



Opinion

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef ... blessed be your actions ... Iraq is our neighbor, and we share a history

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

“THE relationship between Kuwait and Iraq is strong and unshakeable. Whoever harbors ill intentions towards either of us must be dealt with fiercely,” First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef said in Basra, which he visited after the Iranian-backed militias bombed the Abdaly border crossing.

This statement contains many important truths that must be considered. Geography is indisputable, as well as the neighborly relations and political, commercial and social ties. The First Deputy Prime Minister spoke with the wisdom that should prevail among neighbors.

It is true that there are illegitimate militias in Iraq, but in the end, Iraq and Kuwait remain. These gangs will disappear with the demise of the Iranian regime, which corrupted the popular relations between all the Gulf states and the Iraqi people.

The calculations of nations are not based on emotions, but on strategic interests. It was on this basis that the Minister of Interior made his visit to Basra and his meeting with its governor.

Since assuming his position as First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef has been leveraging his personal relationships with officials or leaders in the Gulf and the Arab world to serve his country. This investment has yielded numerous benefits, resulting in a more robust internal security.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef works, not just in words but in deeds, to refute rumors that flooded social me-

dia and some Arab and foreign media outlets, rumors aimed at harming the Gulf states, and damaging relations between Kuwait and Iraq.

Some have tried to sow discord and undermine the deep-rooted relationship between the two peoples. Even the Iraqi invasion, with all its wounds, could not tear apart the unified fabric of the two nations.

Therefore, the First Deputy Prime Minister’s statement, “Whoever harbors ill intentions towards either of us must be dealt with fiercely,” is not directed solely to the Iraqi public. It is a very clear political message to all troublemakers in the region, including the Iranian-backed militias or groups keen on destabilizing relations between the two countries.

From a political perspective, the visit of Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef to Basra at this sensitive time is a stroke of genius from an official who manages internal and external security files and is privy to all

the details.

Thus, the visit of Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef confirmed that no power can separate the destinies of Iraq and Kuwait. No one should dream of driving a wedge between the two countries.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef bases his steps on facts and interests, while carefully learning from past lessons in a calm and wise manner in order to rebuild on solid ground, not on shifting sands that could be affected by any external developments.

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Kuwait rejects Red Sea chaos

Diplomacy window opens as airstrikes pause

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (Agencies): The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry on Sunday strongly condemned and denounced the repeated attacks by the Houthi militia on ships in the Red Sea, the last of which was on Saudi ship NCA MASA while sailing in the Red Sea.

In a press release, the ministry termed the attacks as a blatant breach of international law and a direct threat to the security and freedom of maritime navigation and the safety of international trade.

It underlined Kuwait’s full solidarity with the King-

dom of Saudi Arabia and its support for all measures it takes to safeguard its sovereignty and protect its security and interests.

The ministry stressed that it is necessary to abide by international law rules that ensure the freedom and safety of navigation in international waterways.

Yemen’s Iran-backed Houthi rebels said Saturday that they fired missiles and drones at Saudi Arabia in response to Saudi airstrikes on the strategic Red Sea city of Hodeida, in an escalation over vital shipping routes in the Middle East while the United States and Iran vie for control of the Strait of Hormuz.

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Day by Day

A FRIEND once said that some people live like sex workers. They spend their nights in the company of the wealthy, dancing and engaging in acts forbidden by religion and rejected by society. They lead lives of vice under the cover of darkness, then at dawn cloak themselves in virtue, preaching patience, good conduct, and endurance to the poor. They urge others to bear hunger and poverty in the hope of attaining paradise, while they fill their own bellies with ill-gotten gains.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

\$16bn Shaheen project seen as catalyst for foreign investment

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Oil expert and analyst Kamel Al-Harami revealed that the 13 pipelines included in the Shaheen project -- from the local production fields to the northern, southern and eastern parts of the country -- directly feed into the ports and marine export facilities.

In a statement to the newspaper, Al-Harami wondered about the reasons behind the absence of the local private sector and its failure to participate in this major deal. He called on Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) to allocate 10 percent of its 51 percent stake to the private sector to ensure the circulation of local capital in the national oil wealth. He believes that the \$16 billion

Shaheen deal will increase the volume of foreign capital invested in Kuwait from \$2 billion to \$18 billion. He said this increase will encourage foreign capital to enter the Kuwaiti market, whether in the oil sector or other economic sectors.

He added that this deal will boost confidence in the State of Kuwait and the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), while confirming the transformation of Kuwait into an attractive environment for foreign direct investment. He stressed that the involvement of three American companies in this deal is a clear proof of its success. He stated that the contract period for the project is 20 years and it is renewable.

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Al-Harami

Kuwait inks contract for northern Kabd wastewater treatment plant with China

— Details Page 5 —



PM Diwan photo

Kuwait-China signing ceremony for the Northern Kabd Wastewater Treatment Plant construction, operation and maintenance project.

Commerce strengthens crisis readiness

Kuwait enhances food stock vigilance

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, represented by the Department of Commercial Control and Consumer Protection, organized a visit for representatives of the Ministry of Interior to its Control Room as part of efforts to enhance cooperation and coordination between government entities, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the visit, the Ministry of Interior representatives were briefed on the work mechanisms of the Control Room, which monitors the activities of cooperative societies and food supply branches (for subsidized food items) in all governorates, in addition to monitoring the availability of food stocks and the smooth flow of essential goods.

The ministry affirmed that the Control Room continuously monitors the availability of essential goods, contributing to enhanced food security and market stability.

In addition, the ministry emphasized its full readiness to implement emergency plans to ensure the continued availability of essential goods under all possible circumstances.

Military pact covers training, intelligence, scientific and technological fields

Kuwait ratifies defense cooperation agreement with Pakistan

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Decree-Law No. 73/2026 approving the agreement between the governments of the State of Kuwait and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on cooperation in the defense field, was published in the official gazette, ‘Kuwait Al-Youm’, on Sunday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This agreement was signed in the State of Kuwait on June 11, 2023.

The Decree-Law was ratified after reviewing the Constitution and the Amiri Order issued on May 10, 2024, and as per the proposal of the

Minister of Foreign Affairs with the approval of the Council of Ministers.

The Decree-Law stipulates that the ministers, each within their jurisdiction, shall implement its provisions, and it shall take effect from the date of its publication in the official gazette.

The explanatory memorandum stated that the agreement affirms the political and diplomatic understanding, religious ties, traditions and heritage between the two countries, and strengthens their cooperation, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Article One of the Decree-Law defines the basis for cooperation in the fields of defense and armed forces training, according to the applicable local laws and regulations of each party and their international obligations.

The agreement covers cooperation in military training, education, armed forces, logistics, exchange of personnel, experts, technicians and specialists, scientific and technological fields, military intelligence, information and electronic

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48°C heat, dust-raising winds set to hit Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): The Kuwait Meteorological Department has forecast active dust-raising winds across the country on Monday, beginning around midday, potentially reducing horizontal visibility, particularly in open areas.

Director of the Forecasting Department Dhirar Al-Ali said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that Kuwait will be affected by an extension of a surface low-pressure system accompanied by a

very hot air mass.

Northwesterly winds are expected to be light to moderate, occasionally strengthening to between 15 and 55 km/h, stirring sand and dust and leading to reduced visibility.

Al-Ali noted that wind speeds will peak during the day, with sea waves rising to up to 6 feet, before easing at night as dust begins to settle and visibility improves.

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Photo by Samer Shiqer

A man crosses a street as Kuwait experiences sweltering temperatures on Sunday.

KD 40 mark

Kuwait gold shines despite headwinds

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): Prices of precious metals in Kuwait continued to be influenced by global market developments, with the price of 24-karat gold reaching around KD 40,800 per gram (approximately \$132), while 22-karat gold was priced at around KD 37,400 per gram (approximately \$121). The price of one kilogram of silver reached around KD 684 (approximately \$2,222).

According to a report by Kuwait’s Dar Al-Sabaek Company, local precious metal prices remain closely linked to international market movements, particularly fluctuations in gold prices driven by changes in monetary policies, energy prices, and geopolitical developments.

Globally, gold prices ended last week’s trading at \$4,054 per ounce, recording limited weekly gains after recovering from losses in the previous session. Markets remained cautious amid escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and rising global energy prices.

Dar Al-Sabaek’s report stated that gold continues to face pressure despite its recent gains, as expectations increase that interest rates will remain elevated for a longer period. This has reduced the appeal of gold as a non-yielding asset.

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10 Mol honors NBK's Head of Anti-Financial Crime & CSO



10 KFH launches 'ONE VISION' leadership development program to empower future leaders

8 Gulf Bank contributes \$3 mln to the Kuwait Emergency Response Fund



HH the Amir

British PM

UK PM reaffirms support for Kuwait in call with HH Amir

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a phone call on Sunday from UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham.

During the call, His Highness congratulated Burnham on his appointment by King Charles III to serve as Prime Minister and form the new British government.

The two sides reviewed the longstanding relations between Kuwait and the United Kingdom and discussed several topics of mutual interest, as well as the latest regional and international developments, particularly the current situation in the region.

Prime Minister Burnham reaffirmed his country's support for Kuwait and its people, stressing the UK's backing for all measures aimed at safeguarding Kuwait's sovereignty, security and stability.

His Highness the Amir expressed his appreciation to the British Prime Minister, wishing him good health and success in leading his country toward further progress and prosperity, and extending his best wishes for continued development to the British people.



HH the Amir

HH the Crown Prince

HH the Amir receives Crown Prince, Premier, Ministers

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness also received First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Crown Prince audiences

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Sunday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness also received First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



Planting mangrove in the Jabra Reserve.



Growing mangrove in the laboratory.

Bid to align with SDGs

EPA: Mangrove plays vital role to preserve coastal systems, climate

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): The Environment Public Authority (EPA) has called for stronger support for national efforts to preserve coastal ecosystems through mangrove cultivation, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and enhancing Kuwait's capacity to face climate challenges and safeguard natural resources for future generations.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) marking the International Day for the Protection of Mangroves, observed annually on July 26, EPA Public Relations and Media Director Shaikha Al-Ibrahim said the occasion serves as a reminder of the need to protect this vital environmental resource and its role in sustaining coastal ecosystems.

Al-Ibrahim affirmed the Authority's continued commitment to strengthening coastal sustainability, highlighting mangroves as a key natural asset that supports biodiversity, protects shorelines from erosion, and mitigates climate change through carbon absorption and storage.

She noted that Kuwait has made notable progress in mangrove cultivation and rehabilitation, with the EPA leading a national project across several coastal sites, particularly at the Jabra Nature Reserve.



KUNA photos
Shaikha Al-Ibrahim planting a mangrove.

The Authority has successfully cultivated mangrove seedlings in laboratory settings and adapted them to local environmental conditions, contributing to improved habitats for birds and marine life and supporting biodiversity within the reserve.

Al-Ibrahim added that the EPA has carried out multiple mangrove planting campaigns in cooperation with government entities, the private sector, civil society organizations, volunteer groups and diplomatic missions, underscoring that environmental protection is a shared national responsibility.

These initiatives have expanded mangrove coverage, raised public awareness of their ecological importance, and delivered positive impacts on coastal ecosystems, including attracting birdlife to the reserve.

The EPA will continue to implement monitoring and evaluation programs to ensure the sustainability of mangrove growth, alongside awareness and educational initiatives aimed at promoting environmental stewardship and encouraging community participation in conservation efforts.

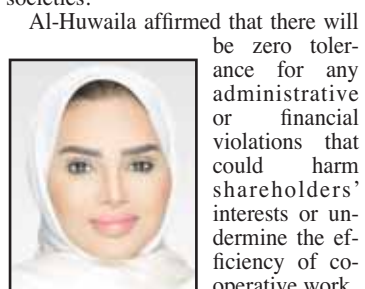
Upgrading co-op sector is among top gov't priorities: Dr Al-Huwaila

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila affirmed that developing the cooperative sector is a priority in the ministry's plans, given its important role in regulating cooperative activities, monitoring the performance of cooperative societies, and ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

During an inspection tour on Sunday of the cooperative sector at the ministry's headquarters in the Ministries Complex, Al-Huwaila said field visits provide an opportunity to directly assess work progress, listen to the views of employees and clients, and identify actual needs, helping to make informed decisions and improve procedures.

She stressed the importance of fully adhering to the regulations and deci-

sions governing cooperative work and ensuring that they are applied fairly and transparently in all cooperative societies.



Dr Al-Huwaila

holders' funds is a top priority for the ministry through strict oversight, moni-

toring the integrity of financial and administrative procedures, and ensuring that cooperative societies' resources are directed towards benefiting shareholders and residents of the areas they serve.

Al-Huwaila called for greater coordination among departments within the cooperative sector, the standardization of procedures and work mechanisms, and improved communication with cooperative societies to ensure prompt handling of feedback and inquiries.

She reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to continuously reviewing and developing the cooperative work system to keep pace with changes, strengthen governance, integrity, and accountability, and enhance the economic and social role of cooperative societies in serving citizens and the community.

Code sets check on teachers decorum

Move to give education impetus, integrity: Al-Tabtabaei

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei has issued a decision adopting a nationwide Teacher Code of Conduct, establishing a unified ethical and professional framework for educators across Kuwait, according to a press release from the Ministry of Education.

The ministry said the code will serve as a reference governing the conduct of teachers and those in educational and supervisory roles in both public and private sectors, reinforcing values of integrity, responsibility and mutual respect while supporting efforts to enhance education quality and create a safe, stimulating school environment.

The move forms part of broader efforts to develop the education system and strengthen professional practices, with the ministry emphasizing that teachers remain central to advancing learning outcomes and shaping future generations.

Described as a comprehensive ethical charter, the code outlines teachers' rights and responsibilities, promotes transparency and profes-

sionalism, and reflects national legislation and best educational practices while respecting Kuwaiti societal values.



Al-Tabtabaei

It sets out core principles including professional responsibility, integrity, justice, citizenship, collaboration and continuous development, aimed at fostering trust within the educational community and improving institutional performance.

The code details teachers' duties toward students, including mastery of subject content, adoption of modern teaching methods and technologies, fair and objective assessment, safeguarding student privacy, and nurturing talent in a safe learning environment free from exploitation.

It also underscores the importance of transparent communication with parents, promoting accurate reporting of students' academic and behavioral progress while maintaining strict confidentiality.

At the institutional level, educators are required to comply with laws and regulations, respect administrative structures, protect confidential

information, and refrain from making unauthorized public statements or publishing official materials.

The code further highlights teachers' responsibilities toward society, including upholding national values, contributing to community initiatives, and aligning education with societal needs.

Additional provisions address supervisory roles, emphasizing fairness in human resource management, equal opportunity, and efficient use of public resources, alongside fostering a workplace environment that supports innovation.

The ministry also outlined prohibited practices, including misuse of position for personal gain, acceptance of gifts, dissemination of unauthorized information, and improper use of social media or official branding.

Clear reporting and accountability mechanisms have been established for violations, ranging from warnings to formal investigations and disciplinary measures in line with applicable regulations.

The ministry said the code will be implemented through training and professional development programs, with periodic reviews to ensure alignment with ongoing reforms and to further strengthen the quality and sustainability of education in Kuwait.

Other Voices

Elif Shafak's novel

By Ahmad alsarraf

It is said that man is an enemy of what he does not know. It is also said that the more we learn, the more we realize how little we know.

When a person reads, learns, researches, and asks questions, they discover new things and, consequently, realise how much they were ignorant of. If a person did not read and research, they would think they knew and understood everything. But the discovery of new information reveals what they were previously unaware of. That is why they say that the dead do not know they are dead, nor are they aware of the weeping of those around them or the funeral and burial arrangements. But everyone around them knows that they have passed away.

A foolish or ignorant person often does not know that he is a fool, but everyone around him knows it.

I have recently finished reading a wonderful novel by the internationally acclaimed Turkish-British author Elif Shafak, titled "There Are Rivers in the Sky."

The novel revolves around the Epic of Gilgamesh, the discovery of the clay tablets which tell the century-long suffering of the Yazidi people in Iraq, and many other fascinating topics. The novel is of the encyclopedic type, blending fact, fiction, and emotion.

Some aspects of the novel prompted me to research the culture and history of the Yazidis. I found that the origin of the name is a matter of debate among scholars, but the most prevalent opinion attributes it to Yazid ibn Mu'awiya. I don't see a connection to the Yazidis, though they are not Muslim. Others believe the name is derived from an ancient Persian word like Yazd or Ezid, meaning "holy," "devoted," or "God." This might suggest that their origins trace back to the ancient Persian province of Yazd. However, there is no definitive proof.

The Yazidis adhere to a monotheistic religion with ancient roots, believing in one God, the creator of the universe. They do not allow conversion to this religion, as it is non-proselytizing, and they do not have a prophet or messenger like those in the Abrahamic religions. Some scholars view the Yazidis as an extension or a blend of ancient religions in Mesopotamia and Iran. Perhaps their origins lie in Islamic sects, from which they later separated, as did the Druze.

The Yazidis are of Indo-European origin, like the Persians and Kurds, and their language is Kurdish. Their dialect is called Kurmanji. Historically, the Yazidis have lived in northern Iraq and have a unique understanding of good and evil.

Due to their beliefs and practices, they have been subjected to genocides throughout history, the most recent being in 2014 at the hands of ISIS, particularly in the Sinjar region. This occurred after the Kurdish Peshmerga forces abandoned them by suddenly withdrawing from Sinjar before the attack, leaving them without adequate protection. This event reinforced a sense among some of the need for the Yazidis to return and assert their distinct identity, separate from the broader Kurdish one.

The Yazidis perform their prayers individually, facing the sun. One of their holy holidays is the Yazidi New Year, which they celebrate in their holy city of Lalish. Their population is estimated to be between 500,000 and 1.5 million, and they reside in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, Russia, and Germany.

In short, the novel "There Are Rivers in the Sky" is worth reading.



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10 years for Syrian gang in huge laundering case

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: The State Security and Terrorism Crimes Court sentenced a gang of nine Syrians to 10 years in prison after convicting them in one of the largest money laundering cases in the country, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The court also fined these Syrians and two general trading and perfume/incense companies a total of KD6,884,000. It ordered the permanent closure of the two companies and prohibited them from engaging in any commercial activity, while two other defendants were acquitted.

The court, presided over by Judge Nasser Al-Badr, with Judges Omar Al-Mulaifi, Abdullah Al-Faleh and Salem Al-Zayed as members, issued the verdict as the defendants were found guilty of money laundering and harming the interests of Kuwait.

The Public Prosecution stated that the defendants formed an organized criminal group that laundered more than KD2.294 million -- proceeds from the crimes of harming national interests, forgery of bank documents, fraud, and operating an unlicensed money exchange business.

Investigations revealed that members of the gang lured their victims through advertisements for food products on social media, and then sent them electronic payment links for stores within Kuwait wherein the amounts are different from the actual purchases. The funds were used to buy various goods, which were received by the unsuspecting couriers, then resold and converted into cash.

The prosecution added that the funds were collected and deposited into personal bank accounts and the accounts of two companies as business revenues. These funds were later transferred to bank accounts in China, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Turkiye, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to purchase heavy equipment, which was then sent to Syria and sold for cash to conceal the illicit source of the funds.

The defendants were found guilty of establishing and managing an illegal financial system outside the scope of official oversight, thereby, harming the interests of Kuwait and jeopardizing its financial standing and credit rating.

The convicted individuals engaged in banking activities without a license from the Central Bank of Kuwait.

The charges included defrauding victims online by sending payment links for a jewelry store, instead of the actual value of the food products. This operation resulted in the purchase of gold coins without the knowledge of the victims.

The court convicted three of the defendants of forging bank documents, as they submitted false information on deposit slips in the Commercial Bank of Kuwait.

Traffic cops nab 3 people in grave traffic violations

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: The traffic police officers arrested three people recently for committing grave traffic violations, such as speeding.

According to a security source, the officers referred these three individuals to the concerned authorities, while their vehicles were impounded.

