "KD Million"	22,784	20,430	11.5
Depositors' Accounts "KD Million"	21,592	19,730	9.4
Shareholders' Equity "KD Million"	5,800	5,565	4.2

Targeting middle school students aged 11 to 15

NBK sponsors the ALT summer program to develop youth skills & enhance future readiness

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: As part of its commitment to supporting educational initiatives aimed at empowering youth and enhancing their capabilities, National Bank of Kuwait is sponsoring the ALT summer program designed for middle school students aged 11 to 15, offering a comprehensive educational and training experience that combines skill acquisition with practical application.

Spanning two weeks, the ALT program engages students in a variety of educational sessions and workshops tailored to enhance their personal and leadership skills, instill values of initiative and teamwork, and foster communication, creative thinking, and problem-solving abilities.

The practical component is a key element of the program, offering participants the opportunity to gain field experience by working in selected stores at 360 Mall, which provides them with a deeper understanding of the work environment while fostering a sense of responsibility and self-reliance.

Most sessions and activities take place at the Rafa Nadal Academy, which offers a stimulating educational and training environment that encourages students to interact, learn, and gain new experiences.

Moreover, the program includes a special visit to the NBK headquarters, offering participants insight into the banking sector and



NBK's ALT summer program.

a firsthand look at the Bank's activities, corporate culture, and professional values, further broadening their knowledge and professional horizons.

Commenting on the occasion, Mohammed Al-Sarraf, Principal– Public Relations and Event Management at National Bank of Kuwait, said: “Our spon-

■ **Al-Sarraf:** Investing in future generations is a cornerstone of NBK's social responsibility strategy. - The ALT program offers educational and practical experiences that enable participants to develop personal and leadership skills. - NBK consistently adopts initiatives that help prepare a generation capable of innovation and active participation in the development process.

sorship of the ALT summer program reflects NBK's unwavering commitment to supporting educational initiatives aimed at developing youth skills and

empowering them to acquire the knowledge and experience needed for a promising future. We believe that investing in future generations is an investment in the future of society and constitutes a cornerstone of the Bank's corporate social responsibility strategy”.

Al-Sarraf added: “We are committed to consistently providing comprehensive educational and practical opportunities

that enable students to develop their personal and leadership skills and gain exposure to diverse work environments. This helps broaden their horizons and enhances their future readiness. Through this program, we offer high-quality experiences that combine theoretical and applied learning, helping participants acquire valuable skills and experience at an early age”.

Finally, Al-Sarraf emphasized that supporting such initiatives aligns with the Bank's vision of empowering youth and developing their capabilities, noting that it continues to reinforce its leading position as a key national institution that supports community development through initiatives that create a positive, sustainable impact and help prepare a generation that is more confident, innovative, and actively engaged in the development process.

The program's first edition will conclude with a special ceremony at NBK's headquarters, honoring the participating students and celebrating their achievements during the program, while the second edition is set to launch this coming August.

NBK's sponsorship of this program reflects its commitment to supporting initiatives that prepare and empower young people to gain the necessary practical experience and knowledge, further supporting their future paths and enhancing their role in society.

Kuwait: GDP fell in Q1 2026 amid declines in the oil, transport and hospitality sectors

By National Bank of Kuwait

Preliminary official estimates show GDP declined 4.6% y/y in Q1 2026 amid a contraction in oil GDP linked to lower crude production related to the US-Iran war. Non-oil GDP recorded moderate growth, improving from a one-off contraction seen the previous quarter and despite weakness in the transport and hospitality sectors. Since Q1 covered just one month of the conflict, further GDP softness is expected in Q2, especially with oil exports severely impacted by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz through much of the quarter.

Oil GDP shrinks in Q1 at fastest pace since Covid-linked decline in 2021

Oil GDP (worth 42% of total GDP) contracted by 12.5% y/y in Q1 2026, reversing three consecutive quarters of growth amid disruptions linked to the regional conflict. (Chart 1.) Oil production fell to 1.2 mb/d in March, down from 2.58 mb/d in February and 2.41 mb/d a year earlier, as the shutdown of the Strait effectively halted Kuwait's oil exports. (Chart 2.) Production weakened further to an average of 570 kb/d during April-May as domestic storage capacity filled, forcing output curtailment. A temporary improvement followed the signing of the US-Iran ceasefire agreement in mid-June, which facilitated a partial recovery in exports and helped lift production to 1.65 mb/d in June. However, renewed hostilities between the US and Iran in mid-July and Iran's subsequent announcement that the Strait would again be closed to vessel traffic are likely to weigh on Kuwait's oil production during the month.

The contraction in Q1 follows a period of

improving oil sector activity, supported by OPEC+'s gradual unwinding of voluntary production cuts that began in May 2025. Notably, OPEC+7 has continued to raise output targets despite conflict-related disruptions, limiting actual output. As a result, Kuwait's production quota has risen to 2.66 mb/d for August and is expected to increase further to 2.68 mb/d in September upon completion of the latest phase of the voluntary cut unwind. While actual production remains constrained by regional developments, the higher quota provides significant upside potential for Kuwait's oil sector once shipping conditions through the Strait of Hormuz normalize and export flows resume.

Non-oil expansion tempered by contraction in manufacturing sector

Non-oil GDP expanded 1.9% y/y in Q1 2026, rebounding from the 1.4% contraction recorded in the previous quarter. Growth was supported by solid activity in heavyweight sectors including real estate and business activities (+7.2% y/y), public administration and defense (+4.1%), and financial intermediation and insurance (+2.5%). Growth was also robust in health and social work (+7.8%) and telecommunications (+3.9%). Partly offsetting this strength was a sharp decline in manufacturing (-8.6% y/y) as refined oil products output fell to 668 kb/d in March, bringing the quarterly average to 1.143 mb/d (-9.7% y/y). Conflict related disruptions also weighed on tourism-linked sectors such as hotels and restaurants and transport, which contracted 9.1% y/y and 8.7%, respectively. Utilities activity was also weak, with electricity, gas and water output declining by

9% y/y.

As the conflict persists, its toll on the non-oil economy is likely increasing, as reflected in recent high-frequency indicators. PMI readings remained in contraction territory throughout Q2, while real estate activity was subdued, extending the weakness observed in Q1. Project awards also slowed significantly, roughly halving from Q1's elevated level amid heightened uncertainty and a shift in government priorities toward defense spending. Overall, the persistence of current geopolitical tensions is likely to weigh on non-oil economic activity in the near term, resulting in another soft output figure for Q2.

Overall GDP dropped sharply in Q1

Reflecting the above moves in the oil and non-oil sectors, total GDP contracted by 4.6% y/y in Q1 2026, reversing the 2.4% expansion recorded in Q4 2025. Economic performance is expected to remain under pressure in subsequent quarters as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and elevated regional tensions weigh. Although visibility remains very limited, we currently forecast oil GDP to decline by 26% this year amid ongoing production disruptions, while non-oil GDP is expected to contract by 2% as weaker business sentiment, softer investment activity, and conflict-related uncertainty pressure growth. Further ahead, prospects for 2027 are more positive. Oil production is expected to rebound sharply as shipping activity normalizes and higher OPEC+ production quotas allow output to rise, while the non-oil economy should benefit from a recovery in project activity and improving consumer and business confidence.

Brent crude up by \$3.06

Oil price rises to \$94.71 pb

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil rose by USD 7.32 to USD 94.71 per barrel (pb) in Wednesday's trading, up from USD 87.39 pb in the previous session, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Thursday.

In global markets, Brent crude rose by USD 3.06 to settle at USD 94.07 pb, while West Texas Intermediate gained USD 2.49 to reach USD 86.83 pb.

Boursa Kuwait ends higher on Thursday

KUWAIT CITY, July 23, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Thursday's session higher, with all major indices posting gains amid active trading.

The general index rose 45.06 points, or 0.52 percent, to 8,661.58 points. A total of 216.5 million shares were traded in 17,688 cash transactions, generating KD 60.6 million, or about USD 197.2 million.

The main market index climbed 65.74 points, or 0.75 percent, to 8,843.17 points. It recorded 122.5 million shares in 8,278 cash transactions worth KD 18.5 million, equivalent to about USD 60.2 million.

The premier market index advanced 43 points, or 0.48 percent, to 9,072.46 points. Trading in the index totaled 94 million shares across 9,410 transactions, with a value of KD 42.1 million, or about USD 137 million.

The Main 50 Index also rose 16.68 points, or 0.17 percent, to 10,117.34 points. It saw 95.8 million shares traded through 6,165 cash transactions, valued at KD 14.4 million, or roughly USD 46.8 million.

Appointment filed with Boursa & CMA

Ms. Hanan Hamadah appointed Chief Internal Auditor at Warba

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Warba Bank announced the appointment of Hanan Ghanem Hamadah as Chief Internal Auditor, effective July 19, 2026. The appointment was disclosed to Boursa Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority (CMA). The bank said the appointment supports its corporate governance, risk management, and internal control frameworks, in line with applicable regulatory and professional requirements.

Hamadah brings over two decades of banking experience, having held several leadership positions in internal audit, risk-based audit, and compliance within Kuwait's banking sector.

Professional Experience:

Prior to her official appointment as Chief Internal Auditor, Hamadah served as the Deputy Chief Internal Auditor and Acting Chief Internal Auditor at Warba Bank. Her career background includes:

- Warba Bank: Held a series of senior roles within the bank's internal audit function, including Senior Director, Executive Director, and Assistant General Manager.
- Banking Sector Experience: Began her banking career in retail operations in 2004 before moving into internal audit, where she held progressive roles including Internal Auditor, Assistant Manager, and Manager at several Kuwaiti banks.
- Core Expertise: Her experience includes risk-based audit planning, internal control assessments, investigations, and continuous audit analytics across retail banking, corporate banking, treasury, and technology functions.

Academic Qualifications and Certifications:

- Hamadah holds academic and professional qualifications relevant to her role:
- Academic Degree: Bachelor of Arts in English Language and



Hanan Hamadah

Literature from Kuwait University.

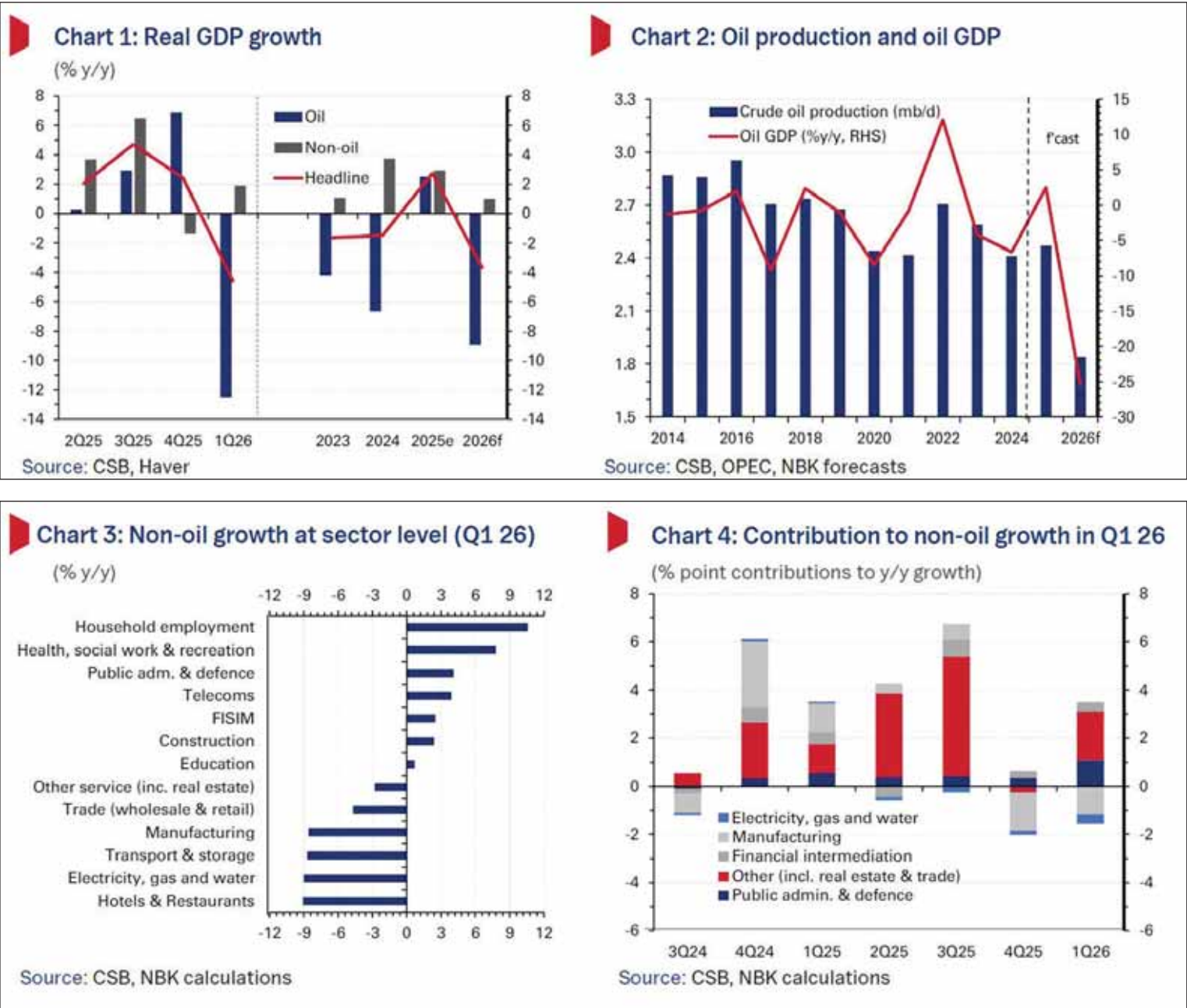
- Professional Certification: Certified Internal Auditor (CIA).
- Specialized Training: Completed specialized training in risk-based auditing, anti-money laundering (AML), regulatory compliance, and banking supervision.