A case was registered and all the necessary legal measures were taken.

Kuwait's Adan Hospital treats rare congenital bile duct condition

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): A medical team at Kuwait's Adan Hospital has successfully treated a citizen in her 40s suffering from severe bile duct obstruction caused by an extremely rare congenital anatomical abnormality.

The Ministry of Health said in a press statement that the procedure was led by Senior Consultant in Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Advanced Therapeutic Endoscopy Dr. Yousef Al-Tawalah, with the participation of Interventional Radiology Consultant Dr. Mahdi Abbas and a team of specialists.

The ministry said the intervention was successful, with the patient making a full recovery. Her liver function and enzyme levels returned to normal, and she was discharged from hospital in good health.

It noted that the achievement highlights the advanced capabilities of national medical professionals in the field of advanced therapeutic endoscopy and underscores Adan Hospital's ability to manage complex and rare cases in line with the latest international medical practices.

The ministry added that such capabilities contribute to localizing highly specialized services, enhancing healthcare quality and enabling patients to receive advanced treatment within Kuwait.

The statement quoted Dr. Al-Tawalah as saying that since the beginning of the year, more than 120 advanced endoscopy procedures have been performed at Adan Hospital.

He added that the hospital also provides a range of highly specialized services, including endoscopic ultrasound for the liver, pancreas and bile ducts, therapeutic stent placement, and double-balloon enteroscopy for examining the small intestine.

Dr. Al-Tawalah noted that these advanced procedures are carried out daily thanks to the availability of highly qualified national specialists and state-of-the-art technical capabilities.



KUNA photo

The medical team which conducted the operation.

Review on nursery fees

MoSA keeps eye on 462 daycare centers

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi revealed that the number of licensed nurseries in the country reached 462, all of which are under the supervision and oversight of the ministry in accordance with the regulations.

In an interview with the newspaper, Al-Ajmi pointed out that this number confirms the expansion of early childhood services in the country and puts more responsibilities on the shoulders of the ministry to continue its monitoring and development efforts in order to ensure that the best quality of services are provided to the children.

He explained that the ministry does not simply grant licenses, as it considers this step the beginning of the ongoing monitoring phase that includes inspection, follow up and evaluation to ensure compliance with the regulations.

He disclosed that the ministry received 64 applications for new nursery licenses this year, stressing that all these applications are subject to legal and technical measures, according to the unified and transparent standards.

He affirmed that the ministry encourages serious investment in the early childhood sector, while prioritizing the improvement of services and guaranteeing the safety of children.

He confirmed that 50 applications to establish nurseries were rejected for failure to meet the conditions stipulated in the relevant law and its executive regulations. He pointed out that leniency during the licensing process could negatively affect the services or the safety of the children in the future.

He clarified that the rejection decisions are based on reasons related to non-compliance with regulatory, technical or administrative requirements. He said applicants are notified about the comments, so they can complete the requirements and reapply once they meet the conditions.

He stressed that oversight of private nurseries is one of the most important responsibilities of the ministry, as it is directly linked to



Dr Khaled Al-Ajmi

child protection -- a responsibility that leaves no room for negligence or favoritism.

Electronic system

He disclosed that an electronic system will be adopted through the 'My Nursery' application, which will contribute to the development of monitoring and oversight mechanisms and provide a number of online services.

He stated that the ministry is fully aware that tuition fees are among the concerns of families, so it is focusing on the issue.

He added that the team formed by the ministry will conduct a comprehensive study on tuition fees to serve the interests of families, reduce their financial burdens, and guarantee the sustainability of the services provided by nurseries.

He clarified that fees vary from one nursery to another, depending on the nature of the services, programs, facilities and equipment offered.

He confirmed that the department recently conducted 75 inspection tours in nurseries in various governorates as part of the monitoring plan of the ministry. He stated that the inspection and follow up operations revealed that the most common violations are non-compliance with the specified age groups and those related

to tuition fees.

He added that the ministry exercises its oversight role through the Private Nurseries Oversight Department, which is implemented by the Inspection Section through continuous field monitoring.

He indicated that inspections are not limited to scheduled or periodic visits, as they include surprise inspections. He stated that the inspection teams ensure compliance with the specified age groups, safety and security regulations, and regulatory and administrative rules, in addition to monitoring violations that may require legal action.

He said the ministry believes that oversight is not just a means for addressing violations, but a tool for performance improvement, so the inspection teams are committed to guiding nurseries toward the best practices.

He cited statistics revealing that 10 nurseries were proven to have committed violations, in addition to 20 nurseries identified previously. He confirmed that these nurseries have rectified their status, but the violations remain.

He said the ministry takes disciplinary action gradually, depending on the nature and impact of the violation, starting with monitoring, guidance and warnings, if necessary, followed by more stringent measures. He added that over the past three years, temporary closure orders were issued to two nurseries as per the executive regulations.

He revealed that most of the violations are administrative and regulatory in nature, and are dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the executive regulations. He pointed out that violations affecting children's safety are few, reflecting the high level of awareness and commitment among a large segment of licensed nurseries. He emphasized that the ministry takes any violation that affects a child's safety or security very seriously.

He added the ministry believes that "prevention is better than cure", so all oversight procedures aim to prevent violations. He stressed that the main objective is not to impose penalties, but to ensure a safe and stable environment for children.

He revealed that upon receiving a complaint, the ministry takes the necessary measures by contacting its Interior counterpart, specifically the Juvenile Protection Department, as it is the competent authority for handling such cases.



HH the Amir



Dr. Mohammad Muizzu



Joseph Boakai

Amir congratulates Maldives, Liberia on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable Sunday, to the President of the Republic of Maldives Dr. Mohammad Muizzu, on the occasion of his country's Independence Day.

His Highness wished the president long-lasting health and the Republic of Maldives and its people further progress and prosperity.

Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable Sunday, to the President of the Republic of Maldives Dr. Mohammad Muizzu, on the occasion of his country's Independence Day.

His Highness wished the president long-lasting health and his country and its people further progress and prosperity.

PM congratulates

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, sent a congratulatory cable Sunday, to the President of the Republic of Maldives Dr. Mohammad Muizzu, on the occasion of his country's Independence Day.

LIBERIA INDEPENDENCE DAY

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Sunday a cable of congratulations to Liberian President Joseph Boakai on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the Liberian President everlasting health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to the friendly country and its people.

Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Sunday a cable of congratulations to Liberian President Joseph Boakai on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the Liberian President everlasting health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to the friendly country and its people.

PM congratulates

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Sunday a cable of congratulations to Liberian President Joseph Boakai on his country's Independence Day.



KUNA photos

Mangroves protect variety of marine life.



Mangrove indoor growth



Mangroves sanctuary for birds.

Mangrove saves biodiversity, cuts effect of climate change

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): Kuwait is stepping up efforts to restore mangrove (qurm) trees as part of its national strategy to address climate change, protect coastal areas, and preserve an important environmental resource.

According to the Chair of the Kuwait Society of Earth Sciences Dr. Mubarak Al-Hajri, Kuwait has officially joined the "Mangrove Alliance for Climate" and adopted an environmental vision aimed at planting thousands of mangrove seedlings by 2035.

Speaking to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on the occasion of the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem, observed annually on July 26, Al-Hajri said United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated the day to raise awareness of the importance of unique ecosystems and promote their protection worldwide.

He highlighted the important role of mangroves in protecting biodiversity, supporting ecosystems, and reducing the effects of climate change.

Al-Hajri explained that mangrove trees disappeared from Kuwait's shores in the 1950s due to several factors, including urban expansion, excessive logging, waste disposal, and the discharge of untreated sewage. However, environmental initiatives have helped revive this natural ecosys-

tem through restoration and cultivation programmes.

Mangrove seeds were collected from neighbouring Gulf countries and cultivated in local laboratories before being transferred to suitable muddy coastal environments.

He pointed to the Jahra Nature Reserve and Sulaibikhat Beach as examples of successful restoration projects, where thousands of coastal mangrove seedlings have been planted. These efforts have contributed to increased biodiversity, including the growth of marine crustacean communities and attracting more migratory birds, particularly flamingos.

He added that butterflies and bees have also been observed during mangrove flowering seasons, reflecting improvements in the surrounding ecosystem.

Meanwhile, Dr. Arafat Al-Shuaibi, a board member of the society and head of its Development and Sustainability Committee, said mangrove cultivation faces several challenges, including high temperatures, increased evaporation rates, rising salinity levels in water and coastal soil, and the risk of young seedlings being washed away or buried by sand due to strong currents and waves.

Al-Shuaibi explained that mangroves provide major environmental benefits, including absorbing carbon dioxide and storing it in coastal soil as "blue carbon," helping combat global warming. Their root systems also trap sediments, pollutants, and heavy metals, contributing to cleaner coastal waters and improving the quality of Kuwait Bay.

Mangrove forests provide breeding habitats for fish, shrimp, and other marine organisms, while also serving as safe shelters and resting areas for migratory birds. In addition, they help stabilise coastlines, reduce erosion, and act as natural barriers against coastal dust storms.



Al-Hajri



Al-Shuaibi



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Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Mohammad Al-Mashaan



Kuwait-China signing ceremony for the Northern Kabd Wastewater Treatment Plant construction, operation and maintenance project.



H.E. Yang Xin, Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait

Kuwait inks contract for northern Kabd wastewater treatment plant with China

PM oversees major infrastructure deal as green upgrade begins

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): Under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwait signed a contract for the construction, operation and maintenance of the Northern Kabd Wastewater Treatment Plant and its associated works, marking the second cooperation agreement with China.

Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Mohammad Al-Mashaan signed the contract on behalf of Kuwait in the presence of Chinese Ambassador to the country Yang Xin.

The project reflects Kuwait's commitment to implementing strategic projects aimed at upgrading infrastructure quality, enhancing environmental sustainability and improving the efficiency of the country's wastewater treatment system in line with urban growth, sustainable development goals and Kuwait's long-term development vision.

The signing ceremony was attended by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah, Acting Head of the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, and Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works Eid Al-Rasheedi.



PM Diwan photos

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwaiti officials and Chinese representatives pose for a group photo after the signing ceremony of the Northern Kabd Wastewater Treatment Plant project.

Continued from Page 1

Sheikh Fahad

There are troublemakers in every country who exploit any loophole to destabilize relations between nations. Acting wisely will thwart their plans and preserve the national security of both countries.

The move of the First Deputy Prime Minister is commendable, as it foiled many of the schemes of the enemies and troublemakers. Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef deserves praise for thwarting the plans of the enemy.

48°C heat,

Temperatures are forecast to remain very high, with daytime highs ranging between 46 and 48 degrees Celsius, while minimum temperatures at dawn are expected to range between 34 and 36 degrees.

He urged the public to follow official weather updates through the department's website and mobile application, particularly during periods of fluctuating conditions, to stay informed of the latest developments.

\$16bn Shaheen

Meanwhile, sources confirmed to the newspaper that the route of the vital Shaheen network, with a total length of around 320 kilometers, starts from the main gathering centers of KOC in the major fields, particularly the Burgan field in the southern and eastern areas, in addition to the northern fields.

Sources indicated that the export terminal leads to platforms and ports along the Arabian Gulf, such as Mina Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah, with the aim of supplying international oil tankers and meeting external demand.

Regarding the overall benefit of the project and its strategic and economic importance, sources summarized the advantages into two main pillars. The first pillar covers the operational and logistical benefits, which are repre-

sented in the comprehensive connection between the gathering centers in the northern, southern and eastern fields and the offshore export facilities.

Sources also affirmed the role of the of the network in ensuring the continuity of exports, as pipelines are the safest means of transporting Kuwaiti crude oil and supplying oil to the tankers.

Sources disclosed that the second pillar consists of the economic and investment benefits, as the project aims to attract liquidity to the Kuwaiti oil sector through foreign direct investment, without relinquishing ownership of assets.

Kuwait gold

The report explained that gold experienced notable declines in recent months following the outbreak of the confrontation between the United States and Iran, as investors focused more on the inflationary impact of rising oil prices rather than seeking refuge in gold as a safe-haven asset. Concerns over inflation have reinforced expectations of continued tight monetary policies.

Gold prices stabilized at the end of the week between \$4,050 and \$4,065 per ounce after declining by nearly 2 percent in the previous session, as investors balanced geopolitical risks, rising oil prices, and expectations regarding US monetary policy.

Markets are closely watching the US Federal Reserve meeting this week, with expectations that interest rates will remain unchanged. However, investors continue to anticipate a possible rate increase in the coming months if inflationary pressures persist.

The report identified rising oil prices as the most influential factor affecting markets last week, driven by continued tensions in the Middle East and concerns over potential disruptions to energy supplies.

It noted that sustained increases in energy prices raise production and transportation costs, which could lead

central banks to maintain restrictive monetary policies for a longer period.

The report explained that high US interest rates have supported Treasury yields and the US dollar, increasing the cost of holding gold compared with income-generating assets. However, the dollar's gains and a limited decline in US Treasury yields provided some support for gold prices and helped reduce losses.

Military and political developments in the Middle East remain a key driver of global markets, with continued military operations between the United States and Iran, concerns over maritime security in strategic waterways, and signs that political negotiations could resume despite ongoing tensions.

Kuwait ratifies

communications systems, military and defense industries, military media, exchange of sports, cultural and social activities, and any other areas as agreed by both parties.

It stipulates the preparation of annual plans for joint activities, such as military training, education and joint exercises, through executive protocols and programs, in addition to the exchange of visits at various levels.

The Ministry of Defense in the State of Kuwait and its counterpart in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan are the entities responsible for implementing the agreement.

The agreement mandates the formation of a joint military committee consisting of the representatives of both sides to coordinate and implement military cooperation. The defense ministers of the two countries shall appoint the co-chairs of the committee, which meets annually, alternating between Kuwait and Pakistan. The committee is in charge of reviewing past cooperation activities and approving the new bilateral cooperation plan, including activities, related topics, implementation mechanisms, schedules, locations and responsible parties.

It includes an article on the protec-

tion of confidential information, obligating both parties to maintain the confidentiality of exchanged information, documents and materials, to take the necessary security measures to protect them, and not to transfer them to any third party without the written consent of the issuing party.

The levels of confidentiality are defined and access is restricted to authorized personnel. Both parties are obligated to guarantee the confidentiality of information even after the agreement expires.

The agreement addressed intellectual property rights arising from the collaboration, granting each party intellectual property rights for research conducted independently. Rights are shared for jointly conducted research and activities, and these rights should not be transferred to any third party without the other party's consent.

It outlined the mechanisms for marketing the shared technology and using the official names and logos of both parties.

On the financial side, the agreement stipulates the principle of reciprocity, whereby the receiving party shoulders the travel expenses for official domestic missions, including accommodation and emergency medical treatment for the sending party's guests during the agreed official visits of up to one week, unless otherwise agreed by both parties.

The agreement affirmed that its provisions neither conflict with the laws in the two countries nor affect the rights or obligations arising from other international treaties and agreements to which either party is a signatory.

It indicated that disputes about the interpretation or application of the agreement shall be settled amicably through negotiations and consultations between the representatives of the two parties, without referring to any third party or any local or international court.

The obligations stipulated in the agreement shall continue to be implemented during the dispute resolution period, except where otherwise speci-

fied.

The agreement permits amendments to its provisions through the written consent of both parties, with the amendments taking effect in accordance with the prescribed constitutional and legal procedures.

The agreement takes effect after the exchange of written notifications through diplomatic channels, confirming the completion of the necessary internal procedures.

It can be terminated through a written notice, effective six months from its receipt. Existing projects shall continue to be implemented until their completion.

The agreement is valid for five years and will be renewed automatically for a similar period unless either party notifies the other in writing of its intention to terminate it six months prior to its expiry.

Kuwait rejects

Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, the Houthis' military spokesperson, said in a prerecorded statement that the attack targeted facilities in the Red Sea cities of Yanbu and Jizan that belong to Aramco, the world's largest oil company.

Saudi Arabia's civil defense said alerts sounded multiple times early Saturday in both cities, but the kingdom didn't comment further.

There were no reported strikes overnight in Iran, in an apparent break from nearly two weeks of consecutive nights of U.S. attacks.

US halts Iran strikes

Meanwhile, signs of cautious diplomatic engagement emerged as the United States paused its airstrikes on Iran after nearly two weeks of military operations, while mediation efforts continued to prevent a wider regional conflict.

But it remains to be seen whether the U.S. and Iran are at an inflection point in a mercurial conflict that will reach the five-month point Tuesday. President Donald Trump both has threatened more strikes and said talks are pressing on, all while brushing off

concerns that rising gas prices tied to the fighting could hurt Republicans in November's midterm elections.

Tehran, Muscat hold talks

On Sunday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmail Baghaei, confirmed that Iran and Oman had held several rounds of technical talks about the strait in Iran over the weekend. He said that while the Omani delegation left Tehran on Saturday afternoon, talks had made progress and were continuing.

Iran put a chokehold on the narrow Arabian Gulf waterway when the war began by firing on tankers and freighters. In turn, oil prices have soared during the conflict, which has been unpopular with many Americans, and could leave some Republican lawmakers vulnerable in November.

Kuwait denies role in military strikes

Separately, Kuwait firmly rejected media reports alleging its involvement in military operations against Iran. Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States, Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, sent an official letter to The Wall Street Journal rejecting what she described as "entirely false" claims published in a July 24 report alleging that Kuwaiti warplanes had participated in strikes against Iran.

The ambassador stressed that Kuwait has neither taken part in any military operations against Iran nor allowed its territory, airspace or territorial waters to be used for offensive operations against any neighbouring country. She reaffirmed Kuwait's longstanding foreign policy based on respect for international law, protection of state sovereignty, good-neighbourly relations and the peaceful resolution of disputes through dialogue and diplomacy.

Calling for a correction to the report, Ambassador Al-Sabah stressed that accurate reporting during periods of heightened regional tensions is essential to preserving stability and preventing misinformation on issues affecting international peace and security.



Lilly Nimmer, left, and Reba Bergmann, (right), hold a sign to protest the police shooting of Corey Ruiz outside of the Wisconsin state Capitol during the weekly farmers market on July 25 in Madison, Wisconsin. (AP)

Wisconsin’s capital city cancels signature events and grapples with fallout from police shooting

MADISON, Wis., July 26, (AP): A police shooting in Wisconsin’s progressive capital city this week put the spotlight on persistent and deep racial divisions, prompting cancellations and other changes to popular summertime events as protesters said they were determined to continue public pressure for change in Madison.

Corey Ruiz, who is identified as Black or Latino in Wisconsin court records, was shot and killed by a Madison police officer on Wednesday after a brief scuffle at an intersection in the city’s most liberal neighborhood just yards away from a popular 52-year-old food co-op.

It marks the third time since 2012 that Madison police have shot and killed someone in the same neighborhood. The shooting has sparked renewed calls for police reforms and forced the city to once again reckon with calls from the Black community to address racial justice issues.

Pressure from protesters, and sympathy for their cause, has also led to the cancellation or disruption of many of Madison’s signature summertime events.

“Our community has spoken loud and clear: this is NOT business as usual,” Black activist Clyde Mayberry posted on Facebook on Friday amid a string of cancellations. “Your decisions have helped ensure that this city continues to acknowledge the pain, the loss, and the call for accountability.”

Protesters took to the streets hours after the shooting, disrupting a popular Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra outdoor concert at the state Capitol that attracts about 30,000 every week in the summer.

The scene captures a familiar divide in Madison, a city that is more diverse than the state overall but still 70% white. Protesters, many of whom were Black, stood over white concert attendees sitting at tables near the stage that cost as much as \$1,800 to rent for the night.

Concert organizers canceled the event.

Threats of a protest on Thursday led the city to postpone the grand opening of a new public market, just a few blocks away from where the shooting occurred. A popular neighborhood festival near the shooting

called AtwoodFest, scheduled to begin on Saturday, was also canceled in the face of potential protests.