Role and Responsibilities:

The appointment is consistent with Warba Bank's focus on developing national talent and strengthening its corporate governance framework. In her role, Hamadah will oversee the Internal Audit Group's independent assurance and advisory activities and support the group's reporting to the Board of Directors and the Audit Committee. The function will also continue to engage with executive management on internal control, risk management, and governance matters while maintaining its independence.

About Warba Bank:

Warba Bank is a leading Islamic bank in Kuwait with a strong focus on Sharia-compliant digital banking. With one of the largest shareholder bases in the country, the bank delivers innovative financial products and services, reinforcing its position as a digital-focused financial institution.



Company’s Innovation Ambassadors guided students in developing practical, market-ready AI solutions

Zain brings real-world business challenges to Kuwait University’s Capstone Program

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Zain Kuwait powered Kuwait University’s Capstone Program, enabling students in the Department of Computer Science at the College of Science to apply their academic knowledge and technical skills to develop solutions and prototypes that address real-world market and business challenges.

The company presented the students with a range of actual challenges and needs facing different industries, inviting them to study and analyze these issues and develop innovative technology solutions. The projects covered a diverse range of topics, including artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, business continuity, digital security, inclusion and accessibility, corporate compliance, and professional skills development.

Zain’s support for the program reflects its commitment to investing in young people’s digital capabilities and creating educational environments that encourage creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork. By connecting theoretical knowledge with practical application, the program strengthens students’ readiness to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Zain’s Innovation Ambassadors played an active role throughout the program, dedicating their time and expertise to preparing the challenge briefs, providing technical and professional guidance, and sharing practical knowledge with the students throughout the development of their projects.

The ambassadors also assessed the initial feasibility of the proposed prototypes, evaluated their alignment with market needs and organizational objectives, and explored their potential to deliver added value to Zain and the sectors they were designed to serve. They also examined opportunities to further develop the projects into practical solutions or entrepreneurial ventures that could eventually be introduced to the market.

The program’s value extends beyond fulfilling academic requirements or producing initial prototypes. It introduces students to the process of developing solutions based on user and market needs, testing their feasibility, continuously refining them, and assessing their potential to become viable products or services.

The program also highlights the importance of direct collaboration between the private sector and academic institutions in preparing a new generation of innovators. It gives students the opportunity to strengthen their technical and professional skills, work on real-world challenges, and benefit from the expertise of industry professionals, helping bridge the gap between the classroom and the workplace.



Zain Innovation Ambassadors with officials from the Department of Computer Science at Kuwait University’s College of Science.



One of the participating projects.



Students leveraged AI to address market challenges,

room and the workplace. Zain continues to support programs and initiatives that strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, invest in young people’s digital skills, and create new pathways for them to transform their ideas into practical solutions that deliver sustainable eco-

nomic and social value. These efforts also contribute to accelerating digital transformation and building a knowledge-based national economy.

The program resulted in the development of several innovative technology projects. These included Krino, an AI-powered platform that collects and analyzes information from official and publicly available sources to help banks and financial institutions improve the efficiency of screening, compliance, and anti-money laundering processes, while delivering clear and auditable results.

The projects also included HyperLocal, a platform that uses Internet of Things technologies to help small and medium-sized enterprises monitor their compliance with regulations and requirements through real-time monitoring, instant alerts, and risk prediction. The platform also allows regulatory authorities to remotely oversee establishments.

Students also developed INERTIA, an AI-powered digital platform designed to centralize and manage business continuity plans, assess organizational preparedness, strengthen governance, and track disaster recovery plans, while keeping data securely within the organization’s internal environment.

In the areas of social solutions and digital security, students developed AI-Motarjim, an application that uses computer vision and AI to translate Kuwaiti Sign Language into Arabic in real time. The translation is displayed both as text and through a three-dimensional avatar, helping facilitate communication and improve access to services.

The projects also included Zain ReVerse, an intelligent system designed to detect fraudulent calls as they occur. It analyzes Arabic-language conversations, assesses risk levels, and generates automated reports, supporting user protection and the monitoring of suspicious cases.

Another project, TruePick, is a digital platform for managing campaigns and prize draws through a reliable random selection mechanism. It also provides tools for managing participant data, verifying winners, and generating reports, helping enhance transparency and reduce operational errors.

Students also developed Tadreeb, a platform that connects university students with practical training opportunities at companies across different disciplines. The platform aims to strengthen their professional skills, provide them with relevant experience, and improve their readiness to enter the workforce before graduation.

Gulf states fast-track oil pipelines around Hormuz

DUBAI, July 23, (AP): Before the war in Iran, roughly 15 million barrels of Persian Gulf oil were shipped each day through the Strait of Hormuz. Within a few years, much of that oil could bypass the strait.

As Iran’s chokehold over the strait drags on and oil prices surge, countries across the Gulf are planning to spend billions of dollars to build pipelines enabling them to re-direct more supplies to ports on the Red Sea, the Gulf of Oman and the Mediterranean.

At least seven major pipeline projects are under construction, in the planning stage or being discussed as possibilities, according to government officials, oil companies and analysts. The war has been a wake-up call for Gulf oil producers, who are determined to become less dependent on a transit point that hugs Iran’s coast.

But alternatives to Hormuz are also vulnerable to disruption. Yemen’s Iran-backed Houthis rebels said early Thursday they had attacked two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea, a key alternative route to the strait for Saudi oil exports.

Some alternative routes will take the oil on longer and more expensive paths to market. Regardless, producers have realized that relying so heavily on the Strait of Hormuz “is no longer a prudent long-term strategy,” said Victoria Grabenwöger, senior research analyst at data firm Kpler.

The effective shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz would have been an even greater shock to the world economy were it not for a pipeline Saudi Arabia built in the 1980s amid fears that Tehran would disrupt shipping through the strait during the Iran-Iraq war.

The Saudis’ East-West pipeline carries oil across the desert nation from a processing facility in Abqaiq to the city of Yanbu on the Red Sea coast. Once there, it is loaded onto tankers that head either south to the Arabian Sea or north to the Suez Canal.

The United Arab Emirates has been sending more oil to the port of Fujairah, which abuts the Gulf of Oman, about 145 kilometers (90 miles) south of Hormuz.

Combined, the two pipelines had spare capacity of about 3.5 million to 5.5 million barrels per day before the war began, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. The two pipelines are now running near full capacity.

The state-owned oil company of Abu Dhabi, one of the UAE’s seven emirates, is accelerating construction of a \$3 billion, 300-kilometer (200-mile) pipeline to Fujairah. That pipeline, which will run parallel to an existing one, aims to increase oil supplied to Fujairah by more than 1.2 million barrels a day.

The project, which started before the war, is now reportedly about halfway completed, according to Kpler. The pipeline is intended to be completed by early 2027, but Kpler says mid-2027 is more likely given the need to expand the port at

Fujairah.

The ambitious timeline “has only become feasible against the backdrop of the Strait of Hormuz blockade,” Kpler’s Grabenwöger said.

In Iraq, officials are ramping up plans to develop alternative export routes for southern oil fields around Basra. Iraq is so dependent on the Strait of Hormuz that it has had to scale back production.

The Iraqi government, which gets some 90% of its revenues from oil sales, has been pursuing pipeline projects with U.S. companies. One would take supplies from an oil terminal in Basra - through which more than 3 million barrels were exported daily before the war - to the port of Ceyhan in Turkey, along the Mediterranean Sea.

That pipeline would also have a branch extending to the Mediterranean port of Baniyas in Syria. Some 2 million barrels a day of oil could ultimately flow through the pipeline to Baniyas, which the U.S. State Department has called “a critical energy corridor.”

Iraqi officials have also held discussions with Jordan on advancing long-discussed plans for a pipeline that would carry oil from Basra to Aqaba. From there it would be exported via the Red Sea or the Suez Canal to Asia and beyond.

Taken together, the new projects to bypass Hormuz could carry an added 3.8 million barrels of oil a day by the end of next year, and 7.3 million barrels per day by the end of 2028, according to analysts at the investment bank Goldman Sachs. The projects would mean some 60% of the Gulf’s total pre-war exports of 23 million barrels a day could bypass Hormuz if needed, the analysts said.

Pipelines from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea send oil in the wrong direction to help Asian countries that relied on exports through Hormuz, requiring a much longer trip around the southern tip of Africa.

Any additional supplies piped from Saudi Arabia to the Red Sea will also be vulnerable to attacks by Houthi rebels in Yemen, as Thursday’s attacks show; the rebels have successfully disrupted shipping before at the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden.

That oil could also be sent to the Suez Canal instead to reach the Mediterranean. But the canal cannot accommodate the industry’s largest tankers, which hold up to 2 million barrels per vessel and are often the most cost-efficient way to transport oil long distances.

And pipelines themselves are not immune to attack. The Saudi East-West pipeline was shut down by a Houthi drone strike in May 2019.

Meanwhile oil pipelines don’t help with the disruption to supplies of liquefied natural gas, or LNG, carried by ship. About one-fifth of the world’s LNG - much of it from Qatar and headed for Asian customers - transited the strait before the war.

‘Two decades advancing youth skills’

Gulf Bank reinforces its commitment to youth empowerment at the INJAZ Internship Fair ’26

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Reinforcing its long-standing commitment to empowering Kuwaiti youth and investing in the next generation of national talent, Gulf Bank participated in the INJAZ Internship Fair 2026, held from July 21 to 23 at the Symphony Style Hotel in Salmiya. The annual event brought together leading banks and companies from across Kuwait to connect university students with internship opportunities and support their career development.

The Bank’s participation reflects its broader strategy of equipping young people with the practical skills, professional experience, and financial knowledge needed to succeed in today’s evolving economy. This commitment aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, through meaningful collaboration between the private sector and educational institutions.

During the fair, Gulf Bank’s Human Resources team introduced students to the Bank’s internship program, highlighting opportunities to gain hands-on experience at one of Kuwait’s leading financial institutions. The team also showcased the Bank’s innovative banking solutions and exclusive offers designed to support students throughout their academic journey and beyond.

The Bank’s booth attracted strong interest from university students seeking internship opportunities and career guidance. It provided them with valuable insights into the banking industry while helping strengthen their readiness to transition confidently into the workforce.

Visitors also had the opportunity to explore Gulf Bank’s award-winning youth banking proposition, led by the red Account and red Plus Prepaid Card, which provide young customers with flexible, rewarding, and digitally enabled banking solutions tailored to their lifestyles. The Bank also highlighted the recently launched “red’y to impress” campaign, alongside the Gulf Points loyalty program, which offers exclusive rewards, lifestyle benefits, and value-added experiences designed specifically for Generation Z.

As part of its commitment to promoting financial literacy and responsible banking, Gulf Bank



A group photo of the HR team at Gulf Bank’s booth during the exhibition.

dedicated a section of its booth to raising awareness of financial fraud and cybersecurity. Visitors received practical guidance on protecting their banking information and safeguarding themselves against fraud, supporting the Bank’s continued participation in the national “Let’s Be Aware” campaign.

Gulf Bank’s leadership in youth banking was recently recognized at the Asian Banking & Finance Retail Banking Awards 2026, where the Bank received the Gen Z Product of the Year Award for its innovative youth proposition, particularly the red Account and red Plus Prepaid Card. The award reflects the Bank’s continued focus on developing customer-centric financial solutions that empower young people and promote financial inclusion.

The Bank also reaffirmed its strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, which spans more than two decades. Throughout this partnership, Gulf Bank has supported numerous initiatives focused on internships, entrepreneurship, financial education, and career readiness, contributing to the development of a highly skilled and future-ready generation capable of driving Kuwait’s sustainable economic growth.

By continuing to invest in youth development, employability, and financial capability, Gulf Bank remains committed to creating lasting value for society while supporting Kuwait’s vision of building a knowledge-based economy powered by empowered, innovative, and financially confident young leaders.

Europe’s central bank holds rates steady

FRANKFURT, July 23, (AP): The European Central Bank left interest rates unchanged Thursday amid uncertainty about how volatile energy prices will affect inflation.

The central bank for the 21 countries that use the euro currency left its benchmark rate unchanged at 2.25% following a quarter-point hike at its previous meeting June 11. That increase was aimed at dampening the impact on consumer prices from higher oil prices due to the US-Iran war and subsequent interruption of oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz.

Analysts say the bank may simply be taking a pause to gather more information amid swings in oil prices, which fell after announcement of a ceasefire but then rose again when the ceasefire agreement collapsed and fighting resumed. Economists are pointing toward the bank’s Sept. 10 meeting as a possibility for another rate increase.

“Uncertainty remains high and

the full inflationary impact of the energy shock has yet to play out,” ECB President Christine Lagarde said at a post-decision news conference. “We are therefore closely

monitoring the intensity and duration of the shock, as well as its indirect and second round effects”

Lagarde said the bank is making decisions meeting by meeting



President of European Central Bank Christine Lagarde addresses the media in Frankfurt, Germany, Thursday, July 23, 2026, after a meeting of the ECB’s governing council. (AP)

based on incoming data and has not committed to any particular path for rates.

Rate hikes combat inflation by raising the cost of credit for buying things, from new houses to new factories. That cools demand for goods and eases pressure on prices. Inflation in the eurozone ran at an annual 2.8% in June, down from 3.2% in May.

International benchmark Brent crude rose to \$99 Thursday following US President Donald Trump’s July 8 declaration that a memorandum of understanding about a ceasefire and future talks was “over.” Oil had traded around \$76 before the ceasefire collapsed, not far from its prewar level of around \$73.

Brent rose 4% on Thursday after Iranian-backed Houthi rebels attacked two Saudi oil tankers near the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, raising doubts about Saudi Arabia’s ability to ship oil through the Red Sea instead of the Strait of Hormuz.



Comic-Con attendees walk the convention show floor during preview night at Comic-Con International on Wednesday, July 22, 2026, in San Diego. (AP)

Marvel's 'Doomsday' drives Comic-Con buzz

The Avengers appear set to return to Hall H as Marvel Studios uses Comic-Con International to build hype for the December release of "Avengers: Doomsday" - and chart a path

forward as audience interest in superhero films has waned. That panel on Saturday is the most-anticipated hour of the nation's biggest pop culture convention, which opens in San Diego on

Wednesday evening. Early bird shoppers can snag exclusive collectibles like a \$25 "KPop Demon Hunters"-themed Hot Wheels Porsche 911 and \$60 "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" customizable Funko figure set.

More than 120,000 people are expected at the four-day expo, which began in 1970 with a gathering of several hundred sci-fi and comics fans and an in-person appearance from Marvel icon Jack Kirby.

Comic-Con has grown to include cosplay contests, autograph booths, obstacle courses, concerts and panels covering everything from video games - new titles feature Wolverine and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles - to movie poster art and fencing. (Bruce Dickinson of Iron Maiden and "Ghosts" actor Asher Grodman will discuss "Hollywood's Love Affair With Fencing" on Thursday.)

DC Studios, which like Marvel sat out last year's Comic-Con because the publicity campaign timing wasn't right, will showcase its HBO

"Lanterns" series with a "training headquarters" activation in San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter and a Friday panel featuring stars Aaron Pierre and Kyle Chandler.

That presentation, like Marvel's, will be in the convention center's 6,500-person premier showcase: Hall H. Livestreams aren't allowed inside but online reaction from fans in attendance can swiftly lift - or doom - a film or TV show's prospects.

Another prestige TV highlight: Actors from "Widow's Bay" are expected to pay a visit to the bayside convention center on Saturday as Apple TV celebrates the comedy-horror series' 19 Emmy nominations.

Comedy fans won't need to comb the desert to find updates on "Spaceballs: The New One," the focus of a Friday panel. The film set for release next year features Rick Moranis, Bill Pullman and 100-year-old Mel Brooks reprising their roles from Brooks' 1987 parody. (AP)



Daniel Huerta, from Simi Valley, Calif., poses for a photo dressed as "Red Guardian" during preview night for Comic-Con International on Wednesday, July 22, 2026, in San Diego. (AP)



James Edwards of San Diego dressed as Thor poses for a photograph in the Marvel booth during preview night of Comic-Con International on Wednesday, July 22, 2026, in San Diego. (AP)



A view of a life-sized model figure of Din Djarin from "The Mandalorian" during preview night of Comic-Con International on Wednesday, July 22, 2026, in San Diego. (AP)



Comic-Con attendees take pictures of model figures at the Sideshow Collectibles booth during preview night at Comic-Con International on Wednesday, July 22, 2026, in San Diego. (AP)



Attendees inspect a model figure based on the Marvel comic book character "Cyclops" at the Sideshow Collectibles booth during preview night at Comic-Con International on Wednesday, July 22, 2026, in San Diego. (AP)



A Comic-Con attendee takes a cell phone picture of a bust of a male velociraptor from the film "Jurassic Park III" at the Elite Creature Collectibles booth during preview night at Comic-Con International on Wednesday, July 22, 2026, in San Diego. (AP)



A large model of a Gundam mobile suit looms over attendees during preview night of Comic-Con International on Wednesday, July 22, 2026, in San Diego. (AP)

Music

Singer turns her story into a deeply personal album

Lim Kim finds herself in ‘Exit to Nowhere’

SEOUL, July 23, (AP): Lim Kim has spent the past decade figuring out where she fits - in the music industry, in adulthood, in the rooms she found herself in. Her new album, “Exit to Nowhere,” traces that search across seven tracks.

The 32-year-old South Korean singer’s second full-length album looks back on a decade of change as she moves from the uncertainty of her early 20s.

“It has seven tracks, and they reflect the emotions and feelings I’ve experienced from my early 20s until now - like a chronicle of my life,” Kim told The Associated Press.

The album, released seven years after her last major project, the 2019 EP “GENERASIAN,” marks a return for an artist who has spent her career shifting between genres and exploring questions of identity, belonging and self-discovery. It arrives 13 years after her debut full-length album, “A Voice.”

When Kim released “GENERASIAN,” she said global interest in South Korea and its music, in-



Singer Lim Kim speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in Seoul, South Korea, Monday, July 20, 2026. (AP)

cluding K-pop, was still developing. She said the album came from a desire to speak about her own identity and perspective as an Asian woman born in South Korea.

“That was a period when no one had really told that story properly,” she said. “I wanted to show that perspective properly - not through the way it’s usually seen from abroad, but from my own point of view.”

Kim said her new album represents a move away from the broader cultural questions of “GENERASIAN” and toward a more personal reflection.

“After I finished ‘GENERASIAN,’ I thought about my next step for a long time,” she said. “Each album feels like a record of what I was feeling at that time, and then I move on. This time, I wanted to focus more on my own individual story.”

Kim broke through in 2011 as part of South Korean folk-pop duo Togeworl before launching her solo career in 2013. She won two Korean Music Awards in 2020.

The singer said the album’s title reflects the uncertainty she felt during the years it covers - a period she described as moving through a “wasteland” while searching for direction.



This image released by Discovery Channel shows KPop singer Rei Ami, left, and actor-comedian Ken Jeong who appear in ‘K-Pop Shark Heroes,’ kicking off Discovery’s annual ‘Shark Week.’ (AP)

Jeong makes waves with comedy

‘KPop Demon Hunters’ star Ami takes on ‘Shark Week’

NEW YORK, July 23, (AP): Rei Ami, whose voice helped fuel the hit movie “KPop Demon Hunters,” recently found herself facing plenty of real hunters - watching from the ocean floor as about 16 reef sharks went on a feeding frenzy.

She was scared, sure. But more than that, she was brought to tears.

“I thought I’d be a bit more petrified, but I was enamored. I was in awe. It was witnessing nature,” she says. “You can’t put it into words the emotions and the feelings that you experience.”

Viewers can watch Rei Ami’s experience with sharks while off the Korean Peninsula when Discovery Channel’s “Shark Week” kicks off Sunday.

Twenty new, hourlong shows leap deep into the world of the ancient predators, from a record-setting dive attempt into shark-infested waters to trying to find out what triggers giant bull sharks to confront humans.

“Growing up, I always watched ‘Shark Week,’” says Rei Ami. “You see those epic commercials, with the great white jumping out and eating the chum and the tuna. That’s ingrained in my brain forever.”

Actor-comedian Ken Jeong joins her to start the week off with the show “K-Pop Shark Heroes” on Sunday. But while she went on two cage dives and two free dives with hammerheads and reef sharks and bull sharks, he preferred to stay out of the water.

“I’m more of the Christopher Nolan of the shark ‘Odyssey’ - just overseeing it,” Jeong jokes. “Just overlooking everything. High and dry. That’s when I do my best work.”

The seven nights of new shows ends Aug. 1 with a look at how great whites are moving further up the East Coast and an examination of how thresher sharks use their tails to stun and kill prey.

One highlight is watching high diver Molly Carlson leap 50 feet (15 meters) from a helicopter into a Plexiglas cage in the ocean surrounded by circling reef sharks. She’s OK with jumping from enormous heights, but sharks terrify her.

“There was zero chances of me ever swimming with sharks. This was just not on my radar,” she says. “That’s always been my thing, and so for me to be invited to be on ‘Shark Week,’ I was like ‘Why me?’”

Viewers will see Carlson, who has been frank about her struggles with anxiety, overcome her lifelong fear of sharks. Carlson hopes she can motivate others.

“If I can inspire that next 16-year-old girl who wants to just hide in her room and never come out because she’s scared of so many things, then I’m absolutely going to find a way to do this,” she says. “You’re allowed to be scared and do it anyways. And so I think that was the big purpose behind this project for me.”

This year’s highlights also include an attempt to locate a rumored 15-foot (4-meter) mako off the coast of Southern California, which would make it the largest ever documented.

Marine biologist Kendyl Berna, a “Shark Week” veteran who co-founded the ecology group Beyond the Reef, says her team of scientists were betting on the fact that a marine heat wave has made mako prey in those waters abundant, allowing the sharks to get bigger.

“Sharks are the cockroaches of the sea because they’ve been around for 450 million years. They’re older than dinosaurs, they’re older than trees. Sharks have just been around, but the form that they’re taking constantly changes,” she says.

Merger cleared with conditions

European Union approves Paramount & Warner deal

NEW YORK, July 23, (AP): The European Union approved Paramount’s \$81 billion takeover of Warner Bros. Discovery this week, effectively clearing another regulatory hurdle for a mega merger that could vastly reshape the entertainment and media landscape worldwide.

But the greenlight comes with certain conditions.