“Our community and our Marquette neighbors witnessed another horrific officer-involved shooting just blocks from our festival grounds, leaving us in deep pain and justified anger,” organizers of the festival wrote. “In acknowledgment of what has happened far too often in our community and our country as a whole, this year’s AtwoodFest, themed ‘The Heartbeat of the Neighborhood,’ is canceled.”

And on Saturday, the popular downtown farmers market that attracts about 20,000 people each week around the Capitol building, shut down nearly four hours earlier than usual in solidarity with protesters.

“We mourn with our community,” market organizers posted on social media. “And we agree - business cannot proceed as usual.”

A handful of protesters showed up at the Capitol as vendors were breaking down their booths at around 10 a.m.

“No one should be thinking this is just another Saturday,” said Reba Bergmann, who sat with Lilly Nimmer holding a sign that said “Justice for Corey.”

“It’s not life as normal,” Nimmer said. “We should be more mad. We should stand up for what we believe in.”

Charles Alt, 30, supported the decision to close down early.

“It’s important to keep focus on the real tragedy, which is that someone got killed,” said Alt, who was shopping at the market. “Missing some market time, that’s sad, but that’s not what’s important.”

But Rodney Hathaway, who was visiting Madison from Milwaukee, was caught off guard by the market’s early closure.

“It’s ridiculous,” he said. “This is peoples’ livelihoods. It’s just unfortunate. We have such a short summer season for these people to sell their wares.”

Investigations into the shooting continue. Civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who represents the Ruiz family, said on Friday at a new conference in the Capitol that the officer who fired the shots should face criminal charges.

President’s party often encounters losses during midterm elections

How to run for reelection in messy United States Congress? It’s not easy

WASHINGTON, July 26, (AP): House leaders sent lawmakers home for summer campaigning after one of the rockiest sessions in recent memory as voters decide which party to put in power in Congress for the remainder of President Donald Trump’s term.

For those seeking to stay in office, particularly the newest members, it can be a tough sell.

“I only know a dysfunctional Congress,” said Rep. Suhas Subramanyam, a freshman from Virginia.

The Democrat said it’s best to campaign on his own record delivering for constituents, rather than on the performance of Congress, as his party tries to wrest control from the Republicans.

“It’s virtually impossible to sell the performance of Congress to the American people because Congress is such an easy punching bag,” he said. “And this particular Congress has been ceding too much of its authority to the executive branch.”

He said, “I tell people to sell yourself and what you’ve tried to do.”

Yet Republican Rep. Brandon Gill, a freshman from Texas who has emerged as one of the party’s rising figures, particularly on Trump’s hard-line immigration enforcement agenda, argued there’s plenty to show to voters back home.

“We’ve gotten a lot done,” he said

“Cutting taxes across the board, over \$100 billion for border security, repealing half the Green New Deal, the biggest mandatory spending reform in history - pretty historic stuff,” he said.

“Everybody always wants Congress to move faster than it does, but we’ve been extremely productive.”

Control of Congress is often an afterthought in presidential election years when the White House is at stake. But in the midterms, when lawmakers face voters as they will this fall, the races largely become a referendum on the party in power.

Republicans have history against running against them, as the president’s party often encounters losses during the midterm elections - a “thumping,” as George W. Bush put it, a “shellacking” as Barack Obama said - and a pendulum nation swings.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, who is about to embark on a cross-country trek to raise millions of dollars for his party and visit lawmakers’ home districts, remains bullish that Republicans will not only keep their House majority control - but grow their numbers.

“This week we continued to deliver for the people, and we’re going to continue that straight through the end of this year,” Johnson said after a flurry of legislating before sending lawmakers home for summer.



Rep Darrell Issa, R-Calif., rushes up the steps at the Capitol for final votes before the House of Representatives leaves for a five-week recess, in Washington on July 23. (AP)

Republicans in a single day adopted a budget resolution seeking \$95 billion for the Iran war and other priorities; advanced a \$1 trillion Pentagon bill renaming it the Department of War; and approved legislation to clamp down on stock trading in Congress, all over Democratic objections.

“We’re going to run through the tape,” Johnson said.

Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, who is in line to become House

speaker if his party wins control, will launch “100 Days of Action” on Sunday as he works to take the majority and impose a check on Trump’s White House.

“It’s not going to be easy, right?” Jeffries told reporters. “No one’s going to give it to us. We have to take it in a way that is consistent with the values of the American people.”

With its 435 seats being contested, control of the House often narrows to the tiniest slice of the country.

Fewer than 20 seats are considered genuine toss-ups, according to analysts. The rest are considered safer seats, drawn with map lines designed to favor one party over the other - including new maps still being drawn to eliminate Black majority districts largely in the Deep South after a landmark Supreme Court decision gutting the Voting Rights Act.

Millions of dollars are being spent that will make the difference between a return of the GOP majority eyeing more budget cuts or a new Democratic agenda that is expected to launch vast oversight and investigations into the Trump administration.

Even as he openly pines for a normal Congress, Johnson believes the country needs a steady hand at the wheel as he partners with the White House on Trump’s priorities - and fend off Democratic investigations and the threat of impeachment.

“We are increasingly confident that we will hold and grow this majority in the House - and we must,” he said.

Democrats under Jeffries make the case that Trump and the Republicans in charge have done nothing for Americans struggling with high costs of living. Instead, they say Trump waged war against Iran that sent gas prices soaring, slapped tariffs on goods that are spiking prices, deported longtime immigrants and

slashed health care and food aid as part of Trump’s big tax cuts bill last summer.

“They’re flailing all over the place,” Jeffries said.

Jeffries vowed that Democrats “will hold the crooks accountable” on a number of issues, including the Trump family’s business dealings.

Johnson raises the specter of a mid-20th-century-style communist threat if Democrats win control with a new generation of far-left progressive candidates, some backed by the Democratic Socialists of America.

“We have been saying that this is an election that’s shaping up as a contest between common sense and crazy,” he said. Now, he said, it’s “common sense versus communism.”

Jeffries brushes past such warnings as unserious. “House Democrats aren’t a cult,” he said, a criticism his party often lobs at Trump’s backers in Congress. “We’re a coalition of people, public servants, who are committed to getting things done.”

One of the newest lawmakers, Rep. James Gallagher, R-Calif., said he’s just trying to focus on the issues important to constituents back home.

“We’re in a time where there’s a lot of division, unfortunately,” he said. “And I think one key is like, Hey, trying to bring people together to solve problems for Americans, right?”



A general view of the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council Session with fellow heads of state at the NATO summit at the IFEMA arena in Madrid, on June 30, 2022. (AP)

Europe

NATO intern arrested on spying allegations: A Canadian woman was arrested and accused of espionage while working as an intern in the operational headquarters of the NATO military alliance, Belgian authorities said Saturday.

Belgium’s Federal Prosecutor’s Office said it launched an espionage investigation after NATO’s security services tipped off Belgium’s military intelligence. Authorities then detained “a Canadian citizen of Chinese origin” on Friday, a day after raiding the suspect’s home and workplace inside NATO’s vast command center.

“She is suspected of spying on behalf of a third country and of being a member of a criminal organization,” the prosecutors said in a statement.

The strategic headquarters of the Allied Powers, known as SHAPE, is located in the southern Belgian city of Mons near the French border. Military officials at SHAPE plan and command joint strategy, tactics and operations. The alliance’s political headquarters is in Brussels, where ambassadors from member nations meet to discuss defense spending, drone incursions and cyber threats. NATO’s Cyber Security Centre is based at SHAPE. (AP)

□ □ □

France wildfires drive 220,000 from homes: A raging wildfire in southwest France forced the evacuation of 55,000 people overnight Sunday, bringing the total forced out of their homes to 220,000 in one region alone, as flames crept ever closer to the city of

Bordeaux. Neighboring Spain oversaw its own fire evacuations on the country’s east coast.

Authorities in France’s Gironde region, where Bordeaux is located, issued overnight evacuation orders for five more localities southwest of the historic city, as shifting, gusting winds and arid conditions complicated massive efforts to limit the spread of the monster blaze that has burned out of control since midweek.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said that after a “difficult” night for fire crews, “the situation remains very unfavorable.” (AP)

□ □ □

Germany plane crash kills 1: At least one person died and a second one appeared to be missing after a small plane crashed into a home in northern Germany on Saturday, police said.

For reasons that are still being investigated, the small plane lost altitude and crashed into the roof of a single-family home in a residential neighborhood in Ganderskeese in Lower Saxony, police in the nearby city of Oldenburg said.

According to police, the plane was carrying two people. One person was killed in the crash and rescue personnel were searching for the missing individual, German news agency dpa reported.

The residents of the house were not home at the time of the crash, dpa said.

A crisis intervention team was called to the scene to provide support for people who directly witnessed the incident or were in the vicinity of the accident site. Residents within a radius of 100 meters of the incident site were evacuated from their homes. (AP)

America

Oregon fire looms near town: As dry, windy weather fueled a big wildfire near a city in central Oregon, a fourth firefighter died after he and several colleagues last month were overcome by a fast-moving wildfire near the Colorado-Utah border, authorities said Saturday.

Nathan Matthews, 43, of Lincoln, Nebraska, died Friday, the federal Interior Department said in a statement.

Meanwhile, several fierce wildfires in a summer of big ones continued burning across the western US.

One of the worst - and the one deemed top priority for fire-fighting efforts - was just a few miles (5 kilometers) north of Sisters, a central Oregon city of about 3,000 people.

Winds gusting up to 30 mph (50 kph) threatened to push flames into new areas. Firefighters made progress keeping the fire in check, however, and officials were optimistic the city would be in the clear once the worst of the wind died down Sunday.

“It’s going to take a while to put it out entirely. But as long as it stops moving, I think that’ll get



Letz

people to relax a little bit,” Sisters Mayor **Jennifer Letz** said.

As of Saturday, the lightning-caused fire had burned about 40 square miles (105 square kilometers) and was 5% contained. About 30 people evacuated from areas north of Sisters were in a shelter at the local high school, with about as many more staying in recreational vehicles parked outside, Letz said. (AP)

□ □ □

11 indicted in smuggling migrants deaths: Eleven people were charged Friday with causing the deaths of seven migrants by trapping them inside a train container in sweltering Texas heat after they were smuggled into the United States.

Among the six people found dead inside the shipping container in a rail yard in the Texas border city of Laredo was a 14-year-old boy. Another person had been left for dead near the tracks in San Antonio, according to the US Attorney for the Western District of Texas, Justin R. Simmons.

“In that kind of heat, it’s May in Texas, ultimately it’s very hard to survive in an un-air conditioned, sealed container with ... the temperature being what it was on that day,” Simmons said.

The group boarded the train in the Texas border town of Del Rio intending to reach San Antonio, but when smugglers there opened the door, a man fell out, so they closed it and fled, Simmons said. (AP)

Poland’s biggest opposition party faces split over tensions about its direction

WARSAW, Poland, July 26, (AP): Poland’s main opposition party faces a split in a disagreement over its future direction, with the party leader saying that more than 30 lawmakers have effectively left.

The conservative nationalist Law and Justice party ran Poland from 2015 to 2023, when the current liberal government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk took power. During that time, it tightened control over the courts by appointing loyalist judges to higher courts and punishing critics with disciplinary action.

The Tusk government’s efforts to reverse those changes have repeatedly been blocked by two successive presidents sympathetic to Law and Justice.

Still, tensions within Law and Justice have simmered as a national election next year approaches, and it faces a challenge from parties further to its right.

Longtime leader Jarosław Kaczyński and Mateusz Morawiecki, Poland’s prime minister from 2017 to 2023, have



Newly designated for the prime minister’s post Mateusz Morawiecki, right, is congratulated by Jarosław Kaczyński, left, leader of Poland’s ruling conservative party Law and Justice, in Warsaw, Poland on Dec. 8, 2017. (AP)

been at the center of the spat. Morawiecki represents a relatively moderate faction and in April set up an association called Development Plus, which many in the party view with suspicion.

A deadline for lawmakers to commit not to be members of other political associations expired Thursday night. A meeting Thursday between Kaczyński and Morawiecki failed to resolve their differences.

Flávio Bolsonaro secures presidential bid despite challenges

Brazil’s government denies visas to US officials over upcoming elections

SAO PAULO, July 26, (AP): Brazil’s Foreign Ministry said on Saturday it denied visas to two US State Department officials that sought to travel to the South American nation next week, in the latest political barb between the two countries.

The move became public after The Washington Post reported the Brazilian government saying the officials, Riley M. Barnes, an assistant secretary, and Samuel Samson, a deputy assistant, wanted to cast doubt on the upcoming October elections in Brazil.

A spokesperson for Brazil’s foreign office said Barnes and Samson requested visas on July 20 and they were denied Friday. He did not disclose the reasons behind the decision.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will bid for reelection against Sen Flávio Bolsonaro, whose family has many ties with the Trump administration.

Sen Bolsonaro and his brother, Eduardo, visited US officials in Washington, including US President Donald Trump, in late May. Shortly afterward, the Trump administration classified Brazil’s biggest drug-trafficking groups - First Command Capital and Red Command - as foreign terrorist organizations, a move Lula opposes.

The Trump administration also imposed an up to 37.5% tariff hike on thousands of Brazilian exports,

which came into force Friday. The US government claims the South American nation has unfair competition practices and fails to stop forced labor practices - both accusations rejected by the Lula administration as an attempt to sway the election to Sen Bolsonaro.

The US State Department said Barnes and Samson planned to go to Brasilia July 27-30 to meet government officials, religious leaders and others about “election integrity,” religious freedom and freedom of expression. The department, in response to a query from The Associated Press, called it a routine visit and said that “any insinuation of a ‘ploy’ to undermine a democratic nation’s election is a baseless lie.”

Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has for years fed concerns about the country’s electronic voting system, without providing any evidence for his claims. He is now serving a 27-year prison sentence at home for an attempted coup. He has long insisted that the machines, used for a quarter-century, are prone to fraud.

His son, Sen. Bolsonaro, has recently repeated some of these claims, although he steered clear of those on Saturday when his Liberal Party confirmed him as a presidential candidate in Sao Paulo.

Bolsonaro was confirmed as the presidential candidate of his father’s Liberal Party on Saturday in a bid



Supporters of Brazilian Sen. Flavio Bolsonaro, backdropped by a banner emblazoned with an image of his father, former president Jair Bolsonaro, attend the Liberal Party convention where Flavio was confirmed as the party’s presidential candidate, in Sao Paulo, Saturday, July 25, 2026. (AP)

against Lula, even as his campaign faces many challenges.

The younger Bolsonaro still seeks a running mate and does not enjoy the support of centrist parties as his father did. Few Brazilian political heavyweights were in attendance, in another sign of his troubles forming an alliance against Lula ahead of the October election .

The 45-year-old senator’s popular stepmother, Michelle Bolsonaro, a leader for many evangelical voters, was one of the notable absences among about 500 people cheering

him on in Sao Paulo. Recently, the two exchanged criticism in public. She spoke Saturday in a recorded video in which she mentioned the anointed candidate just once.

Still, Flávio Bolsonaro managed to bring in Argentina’s President Javier Milei, displayed a short video of support from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and now eyes more international endorsements from several members of US President Donald Trump’s administration.

Milei said Brazil needs to get rid of what he called “the Lula risk” of

keeping progressive politics for another four years in Latin America’s most powerful economy.

But absences were notable. The former president cannot make public addresses as he serves his 27-year sentence over a coup attempt, so a video featured an artificial intelligence-created version of Jair Bolsonaro.

Flávio Bolsonaro did not disclose much about his plans for the presidency if he wins. He tearfully paid tribute to his father, now under house arrest, and raised his voice against Lula.

“You are going to put this presidential sash on me next year,” said Bolsonaro, who also accused Brazil’s Supreme Court of persecuting his family. “This is more than a party convention. This is the beginning of the toughest battles of our life. A fight between good and evil.”

Bolsonaro has failed to recruit a high-profile female running mate after attempts to lure former Agriculture Minister Tereza Cristina.

Her Popular Party, which has a stronghold in Congress and was key for Jair Bolsonaro’s presidency, was not expected to field a presidential candidate. Its distancing from the younger Bolsonaro has been surprising.

“That’s not necessarily bad for us,” lawmaker Zé Trovao told journalists before the convention began. “We can have a more ideological

campaign and when time comes it will be them coming to us, having to agree to our agenda if they want to get rid of Lula and the Workers Party.”

Flávio Bolsonaro “has faced a problem each week, sometimes two problems,” said political consultant Thomas Traumann, based in Rio de Janeiro. “So far he has been on the defensive, saying the campaign only starts in August.”

Lula’s Workers’ Party will confirm the 80-year-old’s reelection bid in a convention on Aug. 2, also in Sao Paulo, a key battleground in the election.

Many of the troubles Bolsonaro has faced are self-inflicted. Support to his bid started to wane in May after he admitted he had requested millions of dollars from jailed banker Daniel Vercora to pay for a film about his father’s life. The revelation shocked many allies.

Bolsonaro then visited the White House and the U.S. State Department days later expecting to get a Trump boost, but now many voters, business leaders and politicians blame him for the U.S. government imposing new tariffs on Brazilian exports of up to 37.5% as of Friday.

Even as most of Brazil was watching the World Cup on TV, Bolsonaro faced another blow: His stepmother recorded a video to say he was being disrespectful to her in a phone conversation.

Former president Juan Orlando Hernández back to Honduras after arrest warrant suspended

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, July 26, (AP): Four years after being extradited to the United States for his drug trafficking trial, former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández returns to his country Sunday to face corruption charges that lawyers fear will be a sham process.

Hernández, once considered an ally by the US in the drug war, led Honduras from 2014 to 2022, during which he boasted that he would “shove the drugs right up the noses of the gringos,” according to U.S. prosecutors.

His extradition shortly after leaving office marked a rare chance at justice for Hondurans, who feared his hold on the country’s justice system would never allow a conviction on Honduran soil.

But the former leader, sentenced to 45 years in prison in the United States, was released in December, to the shock of many in the US and Honduras, after receiving a presidential pardon from U.S. President Donald Trump. He said Hernández did not receive a fair trial and that it was a setup orchestrated by the Biden administration.

Hernández now returns to the country to face corruption charges amid concerns that a weak justice system and his party’s return to the presidency will ensure his impunity.

“There is a social majority that is outraged, but doesn’t speak out because of fear,” said Joaquín Mejía, lawyer and researcher for the human rights organization Reflection, Research and Communication Team. “We’re talking about the boss of all drug bosses.”

Hernández, 57, faces charges related to a case known as Pandora I, which alleges that a network of former high-ranking officials from 2010 to 2013 participated in the expansion and approval of public funds disbursements totaling more than 288 million lempiras (\$10.8 million) to various foundations, according to an investigation by the country’s Specialized Prosecutor’s Unit Against Corruption Networks, or UFERCO.

According to UFERCO, Hernández benefited from these disbursements,

receiving at least 62 million lempiras (\$2.3 million) for his political campaign through various schemes, including the creation of shell companies, the use of straw men and fictitious contracts.

Hernández has said he is innocent and that the case “lacks any legal basis.”

In June, a judge suspended his arrest warrant and the international red notice issued to Interpol at the request of Hernández’s lawyer, although the case is still pending. The former president has agreed to appear before the judge on Aug. 3 for his arraignment.

“The moment has arrived. After four years, I can finally tell you that we will see each other again,” Hernández said in a video posted on social media.

Since his release in the US, Hernández has expressed his intention to return to Honduras to reunite with his wife, Ana García, and their children, whose U.S. visas are currently suspended.

Other high-level officials implicated in Pandora I whose cases have been dismissed indicate the likely outcome for Hernández, according to legal experts.

“Everything points to the suspension being the first step,” said Mejía. “He’ll come, they’ll likely issue him alternative measures to imprisonment to keep up appearances, and then he’ll end up without any problem, without any sanction.”

For Luis Javier Santos, the former head of UFERCO who investigated the case against Hernández, the former leader’s return represents a failure to prosecute him for his crimes, rather than a chance for justice.

Santos was removed from his role in UFERCO in February in what he believes demonstrates attempts to stifle anti-corruption investigations by the new government of Nasry Asfura, of Hernández’s National Party, which took office in January after gaining Trump’s backing during elections.

“We have gone backward to an even worse point than when all the work to fight corruption began,” Santos said.



Honduras’ President Juan Orlando Hernandez speaks during the opening ceremony of the UN Climate Change Conference COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland on Nov 1, 2021. (AP)



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, a drone photo shows fishing boats taking shelter ahead of Typhoon Noul at a port in Shenzhen-Shanwei Special Cooperation Zone in southern China’s Guangdong Province on July 25. (AP)

Typhoon Noul weakens after bringing heavy rain to China

Typhoon Noul weakened to a tropical storm on Sunday as it moved inland after making landfall and bringing winds and heavy rain along the coast of southern China.

Chinese weather authorities expected parts of southern Guangdong and southeastern Fujian provinces to experience heavy rain. More than 801,000 people had been relocated for safety in the province of Guangdong as of Sunday, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

In the financial hub of Hong Kong, the city’s airport authority said around 350 flights were canceled Sunday and about 2,000 passengers were stranded at the airport over the weekend. At least 21 people were injured across the city during the typhoon period, according to Hong Kong authorities.

China’s Ministry of Water Resources upgraded its flood-control emergency response, including for Guangdong, over high risks of mountain floods, Xinhua reported.

China’s National Development and Reform Commission said it allocated 100 million yuan (\$14.8 million) to support recovery efforts in the typhoon-hit Guangdong province. (AP)

China’s Ministry of Water Resources upgraded its flood-control emergency response, including for Guangdong, over high risks of mountain floods, Xinhua reported.

China’s National Development and Reform Commission said it allocated 100 million yuan (\$14.8 million) to support recovery efforts in the typhoon-hit Guangdong province. (AP)

Hurricane moves through Pacific off Mexico, no direct threat to land

MIAMI, July 26, (AP): Tropical Storm Genevieve has strengthened into a hurricane in the Pacific Ocean southwest of Mexico. It is forecast to pick up even more steam and become a major hurricane in the coming days but stay well out to sea on a course roughly parallel to the shore.

Genevieve had maximum sustained winds of 90 mph (150 kph), making it a Category 1 hurricane, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami. A major hurricane is Category 3 or higher.

Genevieve’s center was located about 500 miles (810 kilometers) south-southwest of Manzanillo, and it was headed west-northwest at 17 mph (28 kph).

No coastal watches or warnings were in effect, but the hurricane center said swells from the storm - likely causing “life-threatening surf and rip current conditions” - were affecting parts of Mexico’s southwestern coast on the weekend and would likely hit southern parts of the Baja California Peninsula on Sunday night or Monday.

Farther west in the Pacific, meanwhile, Hurricane Fausto weakened to a Category 1 storm as it continued on a projected path in



This GOES-19 GeoColor satellite image provided by NOAA shows Tropical Storm Genevieve in the Eastern Pacific on July 24. (AP)

the general direction of the Hawaiian Islands.

Forecasters said it was expected to be downgraded to a tropical storm in the coming days, but warned that it could still generate dangerous surf and said “interests in the Hawaiian Islands should monitor” its progress.

Fausto had maximum sustained winds of 90 mph (150 kph); was located about 995 miles (1,600 kilometers) east of Hilo; and was moving west at 13 mph (20 kph).



Tanzania Army patrol the street during vote counting in Zanzibar, Tanzania on Oct 31, 2025. (AP)

Africa

Senegal’s President Faye launches new party: Senegal’s president formally launched his own political party Saturday, cementing his rupture with former ally Ousmane Sonko, the head of the ruling Pastef party, and setting up a power struggle during a major debt crisis.

The creation of Bassirou Diomaye Faye’s Republican Patriots party makes official a split that had been building for months between the two men. They rose to power together in 2024 under the Pastef banner, an acronym for its French name, Patriotes Africains du Sénégal pour le Travail, l’Éthique et la Fraternité.

In the weeks leading up to the launch, a growing number of Pastef officials resigned from the party to join Faye’s camp, including several regional leaders and members of its youth wing. Several members of the opposition party Alliance for The Republic have also joined Faye’s movement.

Faye and Sonko’s alliance, forged ahead of the 2024 presidential election, unraveled amid disputes over key policy decisions, including how to approach negotiations with the International Monetary Fund over a loan program amid a severe debt crisis.

Faye dismissed Sonko as prime minister earlier this year, but Sonko’s party retained its large majority in parliament, and he was elected president of the

National Assembly soon after. (AP)

□ □ □

‘51 officials arrested, charged over planned July protests’: Tanzania’s main opposition party on Saturday said 51 of its officials were arrested and charged with terrorism, accusing the government of using law enforcement to intimidate critics. Chadema deputy chairperson John Heche said the officials were arrested over planned protests this month that failed to materialize because of a heavy police presence.

Tanzanians had planned to take to the streets on July 7, a date that commemorates the formation of the ruling party and is also associated with pro-democracy protests in neighboring Kenya. Protest organizers were calling for democratic reforms following the disputed October general election, in which President Samia Suluhu Hassan was declared the winner with 98% of the vote.

Heche said Chadema chairman Tundu Lissu had been denied his basic rights and was facing the same terrorism charges, which are not eligible for bail.

Terrorism charges in Tanzania carry severe penalties, with those convicted facing prison sentences ranging from 10 years to life imprisonment.

On Thursday, a university lecturer had charges against him upgraded from incitement to terrorism ahead of a scheduled bail hearing on the earlier charges. (AP)

Premier market lifts Boursa Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Sunday's session on a positive note, with the general index rising 35.69 points, or 0.41 percent, to settle at 8,697.27 points. Trading activity saw 262.7 million shares change hands across 16,086 transactions, with a total value of KD 70.1 million (approximately USD 227.8 million). The premier market led the gains, advancing 51.52 points, or 0.57 percent, to reach 9,123.98 points. A total of 122.9 million shares were traded through 7,955 transactions, valued at KD 47.9 million (approximately USD 155.9 million).

Business

Reaffirming its national responsibility & commitment to supporting strategic national initiatives

Gulf Bank contributes \$3 mln to the Kuwait Emergency Response Fund

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Gulf Bank announced a financial contribution of USD 3 million to the Kuwait Emergency Response Fund, administered by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), in support of national efforts to enhance the country's preparedness to respond to emergencies and exceptional circumstances.

This initiative embodies Gulf Bank's deep sense of national responsibility and its commitment to supporting initiatives that strengthen the country's ability to address evolving challenges and exceptional circumstances with efficiency and resilience. It also reinforces the Bank's support for Kuwait Vision 2035 and its objectives of building a sustainable economy and a more prepared and resilient society, in line with Gulf Bank's role as a key partner in Kuwait's comprehensive development.

Gulf Bank affirmed that the contribution reflects its belief in the importance of coordinating efforts between the public and private sectors. Enhancing national preparedness and ensuring the continuity of vital services are shared responsibilities that help safeguard national achievements, reinforce the foundations of security and stability, and sustain the country's development under all circumstances.



Gulf Bank headquarters.

Sustainability remains a core pillar of Gulf Bank's corporate strategy. The Bank continues to launch and support high-impact economic, social, and environmental initiatives, guided by its commitment to investing in people and communities and building partnerships that deliver lasting positive impact. It also applies sustainability best practices across its operations and initiatives, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and the priorities of Kuwait Vision 2035.

The contribution builds on Gulf Bank's long-standing record of supporting national and community initiatives across education, youth empowerment, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, volunteerism, and environmental conservation. These efforts reflect the Bank's belief that the banking sector is an essential partner in advancing sustainable development and enhancing quality of life across society.

KFAED's Board of Directors allocated USD 100 million as a founding contribution to the Kuwait Emergency Response Fund. Established pursuant to a resolution of the Council of Ministers, the Fund is intended to finance and support national initiatives that strengthen the country's preparedness to meet emergency requirements and ensure the continuity of essential services under all circumstances.

KON launches first cohort with 34 students

Zain, LOYAC shape Kuwait's future social entrepreneurs



Attendees learned about the participating projects.



Zain honors a winning team.



A group photo of the students, organizers, and partners.

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Zain Kuwait, along with strategic partner LOYAC, held the closing ceremony of the first cohort of the 11th season of the KON Social Entrepreneurship Program. The cohort brought together 34 high school students to develop solutions to social and environmental challenges, further advancing Zain's mission to prepare future entrepreneurs and empower young people to play a leading role in the knowledge economy.

The two-week program was held at LOYAC's premises at Aisha School and concluded with a ceremony at Shadi Al-Khaleej Theatre. During the ceremony, Zain Kuwait's Youth Empowerment and Community Partnerships Team Leader, Faisal Al-Duwaihi, honored the winning students. Participants then moved to The Avenues to showcase their projects and share what they had gained from the experience with the public.

KON is one of LOYAC's leading youth

initiatives, delivered in partnership with US-based Babson College, one of the world's top business and entrepreneurship academic institutions. The program targets students aged 12 to 16 through an educational and interactive journey that combines knowledge with practical application.

The program featured a series of interactive workshops delivered by experts in innovation and entrepreneurship. Participants also received practical training in the fundamentals of social entrepreneurship and prototype development, continuous professional mentoring for their teams, and guidance on public speaking and confident business pitching.

Throughout the journey, the students worked in teams to turn issues they care about into innovative entrepreneurial projects addressing real environmental and social challenges. They developed practical solutions and prototypes that reflected

the skills they had gained in critical thinking, innovation, teamwork, problem-solving, and effective pitching.

Zain's support for the program builds on its strategic partnership with LOYAC, now in its 23rd year. Over more than two decades, the partnership has delivered a wide range of impactful programs and initiatives across education, youth empowerment, and social entrepreneurship, impacting thousands of young people.

This support also aligns with Zain's sustainability strategy, which places education, youth empowerment, and entrepreneurship among its key social priorities. The company seeks to give young national talents the space to discover their potential, develop their skills, and transform their ideas into solutions that deliver tangible impact, contributing to a stronger innovation ecosystem and a national economy driven by knowledge and creativity.

Warba Bank issues travel banking safety guidance under 'Let's Be Aware' initiative

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Warba Bank reaffirmed its commitment to financial awareness and fraud prevention through its continued support for the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) banking awareness campaign, launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait in cooperation with the Kuwait Banking Association. Ahead of the summer travel season, the bank issued practical guidance to help customers manage their finances securely and reduce their exposure to fraud while traveling abroad.

The initiative supports the campaign's objective of raising public awareness of card security, digital transaction safety, and personal data protection.

Pre-Travel Banking Preparations:

Warba Bank outlined essential steps customers should complete prior to travel:

- Account and Limit Verification: Check card expiry dates, available balances, and daily card limits in line with expected travel spending.
- Contact Information Updates: Ensure mobile numbers and email addresses are updated with the bank to receive transaction alerts and security notifications.
- Digital Access: Update the Warba Bank mobile application, ensure access to digital banking services, and secure devices used for travel bookings and financial transactions.

Card Security Practices During Travel:

During travel, customers are advised to follow recommended card security practices:

- Physical Safeguards: Keep cards secure, store backup cards safely – including in hotel safes where appropriate – and keep cards within sight during point-of-sale transactions.
- ATM Safety: Check ATMs for unusual attachments or signs of tampering, cover the keypad when entering the PIN, and decline assistance from strangers.
- Currency Selection: Review the currency options presented at point-of-sale



Abdullah Al-Shoail

terminals or ATMs and consider selecting the local currency to avoid potentially unfavorable dynamic currency conversion rates or fees.

Data Protection and Digital Security:

To reduce digital risks and protect accounts:

- Credential Confidentiality: Warba Bank reiterated that it never asks customers to disclose passwords, PINs, one-time passwords (OTPs), or other confidential banking information through calls, text messages, email, or social media.
- Network Security: Avoid conducting banking transactions over public or unsecured Wi-Fi networks, and access banking services only through the official application or verified website.
- Responding to Suspicious Activity: If a card is lost or a suspicious transaction is detected, customers should immediately lock the card through the Warba Bank mobile application and contact the bank's customer service center.

Executive Commentary:

Abdullah Nasser Al-Shoail, Senior Director of Retail Banking Branches at Warba Bank, stated:

"Financial awareness is one of the most effective defenses against evolving fraud risks. As travel increases during the summer season, practical guidance helps customers use digital banking services securely wherever they are."

Al-Shoail added that mobile banking tools give customers greater control over their accounts, enabling them to monitor transactions in real time and temporarily lock cards if suspicious activity is detected.

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.

Rockets and feathers: Inflation eases, grocery prices hold firm

Economics has a term for what U.S. grocery prices have done in recent years: rockets and feathers.

Rockets, because the cost of food eaten at home zoomed up in the aftermath of the pandemic. Feathers, because once prices rise, they're slow to come down.

That's been frustrating for Americans hit with the sharpest increase in grocery prices in 50 years. While food price inflation peaked in 2022, when prices jumped 11.4%, prices have not reversed course. An acceleration in fiation after the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran has prolonged the aggravation.

"I think the public is coming to grips with, 'Well, I'm hearing inflation has slowed, but things aren't getting any cheaper.' It has to be deflation for prices to go down, and that's very rare," said Matt Hamory, who leads the global grocery practice at the consulting company AlixPartners.

Prices for food at home are expected to rise 2.7% across the country this year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported Friday. That's higher than the grocery inflation shoppers saw in 2024 and 2025 but close to the historical average of 2.6%.

It's the compounding effect of the post-pandemic price shocks that consumers are still feeling, and they're reacting to them in ways that could have repercussions for the U.S. economy.

A recent study by the consulting firm Bain & Co. and the market research company NielsenIQ said the number of items purchased at U.S. grocery stores declined in the second half of last year and dropped more sharply starting in February of this year. The study said high gas prices, rising GLP-1 usage and cuts in the number of people receiving government food aid are all affecting grocery spending.

Consumers are also looking for deals and shopping around to find them. In the second quarter of this year, discounters like Costco, Walmart and Aldi took market share away from traditional grocers like Kroger and Albertsons, according to Numerator, a market research firm.

Many U.S. shoppers are also replacing name-brand products with store brands to save money. Total sales of store brands at supermarkets, drugstores and other retailers grew to a record \$282.8 billion last year, the Private Label Manufacturers Association said.

"Now that this option becomes available, why would I go back? You have the convenience, it's the same, but my cost is 40% less and it's a brand that I know and trust," said Sean Hooper, a senior solution principal at Relex Solutions, a retail and grocery consulting firm.

Prices rocketed up for lots of

reasons in the wake of the pandemic, from the war in Ukraine to a highly contagious bird flu that pushed retail egg prices to record highs last year. And when prices rocket upward - whether for food, gas or other items - consumers can count on a slow, downy descent.

For one thing, retailers are reluctant to lower prices on inventory they ordered when wholesale prices were high, said Jared Bernstein, a senior policy fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy who served as chair of President Joe Biden's Council of Economic Advisers.

Stores and food companies also want to maximize their profits and were reluctant to give up some of the sales gains they saw after the pandemic, Bernstein said. PepsiCo hiked its prices by double-digit percentages for eight straight quarters in 2022 and 2023, for example, citing higher ingredient and packaging costs. After customer demand faltered, the company began lowering prices on some snacks last year.

Customer behavior also can contribute to prices staying elevated. When prices spike, people shop around for lower ones. But consumers often stop deal hunting when they see prices coming down, giving retailers less incentive to lower prices even further.

"There's less competitive force on the feather side of the mountain," Bernstein said.

In some cases, grocery inflation is the result of long-term issues with no quick fix. Consider the average price of coffee, which has risen 54% in U.S. cities since 2019, according to government data. Climate issues - including drought in Vietnam, heavy rain in Indonesia and hot, dry weather in Brazil - are blamed for reducing coffee yields and driving up global prices.

In other cases, there are clearer causes and simpler fixes. For example, U.S. consumers paid 19.5% more for fresh tomatoes in June compared to a year earlier due to a 17% import tax the Trump administration placed on fresh tomatoes from Mexico. Coffee was subject to a tariff for most of 2025 as well, but the duty was eventually removed.

Hamory said the feather may be starting to fall as big retailers invest in price cuts. In early July, Walmart said it was rolling back prices on ground beef, corn, red cherries, ice cream, potato chips and Coca-Cola and Pepsi products. Target also cut prices on some foods in March.

"If the big guys are really investing, saying, 'That's what I need to do to get right with my customer,' that will force others in the market to act," Hamory said. "It's just in the process of starting, but that's a thing we could be seeing." (AP)



Apral Jack orders deli meat at Stop&Shop in Lexington, Mass., Monday, July 6, 2026. (Maggie Scales/The Lexington Observer via AP)

Recording a growth of 18%

Kuwait International Bank Group reports KD 17.5 mln H1 net profit

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: **Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah**, Chairman of Kuwait International Bank (KIB), announced the Group’s financial results for the first half (H1) of 2026 ended 30 June 2026. KIB Group achieved net profit attributable to shareholders amounting to KD 17.5 million, compared to KD 14.8 million in H1 2025, reflecting a growth of 18%. Earnings per share (EPS) stood at 8.32 fils, compared to 6.77 fils for the same period last year. Total operating income was almost KD 51million, marking a growth of 10% compared to the first half of 2025.

Regarding the Bank’s financial statements for the first half of 2026, Al-Jarrah stated that KIB’s total assets grew by 10% to reach KD 4.60 billion, compared to KD 4.19 billion as of 30 June 2025. This growth was driven by an increase in the financing portfolio, which rose by 12%, or KD 360 million, to reach KD 3.45 billion, compared to KD 3.09 billion for the corresponding period last year. Meanwhile, its investment portfolio, which includes high-quality Sukuk, grew by KD 60 million to reach almost KD 582 million as of the end of June 2026, compared to almost KD 522 million for the same period in 2025.

Commenting on the financial results, Al-Jarrah expressed pride in KIB’s performance during the first half of 2026, despite geopolitical developments in the region. He emphasized that these results demonstrate the Group’s ability to deliver sustainable growth, driven by strong operating income while maintaining high asset quality and profitability, underscoring the resilience of its business model and its ability to create sustainable value for shareholders. Al-Jarrah stated that the Bank remains committed to preserving a solid capital base and balanced asset quality and profitability, while achieving prudent growth in financing and deposits. He added that these indicators reflect the Bank’s agile execution of its strategy and support the sustainability of the Group’s performance.

Al-Jarrah also emphasized that investing in national talent remains one of the Bank’s key drivers of sustainable growth. Accordingly, KIB



Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah, Chairman

continues to attract, develop and retain top talent to strengthen the Bank’s readiness to meet future aspirations.

On his part, **Raed Jawad Bukhamseen**, Vice Chairman and CEO of KIB, provided a detailed overview of the key financial results for the first half of 2026 compared to the same period last year, noting that financing income increased to KD 106 million, compared to KD 95.4 million, representing a growth rate of 11%. Fees and commission income also increased to KD 12.2 million compared to KD 9.3 million, reflecting a growth rate of 30%. Investment income also increased to reach KD 3.3 million, compared to KD 2.9 million, marking a growth rate of 14%. This contributed to a rise in total operating income, which reached almost KD 51 million, reflecting a growth rate of 10%.

Regarding the Bank’s financial position, Bukhamseen said that KIB’s depositors’ accounts grew by 16%, or KD 451 million to reach KD 3.29 billion as of 30 June 2026 compared to KD 2.84 billion for the same period of last year. In addition, the total shareholders’ equity grew



Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and CEO

6% to reach KD 379 million as of 30 June 2026 compared to KD 357.7 million for the same period of last year. He noted that KIB continues to maintain high levels of total capital adequacy ratio, in accordance with Basel III instructions, of 21% as of 30 June 2026.