The European Commission - which serves as the EU’s antitrust enforcer - said that even with a Paramount-Warner combo, enough competitors would exist across markets like film production and streaming in its 27-nation bloc. Still, when it comes to distributing movies to theaters, the Commission warned of high concentration that could lead to “worse rental and distribution terms for cinema operators, ultimately disadvantaging consumers.”

To address this, the Commission said Skydance-owned Paramount agreed to end its European Economic Area stake in United International Pictures - a longstanding venture with another major studio, Universal, that Paramount has used to distribute films in theaters outside North America. The company must end that partnership within 13 months of closing its Warner acquisition, the Commission said, and not enter any new agreements with Universal for the next 10 years.

Among other terms, current distribution of Warner films must be shifted to the same pipeline Paramount is using in these European countries. The European Commission said its approval was conditional on the company’s commitments and that it would monitor their implementation, without expanding further on how that would be enforced.

Paramount welcomed the EU’s greenlight, which it said represented “a major milestone” toward completing its acquisition. In a Wednesday statement, the company added that such clearances reflect how a Paramount-Warner combo “will enhance consumer choice” and create a business with a scale “capable of competing with the tech companies that have come to dominate the industry.”

Universal did not respond Wednesday to a request for comment about Paramount’s new film

distribution commitments in Europe.

A Paramount-Warner combo would mean putting HBO Max, fan favorite titles like “Harry Potter” and even CNN under the same roof with CBS, “Top Gun” and the Paramount+ streaming service. Beyond movies and streaming, both American companies also own a handful of European-based TV assets - including Warner’s TVN Group in Poland, as well as localized channels for flagship Paramount brands like MTV and Nickelodeon.

The EU’s blessing marks the latest in a chain of regulatory clearances inching the merger closer to becoming a reality, but the deal faces other challenges. In the U.S., a federal judge on Monday ordered the companies to pause their transaction for at least two weeks.

That spans from a lawsuit brought forth by California and 11 other states seeking to block Paramount and Warner’s merger altogether - on the grounds such a tie-up would “extinguish competition” in Hollywood and lead to fewer choices for consumers, particularly moviegoers and cable customers in the U.S.

Paramount has called the states’ claims meritless. And the company reiterated that on Wednesday - saying findings from the EU’s approval “directly refute key assumptions that underpin the state AGs’ complaint,” particularly when it comes to competition from newer or smaller film studios.

Either way, the deal is set to be halted until at least a preliminary injunction hearing, currently slated for Aug. 3. When granting the temporary restraining order earlier this week, U.S. District Judge Araceli Martínez-Olguín said states had made a strong case about a combined Paramount-Warner’s potential to “substantially lessen competition” and that the merger would be “difficult, if not impossible, to unwind” without a pause.

In contrast to the states’ case, the Trump administration’s U.S. Justice Department said it wouldn’t block the deal - and instead released a lengthy statement in support, maintaining a Paramount-Warner combo would bring “benefits for American consumers and workers.”

‘Little Miss Twain’ reveals girl behind the icon

NEW YORK, July 23, (AP): Before Shania Twain became Shania Twain, she was a child performing in Canadian bars, singing to miners, lumberjacks, fishermen and hunters drinking the night away.

“It was a bit more of a rugged crowd. And they were small crowds,” she says in a recent interview with The Associated Press. “I could only enter after the bar closed. That was after midnight because I was underage. And as long as the bar wasn’t still serving, then I could go in and play while everybody was finishing up their last call.”

It was “character building,” she says, painting an image of a bygone era of her life in Northern Ontario and one dramatically opposed to the glitz and glamour associated with the five-time Grammy Award winning country musician. But those days were instrumental to what became her career. “I spent a lot of years dreaming about things that would eventually come but took a little while,” she says.

As Twain describes it, her latest album, “Little Miss Twain,” out Friday, is the period of her life from her earliest performances at age 8 all the way to her late-20s, when she inked her major label record deal.

“There’s this whole gap of life that I’ve never written,” she says. “I wanted to fill in story wise, personal story wise. ... It’s a phase of my life that not a lot of my fans would know about.”

A number of the songs on “Little Miss Twain” have been sitting with the singer for many years. “Rockstars” I was writing probably 10 years ago now, and ‘Northern Town’ is one that’s been around for a long time,” she says.

The title track of the record, “Little Miss Twain,” is its emotive heart - a song for her mother, who died in a car crash in 1987, alongside her stepfather, and never got to experience her success. For Shania, it was an opportunity to reflect on “my mother being my manager and my agent, my driver and my coach, even though she couldn’t sing a note,” she said. “She would drive me around to all these stages, underage in the bars, and that’s where I got my experience.”

The song was one of the last ones to make the collection, she says, but



Shania Twain performs during the Calgary Stampede in Calgary, Alberta, Canada on July 5, 2025. (AP)

“it was this missing piece that came to me.” That’s at least partially due to the inclusion of Tanya Tucker, who duets with Twain on the track.

On the chorus, Twain sings “According to my mother/I’m the next Tanya Tucker.”

Twain says of having Tucker on the record: “I don’t know if I would ever really be able to explain in words what it meant and what it would have meant to my mother.”

The song also features her son Eja D’Angelo Lange on background vocals; he appears on a few of the album’s tracks. “I get to fulfill a lot of things that my mother would not have been able to share with me,” she says about working with her son. “It’s really beautiful.”

Pulling from her early years allowed Twain to focus on some of her musical loves in and outside of country music. Listen closely and you’ll hear “Motown, the country and western that my grandparents used to play like Marty Robbins” she says. “There’s a lot of rock edge stuff in there. ‘Faded Blue Jeans’ is



This album cover image released by Republic Records shows “Little Miss Twain” by Shania Twain. (AP)

very much a bluesy rock song” - it features Queens of the Stone Age’s Josh Homme.

The multi-genre moments on the album, with credits that also include Ronnie Wood, work for Twain’s current voice, which now features a wizened rasp. “I don’t have the little sweet sound I had years ago, but

I have a new sound that I actually like,” she says. “And I think I write songs a bit differently because of it.”

A number of years ago, Twain contracted Lyme disease, which affected her voice. In 2018, she had implants placed in her larynx. “It’s a very unusual procedure to have for a singer,” she says. “I had damaged nerves in my larynx. So the vocal cords were perfectly fine.” The surgery worked, and the continued result is a kind of gravelly tone, a vocal fry, and additional distinction to her already unmistakable voice.

When her audience listens to “Little Miss Twain” for the first time, Twain hopes they will leave the experience with “a sense and a feeling of the atmosphere that I grew up in, the environment that shaped me, the experiences that developed me as a person and as an artist,” she says.

She wants them to get to know the cover singer at the local bar, the woman who didn’t have childhood success. “I hope they learn,” she takes a beat, “about the missing chapter of who I am.”

Taiwan children’s choirs win top awards in Hungary

TAIPEI, Taiwan, July 23, (BUSINESS WIRE), Competing against 36 leading contenders from 20 countries, four Taiwanese children’s choirs have garnered several major awards and top honors at the 5th Budapest International Choral Celebration, showcasing Taiwan’s cultural diversity and music excellence.

Puzangalan Children’s Choir and Yo Wu Wei Children’s Chorus join forces with international choral ensembles and orchestras to perform Mozart’s Requiem Mass in D minor, K. 626 at the Béla Bartók National Concert Hall of Műpa Budapest.

With its pure, angelic voices and exceptional vocal techniques, Puzangalan Children’s Choir from Pingtung County won the top prize, Laurea Summa Cum Laude, in the Grand Prix Competition’s Youth Choir of Equal Voices, Folklore, and Sacred Music categories.

In the Open Competition, Yo Wu Wei Children’s Chorus claimed three gold prizes in the categories of Youth Choir of Equal Voices, Modern, and Folklore. The choir also secured two championships in the Youth Choir of Equal Voices and Modern categories and received the highest honor in the Modern category. Meanwhile, Taipei Fuhsing Elementary School Choir earned the Children’s Choirs Gold Diploma and was named the Category Winner. Kaohsiung Children’s Choir received a gold prize in the Folklore category and the Children’s Choirs Silver Diploma.

Invited by the organizer, Puzangalan Children’s Choir and Yo Wu Wei Children’s Chorus joined forces with international choral ensembles and orchestras to perform Mozart’s Requiem Mass in D minor, K. 626 at the Béla Bartók National Concert Hall of Műpa Budapest. The two choirs then embarked on a tour of the Baltic states, bringing Taiwan’s choral artistry to audiences in Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia while sharing Taiwanese music and culture with local communities.

The Taipei Representative Office in Hungary



Puzangalan Children’s Choir and Yo Wu Wei Children’s Chorus join forces with international choral ensembles and orchestras to perform Mozart’s Requiem Mass in D minor, K. 626 at the Béla Bartók National Concert Hall of Műpa Budapest. (Business Wire)

noted that the award-winning achievements at the choral competition demonstrate the confidence of Taiwan’s younger generation on the global stage.

It added that the children’s voices have become a powerful form of cultural diplomacy, leaving a lasting impression at this year’s event.



In this image taken from video taken on July 15, 2026, one of the quadruplets born at Metro North Health hospital lies in an incubator in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

Australian woman gives birth to rare identical quadruplet girls

SYDNEY, July 23, (AP): An Australian woman has given birth to identical quadruplet girls after a pregnancy doctors described as incredibly rare.

Jenitar Sau Na'amoana, who is 34 years old and already had four children, delivered the babies last week at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in Queensland state.

"We are very excited to be able to care for this amazing little family, a big family now," Dr. Alexa Bendall, a maternal fetal medicine specialist who cared for Na'amoana, said in an interview released by the hospital.

The babies were conceived naturally and came from one fertilized egg that split into four, "which was incredible," Bendall said.

"We think the figures are probably around 1 in 15 million for a case like this to be spontaneously conceived," she said. "We don't think it's ever happened in Australia."

Overall, experts say, the chance of conceiving quadruplets naturally is only 1 in 700,000; most are conceived with the assistance of medical technology.

Hospital officials said Na'amoana and her husband, Jortham, hadn't planned to have more children and were quite surprised when she became pregnant with the quadruplets.

Na'amoana faced a high risk of complications, especially given the fetuses shared one placenta. In general, being pregnant with any multiple fetuses puts a mom at increased risk for problems such as preterm birth, miscarriage and birth defects, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine.

Na'amoana was monitored by a large medical team at the hospital since 10 weeks gestation and was admitted as an inpatient at 25 weeks so she could be monitored, hospital officials said. She delivered the babies by cesarean section on July 14.

"The fact that we've got four beautiful, healthy babies born at 28 weeks and four days is incredible," Bendall said. "Mum did lose a little bit of blood but not an excessive amount for having quads, and she's doing well."

The babies are doing well in the neonatal intensive care unit. Their names are Emily, Harriet, Catherine and Alexa, in honor of Bendall. The doctor called the name a "beautiful tribute," and said she feels privileged to have helped bring these children into the world.

"From an academic perspective, it's really interesting," she said. "But also from a human perspective, to be able to be part of the family's journey and come out with four beautiful babies and a healthy mum is very precious."

Road deaths decline globally since 1990 except in poorer countries: study

France records 5,700 more deaths than usual during historic June heat wave

PARIS, July 23, (AP): France recorded at least 5,700 more deaths than usual during a historic heat wave last month, the public health agency said Wednesday, sharply increasing its estimates of the feared toll from record-shattering temperatures.

Public Health France said regions hit by the heat from June 17 to July 2 recorded 21,674 deaths from all causes. But without a heat wave, those same regions would have been expected to have seen far fewer deaths, or 15,910, based on statistical modeling using data from previous years, it said.

The difference between expected and actual deaths - a total of 5,764 - are therefore considered to be "excess" deaths during the heat wave, the agency said.

It said the excess mortality, with 36% more deaths than would normally have been expected, was the highest from any heat wave since 2003. A historic heat wave that year caused an estimated 15,000 deaths in France.

France registered its hottest-ever days on June 24 and June 25 this year - with a national average of 30 C (86 F) - as well as record heat at night and peak temperatures that soared well above 40 C (104 F) in many places.

Just over half of the unexpected deaths occurred during and in the immediate wake of that hottest period, over three days from June 25

to June 27, the public health agency said.