Bukhamseen noted that, during the first half of 2026, KIB Group, through its investment arm KIB Invest, acted as Joint Lead Manager in two landmark Sukuk transactions. The first was a historic USD 1 billion Sukuk issuance for the Islamic Development Bank, which is rated AAA with a stable outlook. This strategic transaction reinforces growing global confidence in the Group’s capabilities in Islamic capital markets and its leading role in arranging high-quality issuances for major international institutions. The second was KIB Invest’s participation in the successful issuance of USD 700 million in five-year unsecured Sukuk for First Abu Dhabi Bank, one of the region’s leading financial institutions.

Meanwhile, Bukhamseen stated that the Bank continues to execute its digital strategy by enhancing its digital banking services, elevating

the customer experience, and investing in its technology infrastructure, thereby driving greater operational efficiency.

In their concluding remarks, Al-Jarrah and Bukhamseen expressed their appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait for its exceptional regulatory and supervisory roles. They also expressed their gratitude to the Capital Markets Authority for its supportive role in fostering a stable and competitive investment environment. They also thanked the Bank’s shareholders and customers for their continued trust, as well as KIB’s employees for their efforts and contributions to achieving these results. They affirmed their commitment to continuing efforts to strengthen the Bank’s financial position and achieve sustainable growth.

About KIB

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

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

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

Section 301 tariffs target 99% of US imports

Forced labor crackdown or tariff end-run?

NEW YORK, July 26, (AP): The Trump administration has imposed double-digit tariffs on more than 60 countries, using a legal justification that permits the president to levy import taxes and other sanctions against countries found to engage in “unjustifiable,” “unreasonable” or “discriminatory” trade practices.

The new tariffs announced in recent days take effect just as temporary 10% worldwide tariffs expired, and critics say they are less about cracking down on forced labor than they are a way to replace those tariffs. The expired tariffs were themselves a temporary replacement for worldwide tariffs the Supreme Court struck down in February.

The tariffs were levied on countries that the U.S. says either don’t have or don’t effectively enforce a forced-labor import ban. The affected countries, which account for 99% of U.S. imports, were quick to protest, calling the Trump administration’s claims unfounded and arbitrary, as nations with vastly different records on forced labor received the same tariff level. The U.S. spent four months investigating but gave few details on how it arrived at the tariff rates, which are either 10% or 12.5%.

The tariffs were levied under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 on countries that the U.S. determined had failed “to impose and effectively enforce a prohibition on the importation of goods produced with forced labor.”

During President Donald Trump’s first term, he cited Section 301 to impose sweeping tariffs on Chinese imports amid a dispute over the sharp-elbowed tactics Beijing was using to challenge America’s technological dominance. The U.S. is also using 301 powers to counter what it calls unfair Chinese practices in the shipbuilding industry.

“The 301s allow a permanent tariff without going to Congress to settle the dispute,” said Barry Appleton, a law professor and co-director of New York Law School’s Center for International Law. “That’s what all of this is about. The president doesn’t want to knock on the front door of Congress, so he’s trying every side door and every unlatched window to get in.”

The office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) said it consulted with all 60 economies under investigation and held two rounds of public hearings, elicited more than 2,100 public comments, and had “engagement” with its trading partners about what they were doing to combat forced labor bans.

It didn’t detail its talks with the countries, saying those were confidential. Experts say it is fairly straightforward to investigate whether a country has a ban or not, but it is difficult to determine the government’s exact rationale for each country’s failure to enforce import bans.

“There’s not a lot of hard evidence there,” said Scott Lincicome, vice president for general economics and trade policy at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank. “It’s pretty laughable on its face to think that a country like the ones in Europe or in Norway or Switzerland aren’t doing enough to police forced labor.”

And even if countries do enact and enforce the forced-labor import bans the U.S. wants, they would still need to prove that they’re enforcing them to Washington’s satisfaction before the tariffs would be removed, said lawyer Patrick Childress, a partner at Holland & Knight and a former U.S. trade official.

“This suggests that no short-term path for country-wide relief from the new Section 301 tariffs will be available,” he said.

Many countries have pushed back against the Trump

administration’s findings.

Brazil, which faces a 12.5% forced-labor tariff, called the U.S. move “arbitrary and unjustified.” The U.S. “chose to manipulate an issue of great importance to human rights and the struggles of workers worldwide in order to accuse 59 countries and the European Union of unfair practices,” it said in a statement.

Australia also questioned the justification for its 12.5% tariff.

“We believe that amongst all of the countries in the world, Australia does take the issue of slavery, modern slavery, seriously, and will continue to do that,” Trade Minister Don Farrell told reporters in Adelaide.

Carve-outs have riled some industries. The National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO), which describes itself as the voice of the American textile industry, protested a mechanism that exempts the Section 301 tariffs for textile and apparel imports from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Malaysia based on those countries’ imports of U.S. cotton and textiles.

“No other industry has been more disadvantaged by forced labor than the U.S. textile industry, which employs 453,000 workers and has lost 41 plants over the past two plus years,” NCTO chief executive Kim Glas said in a statement. “We remain strongly concerned that USTR’s textile mechanism will harm the very domestic manufacturers the administration seeks to help.”

The U.S. has two major pieces of legislation related to forced-labor import bans. The Tariff Act of 1930 gave Customs and Border Protection the authority to seize shipments where forced labor was suspected and to block further imports. But it had a big carve-out: If there was “consumptive demand,” meaning there wasn’t sufficient supply to meet domestic demand, imports were allowed regardless of how they were produced. The Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act that took effect in 2016 eliminated that loophole.

In 2021, the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act was passed. It blocks imports from China’s Xinjiang region unless businesses can prove the items were made without forced labor.

But goods made with forced labor can still make it into the U.S. In 2015, an Associated Press investigation found that slave labor was used in the fishing industry in Southeast Asia. The seafood they caught made its way to supermarkets and pet food providers across the U.S.

An investigation by The Associated Press in 2020 into the \$65 billion palm oil industry found labor abuses among an invisible workforce consisting of millions of men, women and children in Asia. The fruit they harvested made its way into the supply chains of major companies, including Unilever, L’Oreal, Nestle and Procter & Gamble.

During hearings on the tariffs this month, National Retail Federation vice president Jonathan Gold, who was representing the business coalition the Joint Association Forced Labor Working Group at the hearing, said that in order for the import bans to work, they would have to be much more extensive.

He said there need to be “clear, measurable benchmarks” tied to tariffs for countries to hit, and that the U.S. should help countries build enforcement programs.

Kenya Davis, a partner at the Boies Schiller Flexner law firm, said an effective ban needs a “comprehensive approach” that provides transparency about what the investigations consisted of, along with programs that provide countries aid in enforcing bans.



أهم النتائج المالية في النصف الأول 2026
H1 2026 Key Financial Results

الأرباح العائدة على مساهمي البنك
Profit attributable to shareholders

18% ↑

17.5 Million KD

H1 2026

14.8 Million KD

H1 2025

	H1 2026	H1 2025	Growth %
ربحية السهم Earnings per share	8.32 Fils	6.77 Fils	23% ↑
الإيرادات التشغيلية Operating income	51.1 Million KD	46.3 Million KD	10% ↑
مدينو التمويل Financing receivables	3.45 Billion KD	3.09 Billion KD	12% ↑
مجموع الموجودات Total assets	4.60 Billion KD	4.19 Billion KD	10% ↑
حسابات المودعين Depositors' accounts	3.29 Billion KD	2.84 Billion KD	16% ↑

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75 high-potential employees & senior leaders embark on a six-month leadership & reverse mentorship journey

KFH launches ‘ONE VISION’ leadership development program to empower future leaders

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched ONE VISION, a leadership development initiative designed to invest in national talent and prepare the next generation of leaders across the Group. The program brings together 75 high-potential employees and senior leaders in a structured six-month journey focused on learning, knowledge sharing, professional growth, and leadership development.

Speaking at the launch event, KFH Acting Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Ahmad Alhammad, emphasized the strategic importance of investing in people and strengthening leadership capabilities across the organization.

“Today, we bring together 75 talented colleagues and senior leaders to embark on a six-month journey of learning, connection, and growth,” Alhammad said. “ONE VISION reflects KFH’s commitment to developing its talent and preparing future leaders capable of driving sustainable success and supporting the Group’s strategic ambitions.”

Alhammad highlighted that the program is distinguished by its reverse mentorship approach, which promotes a two-way learning experience between senior leaders and high-potential employees.

“What makes this program unique is its focus on reverse



Group photo of the participants during the ONE VISION initiative.



Ahmad Alhammad



Part of the training program.

mentorship, where learning is mutual,” he said. “Our leaders will share their experience and insights, while talented employees will contribute fresh perspectives,

innovative ideas, and new ways of thinking. This exchange creates valuable opportunities for growth and strengthens collaboration across different levels of the

organization.”

As part of the program, mentors and mentees will participate in six structured sessions over the next six months. These sessions are designed to strengthen professional relationships, encourage knowledge transfer, support leadership development, and foster a culture of continuous learning.

Alhammad noted that ONE VISION has been developed to achieve several key objectives, including strengthening leadership capabilities among high-potential talent, building stronger connections between future leaders and senior leadership, encouraging collaboration and innovation, promoting cross-functional engagement, and enhancing readiness for future leadership opportunities.

He expressed his appreciation to the participating mentors for their commitment to developing future leaders and sharing their expertise and professional experiences.

Alhammad congratulated the mentees on being selected for the program and encouraged them to embrace the opportunity with curiosity, openness, and a commitment to continuous learning. He noted that the relationships they build and the insights they gain throughout the journey will play a valuable role in their professional and leadership development.

Alhammad reaffirmed KFH’s belief that people are its most valuable asset and stressed the bank’s commitment to creating meaningful development opportunities that support long-term organizational success.

He concluded by encouraging all participants to fully embrace the experience and contribute to making ONE VISION a successful platform for collaboration, development, and shared achievement.

Mol honors NBK’s Head of Anti-Financial Crime & CSO

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: In recognition of National Bank of Kuwait’s (NBK) role in upholding the highest standards of security and protection and strengthening its partnerships with various government entities, the Ministry of Interior, represented by His Excellency Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, honoured Mr. Khalid Al-Matrouk, Chief Security Officer and Head of Anti-Financial Crime–Kuwait at NBK.

Al-Matrouk received a certificate of appreciation in which His Excellency the Minister of Interior commended his outstanding efforts, dedication and commitment in the performance of his duties, while recognising NBK’s contributions to supporting efforts aimed at enhancing security and stability and serving the national interest.

The certificate of appreciation also commended the commitment, responsibility and dedication reflected in this performance in service of the nation. His Excellency extended his best wishes to Mr. Khalid Al-Matrouk and NBK for continued success and further contributions to advancing Kuwait’s development and safeguarding the security and stability of the country.

This recognition reflects the longstanding cooperation between NBK and the Ministry of Interior across its various sectors and departments, underscoring both parties’ commitment to deepening coordination and fostering the exchange of expertise in support of the public interest and the continued security and stability of the State of Kuwait.

Reflecting this shared commitment, the relationship between the

Bank and the security authorities stands as a model of effective partnership between the banking sector and government institutions. Through cooperation and coordinating across a broad range of areas of mutual interest, this partnership contributes to advancing national efforts aimed at enhancing security and stability and protecting Kuwait’s national achievements.

NBK continues to invest in strengthening its capabilities and resources across security, protection and risk management by deploying advanced technologies and the latest solutions, enhancing its preventive frameworks, and maintaining close cooperation and coordination with the relevant authorities. These efforts support the efficiency of procedures and enable a swift response to a wide range of challenges.

The Bank also remains committed to delivering ongoing awareness programmes for customers and various segments of society to raise awareness of security risks and emerging fraud techniques. This commitment forms an integral part of the Bank’s efforts to provide a secure banking environment and deliver robust protection across its full spectrum of banking services and channels.

More broadly, this recognition underscores the vital role of partnership between the banking sector and security authorities in advancing national efforts to safeguard security and stability and serve the national interest. In this context, NBK reaffirms its commitment to leveraging its expertise and capabilities and deepening cooperation with all relevant entities, thereby supporting Kuwait’s development and further reinforcing its security and stability.

Global markets reprice inflation risks as oil surges & central banks turn more hawkish

By National Bank of Kuwait

Global markets are increasingly repricing inflation and monetary policy expectations as higher energy prices and renewed trade measures raise the risk of persistent inflation alongside softer growth. Brent crude rose above USD 100/bbl before retreating by the close of trading last week, amid concerns over disruptions to key shipping routes, while higher oil prices pushed global bond yields upward and reinforced expectations of central bank tightening. In the US, initial jobless claims fell 22K to 187K, the lowest since 1969, signalling continued labour market resilience, while US tariffs of 10%-12.5% across around 60 economies could add to inflationary pressures and raise business costs. The dollar strengthened alongside higher Treasury yields, with DXY closing the week at 101.468 [+0.70%]. In Canada, CPI eased to 2.8% YoY from 3.2% YoY and fell 0.4% MoM, while average core inflation declined to 1.85%, providing further evidence of moderating underlying price pressures. USD/CAD closed the week at 1.4096 [+0.52%]. In Europe, the ECB held its deposit rate at 2.25% while signalling potential tightening in September, as euro-area inflation remained at 2.8% YoY and the Composite PMI rose to 51.9, indicating a return to private sector expansion. EUR/USD closed the week at 1.1370 [-0.60%]. In the UK, CPI eased to 2.6% YoY, while the Composite PMI rebounded to 52.1, although renewed energy pressures could reverse some of the recent disinflationary progress. GBP/USD closed the week at 1.3325 [-0.94%]. In Asia Pacific, China kept its one-year and five-year LPRs unchanged at 3% and 3.5%, respectively, as broad fiscal spending fell 11.9% YoY in June, while Australia added 76.3K jobs MoM and New Zealand CPI accelerated to 4.1% YoY, reinforcing expectations for tighter monetary policy. USD/CNH closed the week at 6.7718 [-0.08%]. AUD/USD at 0.6979 [-0.07%], and NZD/USD at 0.5793 [-0.86%]. Meanwhile, the Japanese yen saw continued weakness, with the currency pair ending the week at 163.83 [+0.87%]. Overall, resilient labour markets, elevated energy costs, and persistent inflation risks are likely to keep major central banks cautious on easing, while tighter financial conditions and higher input costs could weigh on global growth.

United States and Canada

US Tariffs of 10%-12.5% Extended Across 60 Economies as Protectionism Resurges

The US is set to impose new tariffs of 10% to 12.5% on imports from around 60 economies, reinforcing President Donald Trump’s protectionist trade agenda following the Supreme Court’s rejection of earlier tariff measures. Levies of 10% will apply to selected partners including Mexico, the UK, Canada, and India, while duties on Japan, Switzerland and South Korea will broadly be capped at 12.5%, with EU and Taiwanese goods generally subject to tariffs of no more than 10%. Although exemptions cover fuel, food, fertilisers, and products already subject to sector-specific duties, the new regime introduces renewed uncertainty for global supply chains and US importers. The measures risk adding to inflationary pressures and business costs, particularly if future tariffs targeting excess manufacturing capacity are layered on top, while retaliatory measures from trading partners could further weaken global trade and investment. DXY last printed at 101.468.

US Initial Jobless Claims Fall 22K to 187K, Lowest Since 1969

US initial jobless claims fell by 22K to 187K in the week ended July 18, substantially below the 210K median economist forecast and marking the lowest level since 1969. The data indicate that employers remain reluctant to reduce headcount despite broader uncertainty surrounding economic growth, tariffs, and elevated energy prices. Continuing claims were little changed at approximately 1.8 million, suggesting that the labour market remains broadly resilient. The sharp decline in initial claims reinforces expectations that layoffs remain contained ahead of the July 28-29 Federal Open Market Committee meeting, although the strength of the labour market may partly reflect lower labour-force participation. For the Federal Reserve, the data provide limited evidence of an urgent deterioration in employment conditions, potentially allowing policymakers to maintain a greater focus on renewed inflation risks from higher energy prices and tariffs.

Canada CPI Falls to 2.8% YoY and -0.4% MoM as Core Inflation Drops to 1.85%

Canadian inflation moderated more than expected in June, with the Consumer Price Index rising 2.8% YoY, down from 3.2% YoY in May and below the 2.9% consensus forecast, while prices declined 0.4% MoM. The average of the Bank of Canada’s preferred median and trim core inflation measures fell

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week’s Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1439	1.1364	1.1450	1.1370	1.1250	1.1450	1.1415
GBP	1.3452	1.3299	1.3481	1.3325	1.3200	1.3400	1.3327
JPY	162.40	162.22	163.99	163.83	163.00	165.00	162.58
CHF	0.8073	0.8061	0.8186	0.8182	0.8100	0.8300	0.8098

to 1.85%, its lowest level since September 2020 and below the 2% threshold for the first time in almost six years. Gasoline prices declined 10.2% MoM, although they remained 20.5% higher YoY, while shelter inflation eased to 1.5% YoY. The Statistics Canada report supports the Bank of Canada’s recent decision to maintain its policy rate at 2.25% for a sixth consecutive meeting, although renewed oil price gains and elevated freight costs could reverse some of the disinflationary impulse in July. The Canadian dollar weakened modestly on release of the data, while two-year government bond yields declined. USD/CAD last printed at 1.4096.

Europe and the United Kingdom

ECB Holds Deposit Rate at 2.25% as Lagarde Signals Potential Further Tightening

The European Central Bank maintained its deposit rate at 2.25% but signalled increasing readiness to resume tightening as renewed Middle East hostilities drive energy prices higher. President Christine Lagarde indicated that some policymakers had considered an immediate rate hike, while emphasising that the Governing Council would assess incoming data ahead of its September meeting. Euro-area headline inflation slowed to 2.8% YoY in June, although the renewed surge in oil and gas prices presents significant upside risks to the inflation outlook and could keep price growth above target into the first half of 2027. Markets are now pricing an almost fully certain 25bp hike in September and another increase by year-end. The 10-year German Bund yield reached 3.21%, its highest level since 2011, while the euro weakened as investors balanced the prospect of tighter ECB policy against growing concerns over energy-driven stagflation and weaker regional growth. EUR/USD last printed at 1.1370.

Euro-Zone Composite PMI Rises to 51.9 as German PMI Rebounds to 51.2 and French PMI Improves to 49.6

Euro-area private-sector activity strengthened much more than expected in July, with the Composite PMI rising to 51.9 from 50.0, moving into expansion territory for the first time since March. Germany led the improvement, with its Composite PMI rising to 51.2 from 49.5 as manufacturing activity strengthened to 52.2, while France’s Composite PMI increased to 49.6 from 47.2, marking its strongest reading since February but remaining marginally below the 50 threshold. The data suggest the euro-area economy entered the third quarter with improved momentum, supported by stronger services activity and easing cost pressures. However, the renewed escalation in the Middle East and the associated rise in oil and gas prices threaten to undermine the recovery by intensifying inflationary pressures, disrupting energy supply and increasing borrowing costs. The stronger activity data therefore provide limited comfort as the ECB considers further tightening in September.

UK CPI Eases to 2.6% YoY as Services Inflation Slows to 3.6% and PMI Rebounds to 52.1

UK inflation eased to 2.6% YoY in June from 2.8% YoY in May, below the 2.7% consensus forecast and marking the lowest rate since March 2025, while services inflation moderated to 3.6% YoY from 3.7%. The disinflationary improvement was supported by a 3.1% decline in petrol and diesel prices and food inflation easing to 1.6% YoY, although renewed energy price pressures are expected to lift inflation in the coming months. At the same time, the labour market remained subdued, with payroll employment rising only 3K MoM in May and falling 0.3% YoY, while private-sector wage growth slowed to 2.9% YoY, its weakest pace in five years. Nevertheless, business activity rebounded, with the Composite PMI rising to 52.1 from 49.3 in June. The mixed data leave the Bank of England balancing softer domestic pressures against renewed energy and tariff-related inflation risks. GBP/USD last printed at 1.3325.