"This unprecedented episode, characterized by its early onset, intensity, and duration, exposed nearly the entire population to extreme heat during a period when school and work activities were still in full swing," the agency noted.

All told, across Europe, extreme temperatures that hit exceptionally early and hard this year saw well over 10,000 more deaths at the height of the heat wave than would normally have been expected, according to figures that are still emerging across the continent.

In France, the Paris region appears to have been hardest hit, recording 1,999 unexpected deaths - around 80% more than would otherwise have been anticipated without a heat wave, the French health agency said.

Funeral service directors in Paris said they struggled to find places to store bodies before burial or cremation, with some mortuaries saying they were full and having to turn bodies away.

Nearly half of the more than 21,600 people who died passed away in hospitals, which wrestled with surges of patients suffering from heat-related ailments. About a third died at home and the rest were mostly deaths in care homes for older people, the agency said.

The latest estimated death toll, which the agency said will be updated



This long exposure photo shows traffic driving on Roosevelt Boulevard in Philadelphia on May 25, 2022. (AP)

ed later in the year with more complete data, was sharply higher than initial figures it had given. It had previously reported around 2,000 additional deaths from all causes for the week of June 22 to June 28, the peak in France of the heat wave that also broke temperature records in many other parts of Europe.

Experts caution that it takes a while for a full picture to emerge, and that many heat-related deaths will never formally be recorded as such. For example, a heart attack, which can be triggered by extreme heat exposure, especially in people who are older or have underlying

health issues, may be listed on a death certificate simply as a heart attack.

Also:

NEW YORK: Road deaths are declining in the US and worldwide, but lower-income countries aren't experiencing much of the improvement, according to a study published.

Global rates of road injuries and deaths each fell more than 30% between 1990 and 2023, according to the study published in Lancet Public Health, which noted the progress varied from country to country.

Pedestrian and vehicle occupant

deaths rose over that time in six countries - including the **United States**. However, more recent data shows road deaths fell in the U.S. in 2024 and 2025.

The World Health Organization put out its own numbers Monday, finding that road traffic deaths declined by 21% between 2011 and 2025. However, traffic crashes still claimed more than 1.1 million lives last year, and they remain the leading cause of death among children and youth aged 5 to 29 years, the WHO said.

Road deaths involve fatal injuries that happen to pedestrians, cyclists and people riding in cars, trucks and other vehicles. Complete data is lacking in some countries, so the researchers behind the new report made estimates based on what data is available.

The researchers, from the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, found that road injury rates are higher in high-income countries, but 90% of road deaths occur in low-income countries.

In many low-income countries, safety measures have not kept up with rapid growth in cities and use of motorized vehicles. For example, seat belt mandates are more common in high-income countries, as are car safety features such as air bags.

"Road injury outcomes are shaped not only by crashes, but by the sys-

tems designed to prevent them and protect people when they occur," said Liane Ong, the new paper's senior author, in a statement.

However, there have been conflicting trends in the U.S, including the proliferation of taller and larger passenger vehicles, the authors wrote. U.S. officials also have said thousands of deaths each year can be attributed to "distracted driving," including drivers looking at their phones.

In the U.S., motor vehicle traffic fatalities rose in the last decade and peaked at more than 43,000 in 2021 before beginning to decline, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The agency estimated the count fell to about 36,600 last year.

Meanwhile, the Governors Highway Safety Association recently reported that US drivers hit and killed 7% fewer people walking on U.S. roads in 2025 compared with the year before. It was the largest annual reduction since pedestrian deaths began falling three years ago, but it was still higher than what the numbers were before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The WHO identified road safety as an international public health priority more than two decades ago. The Lancet report's release coincides with the start of a two-day United Nations high-level meeting on improving global road safety, being held in New York City.

Why 78 degrees isn't the right thermostat setting for everyone during a heat wave

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



By Destenie Nock
Carnegie Mellon University

Across the US, it's a hot summer, and electricity prices are high. Various public officials and corporate websites suggest people set their thermostats to 78 degrees Fahrenheit (25.6 degrees Celsius), or even 81 F (27.2 C), as a way to stay relatively cool without breaking the bank. But as someone who studies energy costs, I know from both personal and professional experience that it's not that simple.

The summer after my daughter's first birthday, she began vomiting in the middle of the night and small bumps covered her chest. I thought it was the blueberries we'd given her. My husband and I cut out acidic foods and changed her milk. At the time, we often kept our thermostat set to 79 F (26.1 C). Before becoming parents, that setting kept the summer electric bill below US\$200. We would sleep without blankets and take cold showers like I had in graduate school.

Then, on a cooler night, she kept her blueberries down. After that, I lowered the hallway thermostat setting enough to get her bedroom near 74 F (23.3 C). The nighttime vomiting stopped. My experience as a parent changed how I hear universal recommendations for air conditioner settings, especially during heat waves.

There is no single thermostat setting that is right for every person or every home. And there are other easy, low-cost steps that can help keep everyone comfortable when hot weather sets in.

Every piece of cooling equipment is different, in terms of its technical design specifications, and its age and maintenance history. And the homes these systems serve vary in terms of insulation, size, sun exposure, and local climate. So there's not one temperature setting that's maximally energy- and cost-efficient for every home.

It may be useful to start at 78 F (25.6 C) to keep a lid on costs, but that temperature is neither a safety threshold nor a temperature every household will find comfortable and safe. If you are uncomfortable, try lowering your thermostat one degree at a time while monitoring yourself and others in your household for any signs of heat stress.

In general, a higher thermostat setting saves energy because the air conditioner has less work to do. When it is 95 F (35 C) outside, maintaining a home at 78 F requires removing less heat than maintaining it at the average level most U.S. households seek in the summer: 72 F (22.2 C). The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the less frequently or intensely the air conditioning system has to run, thereby using less electricity.

Running an air conditioner also reduces the humidity in a home. When the air is humid, sweat evaporates less effectively. The National Weather Service has a chart that says if the temperature is above 90 F (32.2 C), and the humidity is above 60%, the air will feel like it's above 100 F (37.8 C).

Running air conditioning may be necessary in a heat wave, but it can represent over 50% of a home's energy usage in summer months - and a similar proportion of the resulting electricity bill.

Fortunately, there are other ways you can keep yourself

and your home cool for very little money.

Prevent outside heat from seeping into the building by closing curtains on sun-facing windows. Close windows and doors too, unless it is cooler outside than inside, which may happen overnight or in the early morning.

And don't add more heat inside your home if you can avoid it. For instance, avoid using the oven during the hottest part of the day.

The moving air from a ceiling fan or a portable fan can make temperatures feel cooler, even if the thermostat is set relatively high.

But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say people should only use fans to cool themselves down when indoor temperatures are below 90 F (32.2 C). This is because when the air is hotter than your skin temperature - about 90 to 94 F - a fan creates a convection oven effect, accelerating the shift of heat into the body and potentially raising your body temperature to unhealthy levels.

Remember that a hallway thermostat may not reflect the temperature in an upstairs room, or one facing the sun. Use an inexpensive thermometer to measure temperatures in the rooms where people actually sleep or spend their time. If possible, have people stay in shaded rooms or on a lower floor, or even in one space, rather than cooling every room equally.

A cool shower or a damp cloth can provide immediate relief, and drinking water regularly helps replace fluid lost through sweating. If you are feeling really hot, consider using ice packs to help cool your body down.

There are many stories of people dying indoors because they turned off their working air conditioners during times of high heat, or because their cooling system wasn't functioning properly.

Infants and people with certain health conditions may need to be in cooler spaces for longer periods of time than healthy adults.

If your home's heat makes you afraid for your health, call your local 211 resident-services hotline or search online for local cooling centers where you can spend some time in air conditioning at no charge. Even a few hours in an air-conditioned space can reduce heat risk. Splash pads and public pools are other options, as are public libraries and other government buildings, or even a restaurant, cafe or movie theater, which often have air conditioning.

Keep an eye on yourself and each other for signs of heat stress. If someone becomes dizzy, weak, intensely thirsty, nauseated, confused or unusually tired, move them to a cooler place or go to the hospital. Confusion, loss of consciousness and very high body temperature can indicate heat stroke, which is a medical emergency.

Lastly, if you need help paying your electricity bills, check in with your utility company, which may have programs for spreading out your costs over time. You may even find you're eligible for cost subsidies. State and local governments also usually have programs that help residents insulate their homes and upgrade inefficient appliances.

The best temperature setting is the one that provides adequate cooling at costs the household can sustain. While a thermostat setting of 78 F (25.6 C) is often touted as a solution, in reality it is just one of several options. In my house, becoming a mother changed the amount I determined was necessary to spend on my summer cooling bills. I couldn't determine the right amount of cooling from the thermostat or my electricity bill - I had to look after the people in my home. (AP)



A North Atlantic right whale surfaces on Cape Cod Bay in Massachusetts, Monday, March 27, 2023. (AP)

Endangered right whales could wait almost decade for new US protections

SCARBOROUGH, Maine, July 23, (AP): New protections for endangered right whales in the North Atlantic would be postponed for nearly a decade under a plan that cleared a key hurdle in Washington last week with the full-throated support of the fishing and lobster industries.

Environmentalists say this could spell the end for the vanishing whales, which can drown after getting tangled up in fishing gear or being struck by boats. There are only about 380 North Atlantic right whales left.

The federal government has already paused any new right whale rules until 2028, and the House Natural Resources Committee voted on July 15 to extend that moratorium to 2035. A vote by the Republican-controlled Congress could happen as soon as this summer, and is almost certain to pass.

President Donald Trump 's administration has thrown its support behind US Rep Jared Golden, a Democrat from Maine, in his efforts to further delay new regulations aimed at protecting right whales. Golden introduced the bill along with Republican Rep. Mike Lawler of New York.

Much of the pushback against further regulations has come from the lobster and crab industries in New

England states like Maine and Massachusetts. Those fishing industries say they already follow some of the most comprehensive conservation measures in the world, and have made a case that adding more rules might drive them out of business.

The pause on new rules, Golden said, is also intended to allow more time to gather data about how best to protect whales.

"Mainers are not asking for much. We just need more time," he said.

The moratorium has been in place since 2022. Environmental groups warn that amid the delays and further studies, right whales keep dying from run-ins with commercial fishing gear.

The whale population shrank by about 25% from 2010 to 2020. Although they rebounded slightly in recent years, their numbers remain well below 2010, when there were about 480.

"They needed more protections in 2022 when Congress ignored a mountain of evidence and decided that insufficient efforts were enough," Gib Brogan, senior campaign director with conservation group Oceana, said. "Now, once again, lawmakers are trying to pass the buck."

The fishing industry has countered

that the current rules are sufficient - and say those rules won't change if the moratorium is extended.

Also:

KEY BISCAVNE, Fla: Scientists working to save a coral species from extinction transported 30 pieces from nurseries off the Florida coast to a hatchery on land Wednesday, fearing that warming waters could trigger a mass bleaching event this summer that could wipe them out.

Elkhorn coral populations were decimated by a 2023 heat wave and a less severe one in 2024 that left them functionally extinct - meaning remaining colonies are too small and far apart to reproduce in the wild - from Broward County to the Florida Keys, said Diego Lirman, associate professor of marine biology at the University of Miami. Heat causes coral to bleach, which can be fatal if it lasts long enough.

Researchers have been propagating them at coastal nurseries, but decided to bring some ashore now because of indications that 2026 will be "a really bad year" for bleaching - perhaps even worse than 2023, Lirman said. Coral has been showing indications of heat stress as water temperatures rise.

Lord’s stages the second test

Trent Bridge to kick off 2027 men’s Ashes as England hosts Australia

LONDON, July 23, (AP): Trent Bridge in Nottingham will host the first 2027 men’s Ashes test between England and holder Australia.

The five grounds had already been selected - including Southampton’s Rose Bowl for the first time - and the dates were revealed on Thursday.

The first test is scheduled from June 18-22. England has won its last three Ashes tests at Trent Bridge, the most recent in 2015 after Australia was bowled out for 60.

Lord’s stages the second test from June 30-July 4.

There’s a scheduled break of

only four days to the third test at Edgbaston in Birmingham from July 8-12.