Asia-Pacific

Yen Nears 40-Year Low as Markets Price an 80% Chance of Another BOJ Rate Hike by October

Bank of Japan officials are reportedly open to raising interest rates faster than the roughly six-month

pace anticipated by most economists, as renewed yen weakness increases upside inflation risks. The BOJ is widely expected to leave its policy rate unchanged at 1% at its July 31 meeting after raising rates to the highest level in 31 years last month, although markets now assign an 80% probability of another hike by October. The yen recently weakened to near a four-decade low, while underlying inflation is approaching the BOJ’s 2% target and companies appear increasingly willing to pass higher costs through to consumers. Policymakers are therefore shifting their focus from generating inflation towards ensuring price growth remains sustainably anchored around target. The prospect of faster tightening, alongside potential government intervention, is supporting Japanese bond yields and increasing USD/JPY volatility. USD/JPY last printed at 163.83.

China Keeps Loan Prime Rates Unchanged for 14th Month as Fiscal Spending Falls 11.9% YoY

China kept its benchmark lending rates unchanged for a 14th consecutive month in July, with the one-year LPR at 3% and the five-year LPR at 3.5%, as policymakers maintained a patient approach despite weaker-than-expected second-quarter growth. The economy is facing a structural mismatch between strong supply and weak domestic demand, with subdued household consumption contrasting with resilient manufacturing and exports. Broad fiscal spending also fell 11.9% YoY in June, suggesting a continued drag from fiscal policy, although authorities have pledged to maintain an appropriately loose monetary stance and strengthen financial support to revive domestic consumption. Attention now turns to the end-July Politburo meeting for guidance on second-half economic policy, including potential measures to stabilise household balance sheets and the property sector. While further monetary easing remains possible, policymakers may prioritise targeted support and faster implementation of existing measures. USD/CNH last printed at 6.7718.

Australia Employment Surges 76.3K MoM in June as Unemployment Holds at 4.4%

Australian employment increased by a much stronger-than-expected 76.3K MoM in June following an upwardly revised 44K gain in May, while the unemployment rate remained at 4.4% as the participation rate increased to 67%. Full-time employment rose 29.3K and part-time employment increased 47K, highlighting continued resilience in labour demand despite restrictive monetary policy. The robust employment data have strengthened expectations for further Reserve Bank of Australia tightening, with markets fully pricing a 25bp hike by December and assigning around a 50% probability to a September move. The RBA’s policy rate remains at 4.35%, while inflation is not expected to return to the midpoint of the 2%-3% target range until mid-2028. Renewed Middle East tensions and higher fuel prices could reinforce inflation risks, although weak consumer and business confidence may constrain domestic demand. AUD/USD last printed at 0.6979.

New Zealand CPI Accelerates to 4.1% YoY and 1.5% QoQ as Fuel Prices Surge

New Zealand inflation accelerated sharply to 4.1% YoY in the second quarter from 3.1% YoY in the first quarter, exceeding the 4% consensus forecast, while prices increased 1.5% QoQ against expectations of 1.4%. Tradables inflation accelerated to 4.9% YoY, driven by a 27.5% increase in gasoline prices and a 71% surge in other fuel costs, while non-tradables inflation eased modestly to 3.4% YoY from 3.5%. The stronger-than-expected inflation outcome reinforces expectations that the Reserve Bank of New Zealand will deliver another 25bp rate increase in September after raising the Official Cash Rate to 2.5% earlier this month. Markets also anticipate further tightening later in the year, although the pace beyond the neutral level remains uncertain. Renewed Middle East tensions and associated fuel price risks represent further upside risks to the inflation outlook. NZD/USD last printed at 0.5793.

Kuwait

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30780.



NBK executive awarded by Interior Ministry.



Joe Russo, from left, Winston Duke, Kevin Feige, Anthony Russo, Anthony Mackie, Pedro Pascal, Chris Evans, Robert Downey Jr., David Harbour, Hayley Atwell, Hannah John-Kamen, Lewis Pullman, Rebecca Romijn, James Marsden, Tenoch Huerta, and Kelsey Grammer attend a panel for Marvel Studios during Comic-Con International on Saturday, July 25, 2026, in San Diego. (AP)

Depp's Scrooge crashes Comic-Con, roasts crowd

Wakanda's heir rises as Gosling ignites 'Ghost Rider'

SAN DIEGO, July 26, (AP): Marvel Studios used its Comic-Con International presentation Saturday to announce David Jonsson as the new Black Panther - the son of Chadwick Boseman's T'Challa - and reveal that Ryan Gosling will be playing Ghost Rider, both in films set for release in 2028.

Jonsson joined Oscar-winning "Black Panther" franchise director Ryan Coogler on stage alongside Letitia Wright and Winston Duke, holding his hand to his chest and smiling broadly. "Black Panther III" is set for release Dec. 15, 2028.

"Thank you to this family that I have the honor and the blessing to join. I don't want to say too much, because I want to let the screen do the talking," said the 32-year-old actor, known for roles in "Industry," "The Long Walk" and "Alien: Romulus."

Boseman died in 2020, and ever since 2022's "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" revealed that T'Challa had a son, fans have been playing a guessing game of who might take over the mantle, with Damson Idris and Wright in the mix. The original 2018 "Black Panther" became the first superhero film to earn a best picture Oscar nomination and made more than \$1.3 billion worldwide, while the sequel earned \$850 million.

Gosling will re-team with his "Star Wars: Starfighter" director Shawn Levy on "Ghost Rider."

"I'm having the greatest flashback vibes being here," said Levy in reference to his appearance at Hall H two years ago to promote "Deadpool & Wolverine," which became a massive hit. "I'll never forget that night because it was also my real introduction to the greatest fans anywhere."

Gosling greeted Marvel Studios chief Kevin Feige and told the crowd that he'd wanted to play the character for a long time.

Gosling's longtime partner, Eva Mendes, starred alongside Nicolas Cage in Cage's original standalone "Ghost Rider" film, released in 2007 - a year before "Iron Man" kicked off Marvel's cinematic universe. A sequel was released by Sony in 2012, and film rights have since reverted to Marvel, but the character hasn't appeared yet in the MCU.

Feige told the crowd that Joe and Anthony Russo's 2019 film "Avengers: Endgame" will be re-released in theaters on Sept. 25 with new footage linking it to the Russos' "Avengers: Doomsday," due out Dec. 18.

A "Doomsday" trailer played during the panel showed that Robert Downey Jr.'s Victor Von Doom will have some past tie to Reed Richards (Pedro Pascal) and Sue Storm (Vanessa Kirby). Storm is seen saying that Doom is a broken person who used to be different: "Everything



Kevin Feige attends a panel for Marvel Studios during Comic-Con International on Saturday, July 25, 2026, in San Diego. (AP)

he loved was taken from him." Later, Richards asks Doom if he's the one responsible for the horrors around them.

Downey Jr. joked on stage that Reed and Doom were "besties." Fans have been curious about the connection between the two after "The Fantastic Four: First Steps" post-credit scene included a clip of Doom sitting in Reed and Storm's living room with their baby.

"Doomsday" stars taking the stage included Wright, Duke, Chris Evans, Hayley Atwell, Simu Liu, Danny Ramirez, Anthony Mackie, James Marsden, Kelsey Grammer, Paul Rudd, Rebecca Romijn, David Harbour, Lewis Pullman and Tenoch Huerta.

Clad in a new gray Deadpool costume, Ryan Reynolds crashed the panel from the audience.

"Longtime listener. First time caller," said Reynolds, asking Rudd why Thor was crying in the previous film. Rudd responded "He's a Wrexham fan," in reference to the soccer team that Reynolds co-owns.

"This seems like an awfully expensive way to an-

nounce a film. When do you start filming," asked Reynolds.

"It's in the can, bro! Did you bump your head?" said Downey Jr. from the stage.

Many fans waited more than a day to get inside Comic-Con's most-anticipated panel. Marvel Studios hopes it will act as a reset for its brand, which has been diluted by an overabundance of Disney+ series and critics' disappointment in films like last year's "Captain America: Brave New World." Though audience interest in superhero films has waned in recent years, "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" - released by Sony in coordination with Marvel - is set to dominate the summer box office when it's released July 31 and ticket pre-sales have been strong for "Doomsday."

Meanwhile, Johnny Depp scolded Comic-Con International attendees in character as Ebenezer Scrooge as the nation's biggest pop culture convention opened Thursday. "Do you have jobs? It seems as though you have so much spare time. Why are you here?" said the actor, clad

in an overcoat and top hat as he emerged from a faux snow-lined downtown San Diego storefront marked with a "Scrooge and Marley" sign. A crowd gathered, recording on cellphones and calling out "Merry Christmas!"

"I can only say you're all very, very strange people. Humbug!" Depp called out gruffly, shuffling back inside the building.

"Ebenezer," set for release Nov. 13, is the embattled star's first studio film in eight years. His appearance on the streets of the Gaslamp Quarter - outside any official panels - fits the more guerrilla-style approach to marketing and promotion that some Hollywood studios have taken at the expo in recent years.

More than 120,000 people are expected at the four-day convention, 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.

Organizers have said in recent years that the San Diego's event and hotel space may not be enough to hold growing crowds, and have floated moving to Los Angeles or another large city. But the city's mayor Todd Gloria said Wednesday as the expo opened that it would remain in San Diego through 2030. He said the announcement "reflects our shared commitment to the fans, creators, businesses and workers who make Comic-Con unlike anything else in the world."

PJ Richardson, 44, drove cross-country from Orlando, Florida, with his family for his first Comic-Con International. He'd visited a smaller convention in his hometown - but it hadn't prepared him for the magnitude of toys and collectibles on display at the bayfront expo.

"It's the Mecca. It's once-in-a-lifetime, so we had to come. This was a thousand times more," he said. "The setups of all the booths and everything are absolutely amazing."

The K-pop group ENHYPEN joined Catherine Hardwicke, director of the first "Twilight" film, and franchise actors Peter Facinelli and Ashley Greene at a Thursday panel about vampire storytelling. It marked one of many moments of cross-pop culture exchanges.

Members of distinct fandoms unite through cosplay, showing off handmade costumes and exchanging photos. Brionna Slavalk, 27, traveled from Indiana to attend the convention dressed as the elf paladin Vaelus from "Critical Role," a Dungeons & Dragons-themed web series. Her skin was painted purple.

"Obviously I am partial to the body paint. I think it looks really neat when people do that. I saw somebody who was red, who I think is from 'Hazbin Hotel,' who was amazing. We just saw three Doctor Dooms over there!" she said. "It's a blast."



This image released by Neon shows promotional art for "Sheep in the Box," a film by Hirokazu Kore-eda. (AP)

Grief reimagined: Kore-eda explores loss through AI in 'Sheep in the Box'

TOKYO, July 26, (AP): In acclaimed Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda's latest film, a grieving couple turns to technology to recreate what they have lost.

"Sheep in the Box," opening in U.S. theaters Friday, centers on a married couple whose son has died. To cope with their grief, they commission a humanoid made in his exact likeness.

The title refers to "The Little Prince," Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's children's book, in which a sheep is imagined as being hidden inside a box. For Kore-eda, the reference suggests that some of the most valuable things in life may be intangible, sustained by connections that cannot be seen.

The film, a family drama set in the not-too-distant future, premiered at the Cannes Film Festival this year.

"It explores how a couple tries to rework their relationship with their child, and so it's not that different from the stories I've explored in my past works," Kore-eda told The Associated Press.

Born in Tokyo in 1962, Kore-eda started directing documentaries after graduating from Waseda University. He generally writes, directs and edits his films, an enormous undertaking in filmmaking, but it gives him near-total control.

His 2013 feature "Like Father, Like Son," a heart-breaking exploration of fatherhood centering on babies who get switched at birth, won the Jury Prize at Cannes.

His 2018 "Shoplifters," which won the Palme d'Or and was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, was about a poverty-stricken family that survives partly by shoplifting.

In 2019, he directed French actors Catherine Deneuve and Juliette Binoche in "The Truth." In the 2022 film "Broker," he directed Korean actors, including Song Kang-ho, who won Best Actor at Cannes.

Despite the demands of his productions, Kore-eda is known for trying to ensure that everyone enjoys working on his sets. He has also been a longtime and vocal opponent of harassment in the industry.

That approach stands out in an industry known for punishing hours and low pay, particularly in Japan. Anyone found harassing another person while working on one of Kore-eda's films is immediately removed from the production.

Adding to the challenge of ensuring benevolent filmmaking is that his works often have children as leading characters.

In his 2004 "Nobody Knows," children live without adult supervision, as they scrounge for food and live without running water or electricity.

That film propelled Yuya Yagira to stardom. Yagira, still active as an actor today, won Best Actor at the Cannes Film Festival, at 14.

"Sheep in the Box" also features a striking performance by child actor Rimu Kuwaki, who took on the difficult role of playing a robot in his feature-film debut.

Kore-eda denied he saw children as a necessary element in his filmmaking. He merely likes the style of taking the view of a child to explore the adult world.

"It's a heavy responsibility. We may be the first adults besides parents and teachers these children may come in contact with," he said.

"We want them to go home thinking all the adults were hard-working and having fun."

Kore-eda is surprisingly disarming for a filmmaker whose works address such serious themes. He laughs easily.

When this reporter said she wanted to ask the same question she asked Japanese director Akira Kurosawa many years ago - "What is filmmaking for you?" - he didn't skip a beat asking what Kurosawa's answer was.

Californios’ third star elevates Mexican fine dining worldwide

San Francisco Mexican restaurant gains historic Michelin acclaim



A tostada with bluefin tuna is prepared at Californios in San Francisco on Thursday, July 16, 2026. (AP)



A flauta dish with local Dungeness crab is seen at Californios in San Francisco on Thursday, July 16, 2026. (AP)



Chef Val Cantu, co-owner of Californios, samples the tasting menu at the restaurant in San Francisco on Thursday, July 16, 2026. (AP)

SAN FRANCISCO, July 26, (AP): After an eight-year wait, the historic third Michelin star that chef and co-owner Val Cantú and his team at San Francisco’s Californios craved is theirs. It’s the first for a Mexican restaurant anywhere in the world. So it’s understandable he and his 40-person staff have more swagger.

“It’s been just really rewarding to see the team kind of like, carry a little bit more confidence in their step,” Cantú told The Associated Press. “Maybe I’ve got some new confidence too.”

The feat caps a trajectory that began with Cantú getting his first star right out of the gate when Californios opened in 2015. He got a second one in 2018. At a June ceremony in San Diego, Cantú, with his wife Carolyn by his side, received his third star and a crisp white Michelin chef’s jacket.

The accolade feels like validation not just for Californios but for the notion that Mexican food in Mexico and across the diaspora can be an elevated experience. Similar to fine dining Chinese restaurants just a few miles away from Californios, Mexican American restaurants have dealt with criticism for daring to charge more and offering tasting menus. Meanwhile, few bat an eye at French and Japanese restaurants with similar prices.

The Michelin Guide, started in 1889 by French brothers Andre and Edouard Michelin, created a star-ranking system in the 1920s. Today, the guide has

ratings for over 40,000 restaurants. To evaluate a restaurant, Michelin sends undercover inspectors posing as regular diners. The inspectors said Californios ascended the ranks because it has never been “afraid to cross borders” on the plate, according to Michelin’s website.

From the first bite, Californios patrons experience the Texas-born Cantú’s blend of Mexican culture with California ingredients. He starts a meal with a sope, a small hand-formed masa cake made with white corn and beans from a farm in nearby Santa Rosa. Then, with a spatula, caviar made in partnership with a Sacramento sturgeon farm is carefully placed on top.

“It’s just really, really delicious and kind of feels like a warm hug,” Cantú said. “It feels comforting.”

Michelin inspectors agreed. Californios deserved a three-star promotion, one of five inspectors said on Michelin’s website, for dishes consistently “executed with such precision, refinement and clarity without losing the Mexican identity - things like kombu or the matsukasa yaki fish taco.”

Sometimes Cantú and his team would try to guess if a diner could be an inspector. That turned out to be a good reminder that “every guest gets the same quality of presentation and hospitality,” the chef said.

In the past few years, Michelin has starred a number of Mexican restau-

rants including a 10-by-10 foot (3-by-3 meter) taco stand in Mexico City. The growing recognition comes at a precarious time for immigration enforcement policies and the treatment of immigrants - even those in the U.S. legally.

Not someone who seeks to inject politics into food, Cantú could not ignore constant headlines about federal immigration operations - some of which have resulted in deaths including a Mexican man in Houston and a Colombian man in Maine earlier this month. Immigrants are “the backbone of all these dish pits and kitchens,” Cantú said. He has shown support through gestures. In March, he collaborated on an “anti-ICE” fundraising dinner.

“The culinary world is like a huge supporter of immigrants and the need for immigrants and the need to treat people with respect,” Cantú said. “It’s hard for me to say much more.”

Being in a blue state, Cantú is certain most of Californios’ diners share that sentiment. Gustavo Arellano, a food writer and journalist who’s also Mexican American, believes the cuisine’s popularity really helps humanize the immigration debate.

“You see this especially like in small Southern towns where the rhetoric is ‘I’m against illegal immigrants. I don’t want too many Mexicans,’” Arellano said. “But, then they look at the Mexican restaurant in town and they’re like ‘Well, not them.’”

16th-century fortress hosts battles

Modern warriors compete in medieval-style combat

SPØTTRUP, Denmark, July 26, (AP): With swords, axes and shields, competitors from 30 countries are going head-to-head in the grounds of a Danish fortress in a modern version of old-fashioned battle.

The International Medieval Combat Federation’s annual world championship roared into gear in northern Denmark this week. First staged in Spain in 2014, it features armor-clad competitors fighting with 14th-century medieval weapons. But it’s also a modern combat sport with safety rules and sporting conventions.

“It’s historically inspired,” combat federation spokesperson Kamila Studencka said. “It’s a mix of modern techniques with historical ones. We have something between full combat sports and fencing.”

And while the swords and axes are blunted, the battles are anything but harmless reenactments. Studencka said some competitors are attracted by “the violence,” while others prefer the technical aspects of face-to-face duels.

“Some people like the friendship and being a team member ... to be a part of something bigger,” she added.

This year’s championship is being held in the shadow of Spøttrup Castle, a formidable Danish fortress that was completed around 1520.

The event has drawn fighters from 30 countries, including the United States, Canada, China, and Brazil.

Brazilian competitor Rodrigo Sinkevicius, who traveled with a team of eight from São Paulo, said he previously competed in jiu-jitsu and other mixed martial arts, but when he first saw this kind of medieval combat, he “couldn’t believe it.”

“People falling and grabbing and the sound of the steel cracking, it’s like something that you cannot fake,” added the 33-year-old, who works in sales back home.

The four-day championships, which opened Thursday, see competitors battle in one-on-one “duels” made up of two one-minute rounds each. Opponents are eliminated after hitting the ground three times or when they submit. If neither happens, marshals declare a winner based on points scored.

There are also chaotic mass-team events, known as “Buhurt,” in which up to 10 competitors on either side participate.

Martin Gill, from Milton Keynes, England, said he first got involved “to hit someone in the face with an ax.”

“This had that kind of niche appeal to it, that people were willing to consensually come up and say, ‘You can hit me in the face with the ax, as hard as you can,’” the 37-year-old geotechnical engineer said.



A fighter from Italy awaits a battle at the International Medieval Combat Federation's World Championship at Spøttrup Castle, in Spøttrup, Denmark, Thursday, July 23, 2026. (AP)

The IMCF says fighters wear thick, shock-absorbing padded garments beneath the armor to distribute the force of impact, and that fights are strictly controlled by trained marshals who enforce the rules of engagement. It says that overall injury rates are comparable to those in mainstream full-contact martial arts.

Gill said almost everything the competitors wear, including his 30-kilogram (66-pound) suit of armor, is historically accurate. Some outfits and fighting techniques are informed by the writings of 14th-century Italian knight Fiore Dei Liberi and German fencing master Johannes Liechtenauer.

“We follow manuscripts as best we can,” said Gill. “Everything is legitimate techniques from all of their writings throughout the 14th century.”

Nearly 600 fighters are taking part in this week’s championship. The sport, an unflinching blend of mixed martial arts, fencing, and historical reenactment, has been growing in popularity.