The fourth test marks Southampton’s men’s Ashes debut from July 21-25. It becomes the 10th British ground to host a men’s Ashes test.

The series ends at The Oval from July 29-Aug. 2.

There was contention that Nottingham was the most northerly venue in England in the 2027 Ashes after Old Trafford in Manchester and Headingley in Leeds were not selected.

Both grounds have been chosen for the 2031 series but when the 2027 venues were picked in 2023,



A general view of Trent Bridge during the Cricket World Cup match between Australia and Bangladesh at Trent Bridge in Nottingham, England. (AP)

the mayors of Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire wrote to the England and Wales Cricket Board to express their disappointment.

Ben Stokes, who plays for Durham in the far north of England, said when he was leading England during their ill-fated 4-1 Ashes defeat in Australia earlier this year that no Ashes tests in the north next year was “a shame.”

Old Trafford will stage a warmup game for Australia against the England Lions. It is scheduled for June 7-10, which will be revisited if Australia reaches the World Test Championship final. That final at The Oval is set for June 9-13.

The women’s Ashes between England and Australia will run alongside the men’s.

Their series begins with a women’s test at Headingley for the first time since 2001 from June 24-27 followed by three Twenty20s and three one-day internationals ending on July 20.

Also announced for 2027 were England men hosting Pakistan for five ODIs in May followed by a first home test against Bangladesh since 2010 at Lord’s. New Zealand tour in September for three T20s and five ODIs as the teams prepare for the 50-over World Cup in southern Africa in October.

Thomas’ 20th triple-double leads Mercury past Sparks

Clark scores 27 as Fever sets scoring record in win

LOS ANGELES, July 23, (AP): Alyssa Thomas recorded her 20th triple-double in the regular season, Kahleah Copper scored 21 points and the Phoenix Mercury edged the Los Angeles Sparks 86-82.

Thomas, who also has six triple-doubles in the playoffs, finished with 19 points, 15 assists and 11 rebounds. She had assists on seven of the last eight baskets scored by the Mercury, who had 28 assists on 35 baskets. Her final one, to Monique Akoa Makani with 14 seconds left, sealed the win.

Akoa Makani had 14 points for the Mercury (10-18), who won their second straight after a six-game losing streak. Natasha Mack added 10. Phoenix was 12-of-18 shooting with 10 assists in the fourth quarter.

Rae Burrell had 20 points for the Sparks (10-16), who take a five-game losing streak into the All-Star break. Dearica Hamby had 18 points and 10 rebounds, but missed a tying layup with 19 seconds to go. Ariel Atkins added 15 points and Nneka Ogwumike had 13 points and 13 rebounds.

Ogwumike, with her ninth rebound of the game, passed Candace Parker (2,902) for second place on the Sparks’ career list behind Lisa Leslie. She finished with her 12th double-double of the season.

Fever 123, Sun 88

In Indianapolis, Caitlin Clark had 27 points and 11 assists, Kelsey Mitchell added 23 points and Indiana set a franchise record for points in a game with their victory over Connecticut.

Aliyah Boston scored 22 points for the Fever, who also had the biggest half in franchise history when they led 70-46 at the break. It was the third-highest scoring game in league history without overtime.

Monique Billings and Tyasha Harris both added 12 for Indiana (17-10), which has a three-game winning streak heading into the All-Star break.

The Fever made 11 of 22 3-pointers and shot 62% overall. Clark had five 3s and Mitchell three. Mitchell had at least 20 points and three 3-pointers for the 10th straight game.

Diamond Miller had 15 points for the Sun (7-20), who were without Aaliyah Edwards and Brittney Griner. Saniya Rivers scored 13 points, Olivia Nelson-Ododa had 11 and three players added 10.

Lynx 86, Storm 76

In Seattle, Napheesa Collier had 24 points and 10 rebounds in her season debut, Kayla McBride added



Seattle Storm guard Natisha Hiedeman (2) drives the baseline past Minnesota Lynx guard Courtney Williams during a WNBA basketball game in Seattle. (AP)

20 points and Minnesota headed into the WNBA All-Star break with the best record in the league after a win over Seattle.

Collier, who tore ligaments in her left ankle in a playoff game last September and had surgery on both ankles in the offseason, shot 9 for 20 with two 3-pointers in 24 minutes. The WNBA Defensive Player of the Year and runner-up in the MVP voting last season made three free throws after being fouled on a desperation 3-pointer as the shot clock was running out, just after Seattle had closed within 77-76 with 1:42 to play.

Collier then followed a Seattle miss with a turnaround jumper before the Lynx hit four more free throws to end the game on a 9-0 run.

Olivia Miles added 13 points and Natasha Howard had 11 for the Lynx (22-6). McBride came up just short of joining Diana Taurasi and A’ja Wilson with 23 points in eight straight games.

Liberty 95, Sky 94

In New York, Sabrina Ionescu scored nine of her 29 points in the final minute, Jonquel Jones made the tiebreaking free throw with 3.4 seconds left and New York rallied to beat Chicago.

The Liberty erased a 12-point deficit in the final five minutes. They trailed 91-85 with less than a minute to play, before Ionescu hit a contested 3-pointer from the corner falling out of bounds, made another 3-pointer and then converted a

three-point play with 15.1 seconds left to tie the game at 94.

Courtney Vandersloot fed Kamilla Cardoso on a pick-and-roll but Cardoso missed the layup and fouled Jones, who made one of the free throws.

Breanna Stewart had 20 points and nine rebounds for the Liberty (15-12). Jones added 14 points and 10 rebounds, and Rebecca Allen scored 12 points. Ionescu was 8 of 11 from the field with five 3-pointers and 8 of 8 from the foul line.

Sydney Taylor had a career-high 31 points for the Sky (9-18). Vandersloot had 14 points and Cardoso scored 10.

Mystics 100, Aces 99

In Washington, Shakira Austin scored 25 points, converting a three-point play after an offensive rebound with 12.8 seconds left, to lead Washington to a victory over Las Vegas.

Austin rebounded Sonia Citron’s miss on a driving layup to cap the Mystics’ rally from nine down with four minutes left. She had 11 points in the rally and Citron, who finished with 20 points, had four in the last minute.

Lauren Betts had 13 points off the bench for the Mystics (13-13), the lowest-scoring team in the league at 79.6 points a game. Kiki Iriafen added 12 points and 10 rebounds, while Michaela Onyenwere and Georgia Amoore both had 10 points.

A’ja Wilson scored 38 points for the Aces (18-8), who go into the All-Star break two games behind league-leading Minnesota. Wilson

was 12-of-16 shooting and made 12 of 13 free throws, but the miss came with 17 seconds left to open the door for Austin. Jackie Young had 24 points and Chelsea Gray 19.

The Aces led 87-78 midway through the fourth quarter but the Mystics were within 96-95 when Citron made a pair of free throws with 43 seconds left.

Wings 101, Fire 97

In Portland, Ore., Jessica Shepard had 18 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists, and Dallas withstood a late rally for a victory over Portland.

Arike Ogunbowale had 24 points and Paige Bueckers added 21 for the Wings, who led by 12 points in the fourth quarter before Portland’s rally.

Dallas (18-9) rebounded from a 99-98 loss at home on to the Liberty on Monday that snapped a six-game winning streak.

Megan DiLeo made a layup and Karlise Samuelson added a 3-pointer that got the Fire within 91-88 with 2:34 left in the game. After Azzi Fudd and Bueckers made consecutive 3-pointers to make it 99-90 with 1:21 to go, DiLeo scored on a running layup and Samuelson capped a steal with a basket to pull the Fire within 99-97.

Portland’s Bridget Carleton missed a jumper from the top of the key at the buzzer.

DiLeo finished with 21 points to lead the Fire (17-10). Formerly Megan Gustafson, DiLeo married David DiLeo in Iowa over the weekend.

Oiwa takes over after Asian Cup

Moriyasu remains Japan boss

TOKYO, July 23, (AP): Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu will continue through next year’s Asian Cup and then step away, Japanese media reported on Thursday.

The Japan Football Association met over the coaching position on Thursday and local media reported that Go Oiwa, who has managed Japan Under-23s, will take over the top team after the Asian Cup.

At the World Cup, Moriyasu guided his team to the round of 32 before losing 2-1 to five-time champion Brazil.

The Asian Cup will be in Saudi Arabia from Jan. 7-Feb. 5 - 24 teams have already qualified and Japan is among the favorites.

Japan will play in Group F with Indonesia, Qatar and Thailand.

Moriyasu took charge after the 2018 World Cup in Russia. He guided Japan to the knockout stage in the 2022 edition in Qatar, losing to Croatia on penalties.



Japan head coach Hajime Moriyasu speaks during a news conference in Tokyo. (AP)

Oiwa had a modest career as a defender and played three times for Japan before moving into coaching in Japan’s domestic league. He’s coached the under-23s since 2021.

Former Japanese star Keisuke Honda said recently he’d be interested in becoming the national coach. Primarily a midfielder, he played 98 times for Japan and in three World Cups, the last in 2018.

Slipper drops out of squad

Wallabies announce first squad under new coach

SYDNEY, July 23, (AP): Les Kiss didn’t tinker much with selections for his first squad as Wallabies head coach, but he predicted “there will be change.”

For Australia’s two-test series against Japan next month, Kiss included only one uncapped player, recalled big, versatile Reds forward Lukhan Salakaia-Loto and left out veteran James Slipper, who recently made a return to international rugby for the Nations Championship.

Kiss took over from Joe Schmidt this week and said he was “a different personality in some ways to Joe’s leadership.”

“How that manifests, we’ll find out,” he said Thursday after unveiling his first squad. “I’ll just be me, driving what it is to be a new ‘us.’”

Center Isaac Henry is the only uncapped player in the squad to take on Japan in Osaka on Aug. 8 and in Townsville, Queensland state, a week later.

Salakaia-Loto and Isaac Kailea are the only other new faces in the 34-player squad that is coming off a win and two losses in the Nations Championship. Kailea replaces Slipper, Australia’s most-capped rugby international, as an option at loosehead prop.

Len Ikitau (ankle) and Tom Hooper (shoulder) were unavailable because of injuries.

No. 8 Harry Wilson leads the squad that will include 19 forwards and 15 backs, and is set to leave Sydney for Japan on Aug. 1.

Australia opened the Nations Championship with losses to Ireland in Sydney and France in Brisbane before beating Italy in Perth, Western Australia over the past three weekends. The Perth match was Schmidt’s

last match in charge.

Schmidt had initially planned to leave the role last October but continued his tenure to allow Kiss to complete his contract at the Brisbane-based Queensland Reds in Super Rugby before taking over as Wallabies head coach through the 2027 Rugby World Cup.

Kiss, who played rugby league for Australia before moving into the coaching ranks in rugby union, was on Schmidt’s coaching staff with Ireland’s national team from late 2013 to 2015.

He said his recall of Salakaia-Loto, who didn’t get a lot of test starts under Schmidt, came after “robust” discussions with coaches.

“He’s worked hard ... he’s ready,” Kiss said. “I want players to be themselves, bring their personalities to the fore. I want them to know our strength is in our diversity and who we are.”

There are limits on how many foreign-based players Wallabies coaches can choose, with preference given to those playing for Australia’s Super Rugby franchises.

“I won’t be afraid to look overseas,” Kiss said of future selections, “but ... respect what we’ve got here.”

Australia squad: Allan Ala’alatoa, Miles Amatoosero, Angus Bell, Charlie Cale, Josh Canham, Isaac Kailea, Fraser McReight, Josh Nasser, Zane Nonggorr, Brandon Paenga-Amosa, Billy Pollard, Aidan Ross, Lukhan Salakaia-Loto, Lachlan Shaw, Carlo Tizzano, Taniela Tupou, Rob Valetini, Jeremy Williams, Harry Wilson (captain), Jock Campbell, Filipo Daugunu, Ben Donaldson, Carter Gordon, Isaac Henry, Max Jorgensen, Ryan Loneragan, Tate McDermott, Declan Meredith, Hunter Paisami, Dylan Pietsch, Harry Potter, Joseph-Aukuso Sualii, Kalani Thomas, Tom Wright.