Competitor Alex King, a 37-year-old financial crime specialist from Shoreview, Minnesota, said that when he first started three years ago, there were just 10 or so members in his local team. Now there are over 50.

“In America, it’s definitely growing, with the short videos you see now highlighting the sport,” King said. “A lot of people have become interested.”

The last big event in the U.S. featured over 40 teams, he added.

Men and women compete in separate events. Miisa Kaivos, a 27-year-old bartender from Helsinki, Finland, said the women’s side of the sport is also “drastically growing all around the world.”

“It’s amazing to see,” said Kaivos. “It’s always nice to come to these events and fight each other, and have that awesome girl power.”



Two fighters battle during the International Medieval Combat Federation's World Championship at Spøttrup Castle, in Spøttrup, Denmark, Thursday, July 23, 2026. (AP)

Japan’s heritage sites & South Sudan’s wildlife earn global recognition

D-Day beaches, Mount Olympus gain UNESCO status

SEOUL, South Korea, July 26, (AP): World War II’s D-Day landing beaches in northern France and the iconic Mount Olympus in Greece were among the sites added to the World Heritage List on Sunday at a U.N. committee meeting in South Korea reviewing dozens of nominations.

The UNESCO committee, which meets in Busan through Wednesday, also inscribed the ancient Japanese capitals of Asuka and Fujiwara and South Sudan’s Boma-Badingilo Migratory Landscape, host to one of the world’s largest land mammal migrations and the country’s first addition to the World Heritage List.

The French designation covers the five Normandy landing beaches - Omaha, Utah, Sword, Gold and Juno - where more than 150,000 Allied troops came ashore on June 6, 1944, along with the Pointe du Hoc assault site, all central to the campaign to liberate Western Europe from Nazi occupation during World War II.

International Council on Monuments and Sites, which evaluates submissions to the heritage committee, said the sites contain extensive remnants, from German fortifications and bomb-scarred landscapes to Allied harbor structures and sunken vessels, marking an “event widely perceived as having enabled the return of freedom and heralded a lasting peace on the European continent.”

ICOMOS also called for stronger monitoring and preservation efforts on the sites, citing potential threats posed by tourism, climate change and rising sea levels, and the development of wind farms near the areas.

Ahlem Garbi, France’s permanent delegate to UNESCO, said the Normandy landings marked a turning point from global conflict toward a postwar order built on peace and security, and that the designation of the sites carries added significance at a time of escalating international crises and wars.

“It’s probably the greatest amphibious landing there’s ever been. It ought to be remembered for that alone,” historian David Edgerton said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

The World Heritage inscription of Mount Olympus, the mythical home of the 12 Olympian gods, rewarded a 12-year effort by Greece to secure recognition for its tallest mountain as a mixed cultural and natural heritage site. Rising 2,918 meters (9,573 feet) from a base near sea level, the mountain was believed to be the throne of Zeus, king of the gods, while also harboring rich biodiversity.

Evangelos Geroliolios, mayor of Dion-Olympus, a municipality at the foot of the mountain, said in a recent interview with the AP that inclusion on the World Heritage List “places greater obligations on our part to protect this environment,” citing the potential impact of increased tourism.

“We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to safeguarding Mount Olympus for the benefit of present and future generations,” said Georgios Koumoutsakos, Greece’s delegate to UNESCO. “As Greek mythology wisely reminds us, it is always best to remain on good terms with gods.”

The designated Japanese locations in the western prefecture of Nara cover 19 archaeological sites from the 6th- to 8th-century capitals of Asuka and Fujiwara, where Japan established its first centralized state modeled after Chinese systems. The



A view of Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan, a 13th-century Buddhist temple in Nakhon Si Thammarat city, Thailand, Saturday, July 4, 2026. (AP)



Left: This shows Asuka Palace Ruins in Asuka village, Nara prefecture, western Japan, on April 20, 2026. Right: The morning light shines on Mytikas, Greece’s highest peak, center left, and Stefani, known as the Throne of Zeus, atop Mount Olympus seen from the outskirts of Litorchoro in northern Greece, Wednesday, July 15, 2026. (AP)



This shows Fujiwara Palace Ruins, foreground, with Mr. Miminashi, background, in Kashiwara, Nara prefecture, western Japan, on Sept. 9, 2024. (AP)

sites preserve the largely buried remains of royal palaces, government offices, Buddhist temples and tombs from capitals that influenced the later capitals of Nara and Kyoto.

Japanese Vice Culture Minister Shigeki Kobayashi thanked the committee for inscribing the Asuka-Fujiwara sites and said Japan reaffirms its commitment to “transmitting this valuable property to the future generations.” Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, a Nara native, wrote on X that she hopes the World Heritage designation will boost

tourism to the site.

Yoshiyuki Aihara, a Nara University archaeology professor, told AP the sites are significant because they show how Japan’s ancient state was formed through influences from China and the Korean Peninsula.

“If you dig underneath these rice paddies about 1 meter, you start finding a stretch of ruins in this area, though that’s not easy for ordinary visitors to understand,” said Aihara, who is continuing excavation work at the site.

South Sudan’s Boma-Badingilo

site encompasses vast wetlands, flood plains and savannas shaped by seasonal rainfall and flood dynamics, with an estimated 6 million white-eared kob, tiang and Mongalla gazelles moving across the landscape in response to changing environmental conditions.

It also provides habitat for elephants, lions, cheetahs and other wildlife while supporting various ethnic communities that have lived by herding, farming and fishing for centuries, according to UNESCO.



In this image taken from video released by Roscosmos space corporation, Russian Soyuz MS-28 space capsule on July 26. (AP)

US-Russian space crew lands safely in Kazakhstan after 8-month stint on ISS

MOSCOW, July 26, (AP): A US-Russian space crew landed safely in the steppes of Kazakhstan on Sunday after an eight-month stint on the International Space Station.

NASA astronaut Chris Williams and Russian crewmates Sergei Kud-Sverchkov and Sergei Mikaev touched down in their Soyuz MS-28 that landed smoothly by parachute in a designated area southeast of Dzhezkazgan.

Their 241-day stint on the orbiting outpost was the first space mission for Williams and Mikaev and the second for Kud-Sverchkov.

The crew will be flown by helicopter to Karaganda, where Williams will board a plane to return to NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, while Kud-Sverchkov and Mikaev will take a flight to their training base in Star City, just outside Moscow.

Once bitter rivals in the space race during the Cold War, Russia and the US cooperate on the space station and other projects. That relationship was marred by tensions after



In this image taken from video released by Roscosmos space corporation, NASA astronaut Christopher Williams, (left), Roscosmos cosmonauts Sergei Kud-Sverchkov, (centre), and Sergei Mikaev, sit in chairs shortly after the landing of the Russian Soyuz MS-28 space capsule near Kazakh town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan on July 26. (AP)

Moscow sent troops into Ukraine in 2022, but Washington and Moscow have continued to work together, with US and Russian crews flying to the orbiting outpost on each country's spacecraft.

On July 14, the crew of NASA astronaut Anil Menon and Roscosmos cosmonauts Pyotr Dubrov and Anna Kikina arrived at the International Space Station for an eight-month mission after launching from the Russia-leased Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on July 14.

'Brasilia gold lab helps battle crime'

Brazil uses forensic science to trace gold's origin, tackle illegal mining in Amazon

BRASILIA, Brazil, July 26, (AP): Brazil is using forensic science to tackle illegal gold mining in the Amazon, a top threat to the rainforest, Indigenous groups and other communities there that has accelerated deforestation and driven mercury contamination to dangerous levels.

The work takes place at the National Institute of Criminalistics in Brasilia, the country's capital, where federal police have set up a "gold lab" that collects and analyses samples from across the country.

The objective is to determine if a newly acquired sample - gold seized in a police raid, for example - comes from a protected area, meaning it has been illegally mined. It's called "gold fingerprinting" - tracing the origin of gold samples with high precision.

At the lab, sparkling gold flakes are kept in tiny, coin-shaped vessels, but the most valuable thing about them is the data they hold. Each speck is unique because while it forms in nature, inside a rock or a riverbed, the gold deposits absorb particles from the area, such as traces of silver and copper.

And that's the fingerprint. It allows the investigators to determine if gold seized during a police raid was actually mined in the area its purported owner claims it came from, or if it was illegally sourced from a national forest or Indigenous land - in which case its analysis would match stored data from the protected area.

Gustavo Geiser, a federal police forensics expert, says the method has been developed since 2019 in collaboration with Brazilian universities. The investigators use tools such as X-ray fluorescence spectrometry, scanning electron microscopy and laser ablation mass spectrometry.

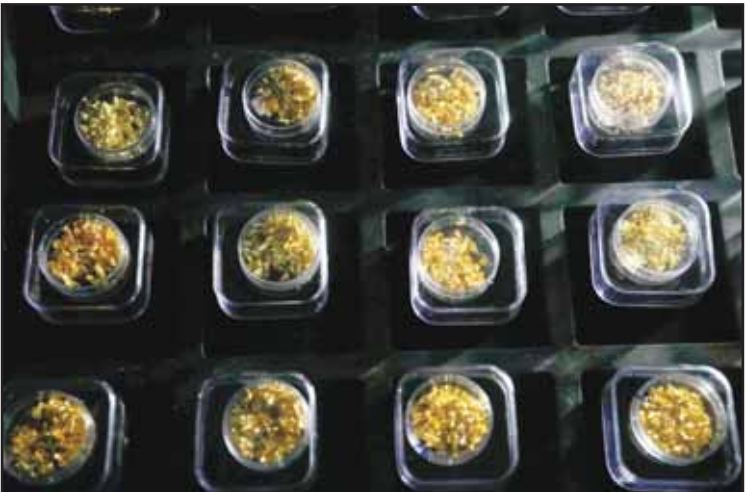
"As we advanced, the forensic examinations became increasingly complex," Geiser said, but the question before them was always the same: "Where did this gold come from?"

If the forensics prove a gold sample was illegally mined, the information then helps police build a case and move forward with further investigations and possibly charges.

Those involved in environmental crimes in the Amazon frequently resort to fraud to introduce their goods into legal markets, not just when it comes to gold but also for cattle and timber. Lately, a worldwide surge in gold prices has only spurred on the mining rush in the Amazon rainforest.

Amazon Mining Watch, a platform that uses satellite imagery to track mining, estimates that about 496,000 hectares (1.2 million acres) of rainforest have been cut down for mining since 2023, including some 223,000 hectares (551,000 acres) in the Brazilian Amazon.

Brazil's Federal Court of Accounts, its top audit institution, said last year there was evidence indicating that mining permits granted by the National Mining Agency to small-scale miners were being used to pawn off gold ex-



Gold samples seized during federal police investigations are displayed at the National Institute of Criminalistics in Brasilia, Brazil on July 13. (AP)

tracted from protected areas in the Amazon.

Greenpeace, in its own independent report in May, based on publicly available records, satellite imagery and aerial surveillance, detailed how the scheme works.

On paper, an owner of a legally authorized mine in the Amazon would declare that tons of gold had been extracted at that mine.

However, satellite and aerial imagery would show that there had not been any activity at the site of the legal mine. Meanwhile, images of bordering Indigenous lands, where mining is banned, would reveal large-scale mining operations - a "ghost mine" scam as Greenpeace calls it.

A federal court in Para, a northern state severely impacted by illegal mining, issued an order this month for institutions like the Central Bank and the National Mining Agency to enact effective control and traceability of all gold, from the mines to the markets. Brazil's federal prosecutors also filed a lawsuit against the National Mining Agency, seeking better oversight of mining permits.

Prosecutor André Porreca, who is leading the case, said the permits have become a front used "to launder gold extracted by criminal organizations from Indigenous territories and protected areas."

Geiser, the forensic expert, says the Brasilia gold lab is an important piece of the puzzle that helps battle crime and strengthen global gold supply chains.

"Being able to state that it (gold) has a legitimate origin and therefore is valid for inclusion in a country's or a bank's financial reserves, I believe provides solidity not only to the market but also to the countries' financial bonds," he said.

There is no data on how many criminals the lab has helped put behind bars, but Geiser says crime networks have recently begun exploiting neighboring countries such as Venezuela, French Guiana and Suriname, to launder illegally mined gold. Samples from abroad have made it to his lab, where they have joined the constantly growing database, he said.

The growing crime has also forced regional countries to strengthen collaboration through the Amazon International Police Cooperation Center, headquartered in the Brazilian city of Manaus.

The Amazon is the world's largest rainforest and a key regulator of global climate, so anything that degrades it could accelerate global warming, researchers say.

A 2023 analysis by MapBiomas, a nonprofit that monitors land-use, said that over 90% of Brazil's mining is taking place in the Amazon region, with nearly 40% of it illegal, in protected areas.

Though illegal gold mining is a relatively small driver of deforestation, compared to agriculture, the harm it inflicts on the environment is nearly impossible to reverse - especially because of the use of mercury to extract gold. Once the gold is separated, the mercury is released into the rivers, contaminating water sources and fish essential to Indigenous life.

A 2023 study by Fiocruz, a Brazilian science institute, said 21.3% of fish in Amazonian markets exceeded the World Health Organization's safety limits for mercury levels - with children between 2 and 4 years old consuming mercury at levels up to 31 times the recommended maximum.

Brazil signed the UN agreement known as the Minamata Convention on Mercury, which commits it to eliminate mercury use in gold mining.

The Ministry of Mines and Energy published a draft this month on easing out mercury that's up for debate, meant to take place until Aug. 7. Federal prosecutors have urged that Indigenous groups - the ones most affected by the contamination - be consulted, but that has not yet happened.

A total ban on mercury would both curb environmental contamination and also bolster forensics investigations, according to Geiser of the federal police, whose lab can detect any traces of mercury in its samples.

"It will make it even clearer that any mining using mercury ... is illegal," he added.

Heat dome expands across central US, creating dangerous conditions for millions

WASHINGTON, July 26, (AP): Temperatures hit sweltering highs across much of the central United States on Saturday as forecasters warned that dangerously hot weather from Dallas to North Dakota would push into next week, with roughly 80 million people facing heat advisories.

A heat dome, where atmospheric conditions trap heat, was forecast to create sustained high temperatures and accumulating discomfort. Meanwhile overnight lows were not expected to come down enough for people to have much chance to recover, allowing heat stress to build as the bad weather lingers, forecasters said. With the high humidity, it feels even worse.

The oppressive midsummer weather was forecast to affect a huge stretch of the country, from the desert Southwest to the Gulf Coast and reaching up into the Midwest and Great Plains. Some records around the Denver area could be broken, forecasters said, and temperatures were expected to be 10 F to 15 F (5.6 to 8.3 C) above normal.

"It looks like it is going to be pretty much stationary in that position as we go through the week," said Bob Oravec, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

Places under a National Weather Service extreme heat warning included western Nebraska, where temperatures Saturday and Sunday were forecast to reach 108 F (42 C).

At the Museum of the Fur Trade near Chadron, Nebraska, there were fewer visitors than usual for this time of year. Fur hats and pelts in the gift shop were not selling so hot.

"I'm sure no one would be willing to wear it on a day like this," museum employee Hannah Lovelace said. Loose-fitting, period-correct fabric shirts, on the other hand, remained popular sellers among folks headed to historical frontier reenactments called rendezvous, she said.

The region's heat was forecast to continue through the week, with temperatures topping 100 F (37 C) even in normally moderate areas of Montana and Wyoming.

Las Vegas was also expected to see near record-breaking highs. On Saturday, when temperatures reached around 114 F (45 C) in



Jake the Asian elephant takes a dip in a pool at the Denver Zoo Conservation Alliance as daytime high temperatures soared toward the triple-digit mark on July 24, in Denver. (AP)

the valley, HVAC repair technician Kristian "Flaco" Santos spent hours outside fixing air conditioning units. His job involves climbing onto homeowners' roofs or in their attics, where temperatures can be 15 degrees warmer.

"It is brutal," Santos said, adding that not everyone can work in the heat. "I'm not Superman, but I do, I do take care of myself when I'm in the heat."

Santos wears long-sleeve shirts and hoodies to protect himself from the sun, drinks lots of water with electrolytes to stay hydrated and takes small breaks to cool down. He encouraged people who work outside to do the same.

"You want to get home to your family safe," Santos said.

There might be some relief in the central U.S. toward next weekend, but even that might be temporary, Oravec said.

Some areas will be spared. The Mid-Atlantic and Northeast should avoid the extreme heat, as will much of the Pacific Northwest.

This is the latest miserable stretch of weather during a summer that has already had a lot of it. The eastern U.S. endured an unbearably hot early July that forced communities to cancel Independence Day celebrations and disrupted the country's 250th anniversary. Another heat wave in mid-July hit the Southwest

and Great Plains.

It's not just the United States: A June heat wave devastated Europe, with France recording at least 5,700 more deaths than usual.

On Sunday at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, fans for the Brickyard 400 will be offered water refill stations and places to get cool, and packed coolers will be allowed. In Denver, recreation centers will set aside areas for people to get out of the heat and in front of air conditioning.

Authorities warned that this heat dome will be dangerous. Children and older adults, along with people with medical conditions, are especially at risk of serious conditions including heat stroke. The basics are important: Seek out air conditioning or a cooling center, and make sure to drink enough water and limit time under the direct sun.

The weather will shift somewhat through the week, with the worst pockets of heat becoming particularly severe across Texas and parts of the Gulf Coast by Wednesday.

It can be difficult to know exactly how climate change contributes to particular events in real time. But rising carbon dioxide levels from burning fossil fuels makes it more likely that hotter weather becomes more frequent and extreme, said Andy Pershing, chief program officer at Climate Central, a climate change communications nonprofit.

Millions of family caregivers manage complex diets for older relatives

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

By Minakshi Raj
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

My first science experiment was in sixth grade for our county's science fair. Over three months, I tested how my grandfather's blood sugar responded to green leafy vegetables versus brown rice at dinner-time. My mom would prepare traditional South Indian meals, including those foods, and my dad would supervise as I measured and administered insulin and recorded my grandfather's blood sugar levels.

It was the first time I observed how much thought, care and uncertainty there can be in supporting the nutritional needs of a relative with a complex health condition.

Today, as a health services researcher studying how family caregivers manage food and nutrition as part of taking care of older family members, I know that helping an older relative eat well doesn't just support their health. It can also bring them joy, boost their energy, prompt nostalgia or offer fun opportunities to experiment with new flavors.

But addressing nutrition for older adults, who may have multiple chronic conditions, can be complex. Many of the caregivers I interview for my research don't recognize how much time, energy and effort they dedicate to their nutrition-related responsibilities until we have a focused conversation about it.

Too often, caregivers are left to manage these substantial responsibilities alone, with limited resources and information about nutrition.

Over 60 million caregivers in the US support a relative, friend or neighbor with daily activities, such as dressing and transportation, and with complex aspects of daily life, such as navigating finances and communicating with clinicians. An estimated 1 in 4 family caregivers of older adults help with nutrition and dietary modifications, my colleagues and I find.

Nutrition needs change with age.

Older adults generally need fewer calories but require more protein, fiber and other nutrients to maintain muscle, bone and overall health. And the shrinking number and size of taste buds and reduced saliva production can affect which foods people enjoy or are able to eat.

More than 7 in 10 older adults have more than one chronic condition, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, dementia or osteoporosis. Some conditions are risk factors for developing others - for instance, having Type 2 diabetes raises the likelihood of cardiovascular disease, and both are risk factors for dementia.

Optimal nutrition is critical for managing these diseases - and often for reducing the risk of developing them. Family caregivers are often responsible for every aspect of providing nutrition support, from planning meals to grocery shopping, to making sure their relative eats those meals.

But different health conditions require different approaches to dietary changes, and those changes can be even more nuanced when someone has multiple conditions. For example, someone with Type 2 diabetes can benefit from eating fewer foods with refined carbohydrates, such as cookies, candies and sodas, and more foods high in fiber, protein and fats to stabilize their blood sugar.

If that person also has kidney disease, they might need to restrict their consumption of foods that are high in potassium, such as potatoes and tomatoes, as well as foods that are high in phosphorus, such as nuts, to avoid straining the kidneys.