Best of the Rest

Casemiro joins Inter Miami: Inter Miami announced the signing of Brazil midfielder and five-time Champions League winner Casemiro on Wednesday, and Major League Soccer is now investigating whether the reigning league champion engaged in tampering to get that deal done.

The 34-year-old Casemiro - who appeared in all five of Brazil’s matches at this year’s World Cup, scoring one goal - is under contract with Inter Miami through the end of next year’s sprint season, with an extension option through June 2029.

Casemiro’s discovery rights were held by the LA Galaxy, and by league rule that would have prevented Inter Miami from negotiating with him. (AP)

KU workshop highlights media’s role in sports

Al-Sahli discusses sports media professionalism



Kuwait University officials honored Dr. Al-Sahli in recognition of his contributions during the ‘Professionalism in University Sports Media’ workshop, hosted by the Sports Activities Department.

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Dr. Sattam Al-Sahli, Director of Media at the Kuwait Football Association, delivered a lecture at Kuwait University during a workshop titled “Professionalism in University Sports Media,” organized by the university’s Sports Activities Department.

The workshop explored the media’s role in supporting university sports, improving communication with media outlets, handling media crises, and promoting professional standards in the management and coverage of sporting events.

A sports photography exhibition was held alongside the event, showcasing works by Kuwait Football Association photographer Abdulrahman Al-Ali.

At the conclusion of the workshop, Dr. Al-Sahli thanked Kuwait University, especially Acting Director of Sports Activities Dr. Tariq Dashti and Acting Dean of Student Affairs Dr. Salem Al-Shammari, for organizing the event and creating a platform to exchange knowledge and practical experience.

He said such initiatives help strengthen professional media skills, develop national talent, and improve the quality of sports media coverage in line with Kuwait University’s commitment to excellence and continuous development.

Inter Miami spoils Lewandowski's debut for Fire

Griezmann scores in MLS debut as Orlando City routs Earthquakes

MIAMI, July 23, (AP): Preston Plambeck scored his first career goal in MLS in the 87th minute, Luis Suárez scored two goals, and Inter Miami beat Chicago 3-2 on Wednesday night to spoil Robert Lewandowski's debut for the Fire.

Miami (10-2-4) has won five straight.

Suárez scored three goals, his first hat trick in MLS since 2024, in Miami's last game before the World Cup break, a 6-4 win over Philadelphia.

Suárez had his shot from the center of the area parried by goalkeeper Chris Brady but Plambeck slammed home the rebound.

The Fire took a 1-0 lead on an own goal by goalkeeper Rocco Ríos Novo in the 18th minute. Miami defender Ian Fray played slow, rolling ball to Ríos Novo, but the ball slipped through the goalkeeper's legs as he whiffed on an attempted first-touch pass.

Suárez converted from the spot in the 27th to make it 1-1.

Puso Dithejane subbed on for Philip Zinckernagel in the 62nd minute and scored his first career goal in MLS on a first-touch shot from just inside the penalty area to tie it 2-2 in the 67th.

The 37-year-old Lewandowski signed with the Fire on June 29 and his first MLS appearance was delayed.

Antoine Griezmann scored in his MLS debut, David Brekalo and Iván Angulo each scored his first goal of the season, and Orlando City beat the San Jose Earthquakes 4-0 in the first game for both teams since before the World Cup break.

Griezmann was acquired in March from Atlético Madrid - where he is the club's all-time leading scorer with 211 goals and 97 assists in 488 matches - with the understanding that the 35-year-old forward would report to Orlando after the conclusion of the La Liga season.

Braian Ojeda added a goal for Orlando (5-9-2). Maxime Crépeau had seven saves.

Brekalo was left unmarked and flicked in a header off a perfectly placed free kick played into the center of the area by Eduard Atuesta to open the scoring in the seventh minute.

Milan Iloski opened the scoring in the ninth minute, Indiana Vassilev and Neil Pierre each added a goal,



Portland Timbers defender Kamal Miller scores against Seattle Sounders goalkeeper Andrew Thomas during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Seattle. (AP)

and the Philadelphia Union beat the New York Red Bulls 3-1 for their first win in more than three months.

The Union (2-10-4), who went into the World Cup break winless in eight straight, got their first win since a 2-1 victory at Montreal on April 11.

Vassilev gave the Union a 2-1 lead in the 57th. Frankie Westfield played and arcing ball-in from the right sideline to the back post and Vassilev's volley deflected off defender Jakkee Marshall-Rutty a slipped past a diving Horvath.

Pavel Bucha scored two goals Wednesday night to help FC Cincinnati beat the Vancouver Whitecaps 4-3.

Evander Da Silva Ferreira - known simply as "Evander" - added a goal and an assist for Cincinnati and Kevin Denkey also scored a goal. Roman Celentano had three saves for Cincinnati (6-5-5).

Evander scored on the counter-attack to give Cincinnati a 3-2



Chicago Fire forward Robert Lewandowski, left, competes for the ball against Inter Miami defender Ian Fray, right, during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Miami. (AP)

lead in the 36th minute. As the defense raced back to set up, Evander paused just outside the top of the

penalty box and blasted a shot off the left post for his 10th goal this season.

Nicolás Fernández scored on a first-half penalty kick and Agustín Ojeda found the net in the second half to help New York City FC hold off the Columbus Crew 2-1.

NYCFC (6-6-4) took a 1-0 lead in the 28th minute on the PK by Fernández. It was the 10th goal this season for the 26-year-old after scoring three in 11 matches as a rookie last year. The kick was awarded after Ojeda was fouled by Crew midfielder Max Arsten.

Sam Surridge scored on a penalty pick and Nashville SC beat CF Montreal 1-0 to extend its win streak to five games.

Nashville (12-1-3), which beat Atlanta 1-0 on Friday night, is unbeaten in 10 straight and leads MLS with 39 points.

Surridge converted from the spot to open the scoring in the 68th minute. The 27-year-old forward has 10 goals in 10 appearances (six starts) this season.

Brian Schwake had two saves for Nashville.

Dejan Joveljić scored in the first half, and Manu García found the net in the second to help Sporting Kansas City hold off Minnesota United 2-1.

Joveljić used assists from rookies Capemba and Lasse Berg Johnsen to score his team-leading seventh goal of the season and give Sporting KC (4-10-2) a 1-0 lead in the 28th minute that stood through halftime.

Capemba's assist was his first in his 10th career appearance and Berg Johnsen collected his fourth in 13 matches.

Myrto Uzuni scored the go-ahead goal late in the second half and Christian Ramírez added some insurance in stoppage time as Austin beat Seattle 3-1 to end a three-match losing streak and hand the Sounders a fourth straight defeat.

Defender Loïc Williams scored in the sixth minute of second-half stoppage time in his MLS debut to rally the Colorado Rapids to a 1-0 victory over San Diego FC.

Williams used assists from Paxten Aaronson and Dante Sealy to score the winner after the Rapids acquired the 24-year-old back in March from Spain's Granada CF.

Aaronson has five assists this season after not collecting any in his previous 44 appearances since 2021. Sealy also has five assists, already a career high after picking up three through his first 68 appearances.

Son Heung-min scored a goal for the second consecutive game, Denis Bouanga added a goal, and Los Angeles FC beat Real Salt Lake 3-1.

Hugo Lloris, who leads MLS with nine shutouts this season, had six saves for LAFC (9-5-3).

Son, who scored his first goal this season Friday in a 3-0 win over the LA Galaxy, opened the scoring in the 11th minute. The 34-year-old forward pushed the ball wide to his left to create space from a defender and then blasted his next touch inside the near post from the end of the penalty arc.

Lukas MacNaughton and Marcel Hartel scored four minutes apart late in the first half to break open St. Louis City's 3-1 victory over the LA Galaxy.

Simon Becher scored in the second half after Galaxy defender Emiro Garcés was sent off in the 49th minute with his second yellow card, and St. Louis cruised to its third straight win.

St. Louis, which is unbeaten in six straight since early May, also leapfrogged the Galaxy into the Western Conference's playoff positions with this victory.

‘Six years is perfectly fine in construction, even under stress conditions’

Olympic countdown clock raises venue timeline questions for Brisbane 2032

BRISBANE, Australia, July 23, (AP): A pesky native bird appeared on the podium almost on cue as organizers prepared to unveil a countdown clock marking six years to go until the 2032 Olympics.

Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner noted the timely white ibis in his welcoming remarks, joking with the crowd that it wouldn't be an event in Brisbane without the appearance of a "bin chicken," as the bird is colloquially known.

There's a small, humorous push locally for the ibis to become a mascot for the Brisbane Games rather than one of Australia's more widely known native animals such as the kangaroo or the koala.

Schrinner didn't miss a beat and the bird moved off before the big digital Omega clock officially started counting down Thursday in the downtown Queen Street mall.

That was a matter of hours after the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority published revamped designs for the National Aquatic Center that



Australian Olympian Emma McKeon, left, and Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee President Andrew Liveris pose at the unveiling of the count-down clock marking six years until the Brisbane 2032 Olympics, in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

will host Olympic events.

The new clock put even more emphasis on the diminishing time for construction for the Olympics, with no major works yet underway on the 3.6 billion Australian dollar (\$2.6 billion) main stadium

almost five years after Brisbane was awarded rights to the Summer Games.

Andrew Liveris, president of the Brisbane 2032 organizing committee, said there's no cause for panic.

"Six years is perfectly fine in construction, even under stress conditions," he said. "I'm very confident that the contingencies are built (in) to allow that to happen."

Liveris said he briefed IOC president Kirsty Coventry as recently as Monday in New York, in the wake of the World Cup final.

"We had a long conversation about timelines, venues, sports, and we're confident it's not 6 minutes to midnight," he said.

The International Olympic Committee last year backed the Queensland government's revised venue plan after several false starts, saying the Brisbane Games were "on the right path."

There are still groups opposed to building major sports venues in the downtown parklands, and more general concern over rising costs of staging the Games.

GIICA, the coordination authority, only took over possession of the Victoria Park site for the 63,000-seat main stadium last month, after police removed protesters.

Saliba to be sidelined for 'extended period'

LONDON, July 23, (AP): Arsenal center back William Saliba will avoid back surgery but faces an "extended period" in rehabilitation, the defending Premier League champion.

The 25-year-old France international was substituted out of his national team's 2-0 semifinal loss to France at the World Cup in the first half.

Arsenal confirmed in a medical update that Saliba sustained a back injury.

"Extensive assessments have concluded that surgery is not recommended, but William should now commence a managed recovery program," Arsenal said in a statement.

"William's rehabilitation will commence immediately, with continual management of his injury, and he is expected to be out of action for an extended period."

Mikel Arteta's team begins its title defense on Aug. 21 against newly promoted

Coventry.

The Scottish Football Association has handed new Rangers manager Derek McInnes a four-match ban for his critical comments about a disputed penalty that benefited Celtic in last season's title race.

Then-Hearts coach McInnes had called the stoppage-time penalty decision "actually quite disgusting" after Celtic beat Motherwell 3-2 in the penultimate game to put it on course for its record 56th Scottish league title.

On Wednesday, the Scottish FA issued the four-match touchline ban with one suspended until the end of the 2026-27 season. Rangers responded by saying it would appeal the ruling.

"We do not believe Derek's view on a match-defining decision amounted to an attack on the competence or integrity of match officials," the Glasgow club said in a statement.

Zidane expected to be unveiled as France boss in coming days

Germany set to appoint Klopp as new national team coach

FRANKFURT, Germany, July 23, (AP): The German soccer federation has called a news conference for Friday when it is expected to present Jürgen Klopp as the next national coach.

In a brief announcement on Thursday, the federation didn't give a reason for the event scheduled for Friday morning at its Frankfurt headquarters.

The former Liverpool manager has been the preferred candidate ever since Julian Nagelsmann resigned following Germany's shock loss on penalties to Paraguay in the World Cup round of 32.

Klopp held talks with Germany officials in New York while working there as a TV expert at the World Cup, and the federation said on July 11 they reached an agreement on "essential key points" of a contract.

At that time, the main obstacle was getting the agreement of drinks giant Red Bull, where Klopp has been working for the last year and a half as head of global soccer, overseeing the network of Red Bull-backed clubs around the world.

Klopp hasn't coached since he left Liverpool in 2024, citing fatigue. He said this month he felt "recharged" and ready for another job.

France's new coach will be announced next Tuesday, when Zinedine Zidane is widely expected to replace Didier Deschamps.

The French Football Federation said in a statement on Thursday that

its president Philippe Diallo will name the coach at a news conference at the headquarters in Paris.

The 54-year-old Zidane has not coached since leaving Real Madrid in 2021. The midfield great coached Madrid to three straight Champions League titles from 2016-18.

Deschamps was in charge of France for 14 years and stepped down after the World Cup, where Les Bleus lost in the semifinals to Spain.

France won the World Cup under Deschamps in 2018 and lost the final on penalties in 2022. Les Bleus also lost the European Championship final on home soil in 2016.

Zinedine was France's playmaker when it won the 1998 World Cup, scoring twice in the final in a 3-0 win against Brazil, and starred two years later when France won the European Championship. He won the men's Ballon d'Or in 1998.

Zidane played 108 games for France scoring 31 goals, including a deft Panenka-style penalty in the 2006 World Cup final, which Les Bleus lost after he was sent off in extra time for headbutting Italian defender Marco Materazzi in the chest.

France's next games are away to Turkey in the Nations League on Sept. 25, followed by a match in Belgium three days later. France then faces Italy at the Stade de France on Oct. 2.

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NEWS



Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey celebrates on the podium after the eighteenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race, with start in Voiron and finish in Orcieres-Merlette, France. (AP)

Carapaz wins Alpine stage

Pogacar keeps grip on yellow jersey



Ecuador's Richard Carapaz celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the eighteenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race, with start in Voiron and finish in Orcieres-Merlette, France. (AP)

ORCIERES-MERLETTE, France, July 23, (AP): Ecuadorian rider Richard Carapaz timed his attack perfectly in the final climb to win the 18th stage of the Tour de France on Thursday, while Tadej Pogacar finished a few minutes behind and maintained his significant overall lead.

It was the 33-year-old Carapaz's first stage win at this year's race and second overall. He was not chased down by Pogacar because he is not considered a threat to win the Tour, and is in 10th spot.

"This is a wonderful victory," Carapaz said. "I dedicate it to my family." After moving ahead about 3 kilometers (2 miles) from the summit, Carapaz raced clear. He patted each side of his head as he approached the finish line, and was 45 seconds ahead of Swiss rider Mauro Schmid and American Matteo Jorgenson.

"It's been a special day. It took a lot of hard work," said Carapaz, who failed to win with a similar breakaway earlier in this year's race. "This is the most rewarding thing for me, knowing that the work I put in has paid off."

Pogacar is chasing a third straight Tour title and fifth overall. The Slovenian star rolled over the line in a large group containing his closest rival Remco Evenepoel and Pogacar's UAE Emirates XRG teammate Isaac Del Toro.

There was no change overall as Pogacar maintained his lead of 4 minutes, 32 seconds over the Belgian time trial star Evenepoel, the winner of two stages at this year's race, and 6:51 over the 22-year-old Mexican Del Toro in third overall. Thursday's stage was the first of three straight days of Alpine climbs.

The 185-kilometer (115-mile) trek featured an early Category 1 climb - the second-hardest category - up Côte d'Engins, before ending with a Cat. 1 ascent to the Orcieres-Merlette ski station.

After going over Engins, Jorgenson was in a small group at the front. They were then joined by Carapaz with Pogacar's yellow jersey group clearly hanging back. "I think nobody would really commit," said Pogacar, who has won four stages at this year's race.

Carapaz's stage could have ended when he had a near miss with a fan stood in the road, just swerving around him in time.

Heading into the final climb up Orcieres-Merlette, Jorgenson and Schmid could not respond when Carapaz, who won the 2019 Giro d'Italia, attacked.

"This final climb was tough and suited my strengths well," said Carapaz, whose other Tour stage win came in 2024. "This was a hard-fought victory, but just as tough as the first one. It gets harder every year to win here."

Friday's 19th stage ends with a HC climb (the hardest category) up L'Alpe d'Huez, an iconic Tour climb and among the most famed in cycling.

Saturday's 20th and penultimate stage is brutal and could be epic. It features three HC climbs - Col de la Croix de Fer, Col du Galibier and Col de Sarenne - and one Cat. 1 climb up Col du Télégraphe, before a hilly finish to L'Alpe d'Huez.

Al-Nasr bolsters volleyball squad with 3 local signings

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Al-Nasr has added three local players to its first-team volleyball squad as part of its preparations for the 2026-27 season.

The club secured the services of Mohammed Al-Bahri from Burgan, Ali Al-Marhoon from Al-Qadsia, and Nawaf Al-Balushi from Al-Arabi to strengthen the team ahead of the new campaign.

The latest moves are part of Al-Nasr's plan to reinforce the squad with quality talent, improve its technical capabilities, and increase its chances of competing for domestic honours.

The "Red" team has also maintained continuity by renewing the contract of Montenegrin head coach Darko, as the club looks to preserve technical stability and build on its ambitions for the upcoming season.

Al-Nasr has further boosted its roster with the addition of foreign players Cuban Kelly Bryant and Brazilian Renan Salton, bringing more experience and depth to the squad.

The club had earlier completed local deals for Jassim Al-Sabbaghah, who will occupy the No. 4 position and Mohammed Al-Ali in the setter role.

First-team volleyball manager Mohammed Al-Daihani said the new arrivals will play an important role in strengthening Al-Nasr's squad.

He added that the management carefully selected players capable of raising the team's performance level and helping the club remain a strong contender for all domestic titles next season.



In this file photo, players vie for the ball during league match.

Sports

Handball youth team faces Saudi Arabia in decisive World Cup qualifier

Kuwait drawn into challenging Group B for Asian Games



Kuwait Handball Association's referees committee begins its preparation programme ahead of the new season.

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Kuwait has been placed in a challenging Group B for the 20th Asian Games, set to take place in Aichi and Nagoya, Japan.

The draw saw the Blues grouped with Bahrain, South Korea, Iran, and Kazakhstan, while Group A features host Japan, alongside Qatar, China, and Hong Kong.

Group B is widely regarded as the tournament's toughest section, with several established Asian handball powers competing for qualification spots in the knockout stages.

Kuwait has already started preparations for the continental event, with training sessions getting underway at the Martyr Fahad Al-Ahmad Hall at the Kuwait Handball Association headquarters in Dasma.

Under Icelandic head coach Aron Kristjánsson, the opening sessions focused on rebuilding fitness levels and regaining match sharpness following the recent break. The team also continued its training programme at Spark Health Club in Shuwaikh.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's youth national handball team faces a crucial showdown against Saudi Arabia today in the Asian Championship quarter-finals in China.

The knockout encounter carries major significance, as victory would secure Kuwait a place in the semi-finals and guarantee qualification for the World Youth Handball Championship.

Kuwait Handball Association Secretary-General Qaied Al-Adwani praised the team's achievement in reaching the last eight despite facing difficult conditions.

He highlighted that Kuwait was the only side forced to play four consecutive matches without a rest day, unlike the other participating teams, calling the schedule unprecedented in official competitions.

Al-Adwani also commended the efforts of the coaching staff, administrators, and players for overcoming challenges and maintaining their pursuit of the tournament's objectives.

Elsewhere, the Kuwait Handball Association's referees committee has begun its preparation programme ahead of the new season.

The programme, held at the Martyr Fahad Al-Ahmad Hall, will include two phases: a domestic training stage followed by an overseas camp in Slovenia.

Referees committee member Abdulrahman Al-Mulla praised the support of the Handball Association and the Public Authority for Sport, saying the programme is designed to raise the level of Kuwaiti officials and improve their performances in local and international competitions.

Kuwait Club set for London camp, Al-Nasr to prepare in Cairo

Ashour: Al-Salmiya targeting every domestic title

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 23: Al-Salmiya head coach Ali Ashour says his side is determined to challenge for all domestic honours as preparations gather pace for the new soccer season.

Ashour said the club's ambition is to return to the winners' circle by delivering consistent performances across every competition. He added that pre-season training has begun with a strong turnout of players, while the remaining foreign professionals are expected to join the squad shortly.

Al-Salmiya has already secured the services of Uzbek Shahzod Azmiddinov and Bahraini Abdullah Yousif. Brazilian Alex Lima is expected to continue with the club, while a decision is still pending on the future of Syrian defender Mahmoud Al-Aswad. The club has, however, confirmed the departures of Syrian Amro Midani and Bahraini Sayed Diaa.

The Bahraini coach revealed that some players are undergoing double training sessions to regain full fitness after the extended break in domestic competitions.

As part of their preparations, Al-



Ashour addresses Al-Salmiya players ahead of training.

Salmiya will travel to Izmit, Turkey, for a pre-season training camp, where they are scheduled to play four friendly matches ahead of the new campaign.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club departs for London today to begin its overseas training camp, which will feature several warm-up matches as the club prepares for the season.

The reigning Kuwait Premier League champion is aiming to fine-

tune the squad ahead of its domestic title defence while also gearing up for its AFC Champions League Two campaign.

Elsewhere, Al-Nasr will hold its pre-season camp in Cairo from Aug. 1 to Aug. 20, with friendly matches lined up against Libya's Al Ahli Tripoli, Egypt's ZED FC, and Saudi club Al-Nejmeh.

Head coach Dhafer Al-Adwani is looking to raise the team's fitness

levels and ensure the squad is fully prepared before the Kuwait Premier League season gets underway on Aug. 25.

Tunisian Hazem Haj, Malian Moriba Diarra, and Sudanese Abdulrahman Koko have already joined Al-Nasr's training sessions, while Algerian Aymen Lakjaa and Mauritanian Sidi Yacoub are expected to link up with the team during the Cairo camp.

Trump role in World Cup red-card ruling for Balogun pushes Norway toward ethics complaint

GENEVA, July 23, (AP): U.S. President Donald Trump's role in clearing Folarin Balogun from a mandatory one-game ban at the World Cup is set to provoke a formal complaint to FIFA ethics investigators.

The Norway soccer federation said Thursday its board of directors will consider filing the complaint at its next meeting, likely on Aug. 6.

"We need our leader in FIFA to say that this was an error," Norwegian federation president Lise Klaveness told London daily The Times in an interview published Thursday.

After Trump called FIFA president Gianni Infantino, a one-game ban for Balogun's red-card tackle against Bosnia-Herzegovina was deferred so he could play against Belgium with a quarter-finals place at stake.

Belgium beat the U.S. 4-1 after a chaotic 36 hours at the World Cup. The Belgium players were seemingly fired up by one of the all-time controversies in tournament history.

Trump called the referee's red card for Balogun after video review a "horrible" call and took

credit for getting FIFA to review what should routinely have been a one-game ban.

"We all know that this verdict was influenced from external forces and did not have the proper process," Klaveness told The Times of the FIFA ruling that was unprecedented in the past 60 years at World Cups.

"When you bend a rule like this, you're on a slippery slope that will put the whole game at risk," said the former Women's World Cup player for Norway, who is an elected member of European soccer body UEFA's executive committee.

Klaveness is a lawyer and judge who has positioned the Norwegian federation as a conscience in world soccer since her election in 2022.

"It is a worry for the game when you compromise fundamental rules of the game," she said Thursday about not enforcing Balogun's ban.

Norway previously joined a London-based NGO's complaint to the FIFA ethics committee alleging Infantino breached a statutory duty of political neutrality, including by creating a peace

prize to award to Trump at the World Cup draw in December.

The close personal and political ties between Trump and Infantino include the U.S. president believing the soccer official could be a good pick as next secretary general of the United Nations, the New York Post reported this week.

The human rights NGO, FairSquare, also has filed an ethics complaint about the Balogun incident to the International Olympic Committee, where Infantino is an elected member, about breaching its rules on political neutrality.

FIFA and the IOC rarely acknowledge or provide updates on potential cases before their ethics bodies.

The independence of FIFA's process to handle complaints alleging unethical conduct has been questioned since the lead investigator and judge both were replaced in 2017, in the second year of Infantino's presidency.

FIFA has yet to publish documents explaining how its disciplinary judges reached verdicts about Balogun or other World Cup players.