On top of that, caregivers may also have to navigate their family member's dietary requirements or preferences, such as being vegan or having food sensitivities. And they may also have to translate dietary guidelines, which are often rooted in Western and American cuisines, to traditional, culturally relevant cuisines that their older relative prefers.

Caregivers often don't have the knowledge to help them with their nutrition responsibilities, such as making sure the food they provide includes the necessary amounts of macronutrients - proteins, carbohydrates and fats that the body needs.

Many are also unsure of how nutrition affects their relative's health condition and lack training on meal planning, budgeting and cooking for themselves and for a relative with chronic health conditions.

Different types of caregiving relationships can also bring about unique challenges. For example, our research shows adult children caring for a parent may struggle with convincing their parents to change their diet. Caregivers supporting someone with memory loss may worry about whether their relative has eaten enough, or may spend hours preparing a meal that is enjoyed one day but goes untouched the next.

These concerns reflect the fundamental role food plays in daily life as well as in caregiving and family dynamics.

Working with a professional can help. A registered dietitian nutritionist can talk caregivers through their family's specific concerns and preferences about managing an older relative's nutritional needs. Dietitians can also help families make sure that any dietary modifications safely align with their relative's health conditions, as well as with their medications and other therapies.

Dietitians are a valuable resource, but they tend to be underused in healthcare. That may be because people are not aware of the type of support they can offer, or because restrictions on insurance coverage mean that working with them isn't always covered.

Since 2025, Medicare has allowed registered dietitians to train family caregivers on how to manage special diets for conditions such as diabetes or chronic kidney disease, even if the patient isn't in the room.

Other help is also available. Online resources, such as those offered by the American Diabetes Association, can provide ideas for recipes as well as information about nutrition and management of specific health conditions. For caregivers who need to make dietary modifications to traditional, non-Western cuisines, resources such as Oldways, a nonprofit food and nutrition education organization, can provide global culinary examples that meet specific nutritional needs. (AP)

Global teams, esports giants & clubs compete in a tech-driven multisport tournament

Astana to host international Games of the Future 2026

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Astana will host Games of the Future 2026 (GOTF 2026) Powered by Samruk-Kazyna from 29 July to 9 August 2026. The international multisport tournament will bring together esports, traditional sports and cutting-edge technology through a distinctive “phygital” competition format.

More than 800 athletes representing over 50 nationalities will compete across eight official disciplines. Phygital competitions combine digital and physical stages: participants first compete in a virtual environment before continuing the contest in physical sporting arenas, including football pitches, basketball courts, martial arts venues and dance stages. Final standings are determined by athletes’ combined performances across both stages.

Competition Schedule

- Phygital Basketball presented by Halyk Fund: 29 July – 3 August
- Battle Royale (PUBG: BATTLEGROUNDS) presented by Alatau City Bank: 31 July – 2 August
- MOBA PC (Dota 2) presented by CenterCredit: 2–5 August
- Phygital Shooter (CS2) presented by Yandex Go: 4–8 August
- Phygital Football (UFL) presented by Samruk-Kazyna: 4–9 August
- MOBA Mobile (MLBB) presented by Freedom: 6–9 August
- Phygital Dancing Presented by Solidcore Resources: 6–7 August
- Phygital Fighting presented by Kazzinc: 8 August



The official logo of Games of the Future 2026.

The tournament will feature teams and clubs from the worlds of traditional sports and esports, including Team Spirit, T1, Team Falcons, Boca Juniors, Valencia Basket, LGD.Pinghu and NOVAQ. Kazakhstan will be represented in all eight disciplines by teams and athletes including ACF x Allur, UEL Team, GTB KZ, PBC Astana, Future Nomads, Rune Eaters, DIGA Esports, NOVAQ, TeamKZ and Gulnaz Amangali.

The opening ceremony will take place on 29 July at 17:00 Astana time. It will feature AI-powered visuals, large-scale LED installations, laser and lighting effects, robotic elements and an immersive stage production.

The ceremony will be broadcast live in Kazakhstan on the Zhibek Zholy, Qazsport and Khabar television channels. International audiences will be able to watch it live on the official GOTF Astana 2026 Powered by Samruk-Kazyna YouTube channel and through the Phygital+ platform.

Competition Venues

The competitions will be held at four major sporting venues in Astana:

- QAZAQSTAN Athletics Sports Complex
- Zhaksylyk Ushkempirov Martial Arts Palace
- BEELINE ARENA National Tennis Centre
- Barys Arena

Tickets are available from the tournament’s official ticketing partner, Freedom Ticketon, and through the Freedom SuperApp.

Clark stars as Team Spoon wins WNBA All-Star Game

Jones completes MVP sweep

CHICAGO, July 26, (AP): Jonquel Jones, Nneka Ogumike and Dominique Malonga made WNBA history on Saturday night.

It was quite the All-Star party in the league’s 30th season.

Jones had 22 points, 13 rebounds and eight assists, helping Caitlin Clark and Team Spoon outlast Marina Mabrey and Team Coop 129-122 in the WNBA All-Star Game.

Playing with a heavy heart after the death of an aunt, Jones was named MVP. The 32-year-old New York Liberty center became the first player to win the league, WNBA Finals, Commissioner’s Cup and All-Star MVP awards.

“No matter what mood I’m in, basketball can pick me back up,” Jones said, “and so just leaning into that.”

Malonga had a first-half dunk for Team Coop, but Team Spoon had eight players score in double figures in an All-Star Game that featured 127 3-point attempts and very little defense. Allisha Gray had 19 points for Team Spoon, and Clark finished with 17.

It was the first WNBA All-Star Game in Chicago since 2022. This time, the marquee event was played in front of a record crowd of 19,783 at the United Center instead of the smaller Wintrust Arena in downtown Chicago.

“To be able to have tonight, have 19,000 people in the highest attendance ever in the All-Star Game just really shows that our league is growing and people want to be around us and want to be a part of this and understand how special it is,” Jones said.

Ogumike scored 11 points for Team Spoon while passing Maya Moore (119) for the most career points in All-Star Game history.

Kelsey Mitchell had 28 points for Team Coop, and Mabrey scored all of her 23 points during a red-hot first half. The 20-year-old Malonga finished with 12 points and 13 rebounds.

“I got to see a few go down early,” said Mabrey, who matched the WNBA scoring record when



Team Spoon’s Olivia Miles drives during the first half of a WNBA All-Star basketball game against Team Coop in Chicago. (AP)



Team Spoon’s Jonquel Jones holds up the MVP trophy after Team Spoon defeated Team Coop in a WNBA All-Star basketball game in Chicago. (AP)

she had 53 points for Toronto in a win over Los Angeles on June 25. “That’s kind of like my thing. Get them up when they’re going in.”

WNBA greats Cynthia Cooper and Teresa Weatherspoon drafted

the All-Star teams from players that were either voted as starters by fans, media and fellow players or chosen as reserves by the league’s coaches.

Las Vegas’ Becky Hammon coached Cooper’s team, and Minnesota’s Cheryl Reeve was in charge of Weatherspoon’s squad.

Clark went 5 for 15 from beyond the arc and had five assists in her return to the All-Star game. The Indiana Fever guard missed last year’s event in Indianapolis because of a groin injury.

“Last year really stunk being in our home city, you never want to miss that for the fans,” Clark said. “I love to show up and compete.”

The 24-year-old Clark came out firing, connecting from 33 feet and 37 feet on her way to 11 points in the first 2 1/2 minutes. She buried another 3 early in the second quarter off a slick no-look pass from Minnesota Lynx guard Olivia Miles, the only rookie selected for the game.

Clark and Mabrey each put on

an offensive show, but Malonga got the biggest cheer of the night. The 6-foot-6 center from the Seattle Storm ran down the lane, got a pass from Angel Reese and threw down a right-handed jam with 6:24 left in the first half.

Reese jumped up and down as Malonga finished the play, and the two exchanged a mid-air chest bump on their way back down the court.

“The way she makes it look easy, the excitement around it,” said Paige Bueckers, who scored 12 points for Team Coop. “I love Dom ... really happy for her in just how easy she makes it look.”

It was the first dunk in a WNBA All-Star Game since Sylvia Fowles in 2022. Lisa Leslie (2005), Jones (2017), Brittney Griner (2019) also have accomplished the feat.

Leslie was on hand for the festivities, along with South Carolina coach and former WNBA guard Dawn Staley. Former NBA star Dwyane Wade also was court-side.

Fury fight hopes alive

Joshua survives knockdowns to KO Prenga

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, July 26, (AP): Former two-time world champion Anthony Joshua recovered from two knockdowns to knock out Kristian Prenga in the second round of a dramatic non-title heavyweight fight on Saturday.

Joshua was flattened by an up-percut inside 30 seconds. He beat the count but looked seriously shaken.

Then Prenga laid out Joshua again, and again Joshua rose before the end of the count and survived to the bell.

A quick end was expected but nobody thought it would be Prenga’s. Joshua unleashed a flurry of fists and finished Prenga with a right hook, sending the Albanian through the bottom of the ropes.

The turnaround shocked even heavyweight king Oleksandr Usyk, whose face ringside was caught by TV cameras.

The comeback also possibly



Britain’s Anthony Joshua, left, lands a punch on Albania’s Kristian Prenga during their heavyweight title fight in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

saved an all-British showdown between Joshua and Tyson Fury. Joshua’s manager Eddie Hearn claims his fighter and Fury have signed a contract to meet for the first time later this year, but on condition they came through war-

mup bouts this weekend.

“I hope the fans will be in for a lovely treat,” Joshua told the crowd about fighting Fury.

Fury played his part by coming out of retirement this year and on Friday forcing 46-year-old Pol-

ish journeyman Mariusz Wach to retire in round seven in Pattaya, Thailand.

Joshua almost blew his part of the claimed contract.

Prenga brought a 20-1 record with 20 KOs into the matchup with Joshua, and looked every bit the knockout artist.

Joshua was fighting for the first time since surviving a car crash in Nigeria in December that injured him and killed his friends Sina Ghami and Latif ‘Latz’ Ayodele. Joshua acknowledged his friends straight after improving his record to 30-4 (27 KOs).

“It’s more than punch power,” Joshua said of his knockout punch. “That was spirit. That was Latz and Sina. That was the family. You know what I mean? That hurts even talking about it.

“He (Prenga) gave me a good test but this is what champions do, we rise. We get knocked down and stand up. That is life, that is life’s motto.”

Former champion joins Badner AC

Tennis star Thiem embarks on a new journey in soccer

VIENNA, July 26: Former US Open champion Dominic Thiem is set to embark on a new sporting challenge after retiring from professional tennis in 2024, with the Austrian star preparing to join eighth-tier club Badner AC.

The former world No. 3 has been officially registered as a soccer player with the Austrian Football Association. Badner AC manager Sergei Petrovic said the club had heard positive reports about Thiem’s ability and hoped to see him feature, while stressing that the tennis great would not receive any special treatment.

“Training has not started yet, so I cannot say much about the new signings. He has a friend at the club, and I hope he can perform well here. However, everyone will have to compete for a place in the starting lineup,” Petrovic said.

This will not be Thiem’s first football experience. The 2020 US Open winner recently represented his hometown side Lichtenwörth, scoring his first goals during a 10-match spell with the club.

Thiem enjoyed a successful tennis career, winning 17 titles, in-



Former US Open champion Dominic Thiem juggles the ball during a training session.

cluding his memorable US Open triumph in 2020 after defeating Alexander Zverev for his only Grand Slam crown. He also reached two French Open finals, one Australian Open final, and two ATP Finals finals before a serious right wrist ligament injury in 2021 disrupted his return to top form.

Alaba seeks new challenge

Salah among high-profile free agents available this summer

PARIS, July 26: French newspaper L’Equipe has highlighted a number of high-profile players currently without clubs as of July 25, with the new season just weeks away and several teams already beginning their European qualifying campaigns, including Benfica and Ajax.

The report stated that the free-agent market features several attractive names, including proven stars, experienced players, and potential bargain signings with strong backgrounds in European football.

Former Juventus striker Dušan Vlahović is considered one of the most appealing attacking options available without a club. The Serbian forward, who recently turned 26, scored 68 goals in 168 appearances during his time with the Italian giants.

The list also includes Mohamed Salah, 34, who remains without a club following his departure from Liverpool, where he played since joining the Premier League side in 2017. The Egyptian star’s next move has yet to be announced, while his agent has played down reports linking him with a transfer to Turkish club Beşiktaş.

Jadon Sancho and John Stones are also among the notable names on the list after difficult seasons. Sancho spent the previous cam-



Egyptian star Mohamed Salah in action.

paign on loan at Aston Villa, scoring just one goal in 29 appearances, while Stones struggled for regular playing time at Manchester City due to repeated injuries.

Meanwhile, Austrian defender David Alaba, 34, is seeking a new challenge after five seasons at Real Madrid. The experienced defender boasts an impressive résumé, including four Champions League titles, although his recent international involvement has been affected by injury problems.

Best of the Rest

Tyler joins Barcelona women: Barcelona has signed American goalkeeper Tyler McCamey for its European-champion women’s team, the Spanish club said.

The 24-year-old McCamey, a Princeton graduate, played for Dallas Trinity FC last season, making 15 appearances.

The Atlanta native will join a side that has Spain’s world champion Cata Coll in goal.

Barcelona won a fourth Champions League title in six seasons in May, but the club’s financial troubles have led to the exits of major players in recent weeks.

Two-time Ballon d’Or winner Alexia Putellas, defenders Mapi León and Ona Batlle, and forward Salma Paralluelo have all left. (AP)

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Sparta signs Haaland cousin Jonatan: Sparta Prague has signed Norwegian center-forward Jonatan Braut Brunes, cousin of Manchester City star Erling Haaland, from Polish side Raków Częstochowa.

Sparta said on Saturday that the prolific 25-year-old striker, who scored 40 goals across all competitions over the past two years, had agreed a multi-year contract.

Before his two years in Raków, Brunes played for Leuven in Belgium and Norwegian top-flight clubs Stromsgodset and Lillestrøm.

Financial details on his transfer to Sparta were undisclosed but, according to Polish media, it paid a fee of 6 million euros (\$6.8 million).

Sparta faces Lyon in the third qualifying round of the Champions League next month. (AP)

‘This is fantastic news for our fans’

Bahrain Grand Prix rescheduled to take place in Malaysia in October

MOGYOROD, Hungary, July 26, (AP): Formula 1 is heading back to Malaysia for the first time in nine years as the Bahrain Grand Prix was rescheduled there for Oct. 4.

The Sepang circuit is slotted in between races in Azerbaijan and Singapore, subject to approval from the FIA’s world motor sport council, F1 and the FIA said Sunday.

“Most importantly, this is fantastic news for our fans. They will continue to enjoy a full and exciting Formula 1 calendar, while also seeing the sport return to a great venue,” F1 president and chief executive Stefano Domenicali said in a statement.

“Malaysia is an incredible country, and Sepang holds a special place in Formula 1 history. It will pro-

vide a spectacular setting for racing and an unforgettable experience for fans at the circuit and watching around the world.”

F1 called off its races in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, which had been set for March and April, as the Iran war escalated.

Despite taking place in Malaysia, the race will still have Bahrain Grand Prix branding.

It’s not the first time an F1 race has been named for one country and took place in another.

he long-running San Marino Grand Prix was held in neighboring Italy but last used that name in 2006, while Germany twice held a race named for Luxembourg and France hosted a one-off Swiss Grand Prix.

None of the earlier examples had the kind of geographical distance separating Bahrain and Malaysia, at opposite ends of the Asian continent.

Bahrain’s Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, said the decision to move the race was a sign of his country’s “commitment to, and passion for, the sport” of F1.

He added: “Amid ongoing regional challenges, Bahrain is proud to stand as a pillar of stability for Formula 1, and we will continue to do everything in our power to ensure a successful and memorable race for everyone involved.”

Since its last F1 race in 2017, Malaysia has focused on hosting motorcycle racing but kept an F1 presence through state-owned oil company Petronas’ sponsor-

ship of Mercedes.

Racing in Malaysia, rather than in Bahrain, raises further questions about future F1 races in the Middle East after military action involving the United States, Israel and Iran escalated in recent weeks.

F1 has two more scheduled races in the Gulf region, the Qatar Grand Prix in November and the season finale in Abu Dhabi in December, though it remains unclear if they can take place as scheduled unless there is a major change in the security situation.

Calling off Qatar and Abu Dhabi could mean the Las Vegas Grand Prix on Nov. 21 becomes the season finale. European tracks in Portugal and Italy have reportedly been discussed as potential replacements but could face weather challenges.

Son scores again as LAFC crushes Sporting KC for fourth straight win



CF Montreal’s Hennadii Synchuk (18) and Inter Miami CF’s Mateo Silvetti (24) challenge for the ball during second half MLS soccer action in Montreal. (AP)

Suárez penalty seals Miami victory after Berterame knocked out in collision

LOS ANGELES, July 26, (AP): Denis Bouanga scored two goals, Son Heung-min scored in his third consecutive match since the World Cup break, and Los Angeles FC thrashed Sporting Kansas City 4-0 for its fourth consecutive victory.

David Martínez also scored in a 3-0 first half for LAFC, which hasn’t lost since May 17. Bouanga added his second goal in the 85th minute, giving him 10 in 17 matches this season.

With an inspired Son and a top-form Bouanga both scoring in every game since the break, LAFC has outscored its last three opponents by a combined 10-1. They’ve pulled even with Vancouver and San Jose atop the Western Conference standings with 33 points and 10 victories, although the Whitecaps and Quakes both have games in hand.

Hugo Lloris had to make just one save while keeping his MLS-leading 10th clean sheet for LAFC.

Luis Suárez scored on a penalty kick in the 81st minute after Germán Berterame was fouled, knocked unconscious and taken away in an ambulance in Inter Miami’s 1-0 win over CF Montreal.

Berterame was injured when he banged heads with Montreal defender Efraín Morales. There was no immediate word on the extent of the 27-year-old forward’s injuries or his condition.

Suárez sent a soft shot past Sébastien Breza for his ninth goal of the season and his sixth in the last three matches to give Inter Miami its sixth straight victory.

Rocco Ríos Novo saved two shots for Inter Miami (11-2-4) in his third start and second clean sheet this season.

Breza had one save in his second start this season for Montreal (4-10-3) and the 37th of his career. He has never had a shutout.

Lionel Messi has not played in Inter Miami’s first two matches following the World Cup after Argentina’s runner-up finish. However, Carlos Casemiro, who played for Brazil in the event, made his MLS debut for the team after a successful career with Spanish powerhouse Real Madrid.

Tyrese Spicer scored in the second half and Maxime Crépeau made it stand up as Orlando City ended Eastern Conference-leading Nashville SC’s 10-match unbeaten run with a 1-0 victory.

Spicer subbed into the match in the 53rd minute then used assists from 18-year-old

rookie Justin Ellis and defender Adrián Marín in the 72nd to score his career-best third goal this season.

Biel and Westwood each score a goal, Kahlina has 5 saves; Charlotte beats Red Bulls 2-0

Felipe Mora scored twice in the second half of his final match with Portland, rallying the Timbers to a 2-1 victory over Real Salt Lake.

Mora erased a 1-0 deficit with goals in the 56th and 67th minutes, giving him 48 in 145 regular-season appearances - third most in club history.

Ariel Lassiter collected his third assist on Mora’s first score and Kristoffer Velde picked up his career-high fifth on the second one.

Rookie defender Juan Manuel Sanabria tallied his first goal when he scored in the 18th minute to give Real Salt Lake an early lead, but the club was forced to play a man down from the 31st minute on after forward Morgan Guilavogul was tagged with a red card. Guilavogul earned his sixth assist on the goal.

All-Stars Pep Biel and Ashley Westwood scored goals in the opening minutes. Kristijan Kahlina had five saves, and Charlotte FC beat the New York Red Bulls 2-0.

Charlotte (7-6-4), which is unbeaten in four straight overall, snapped a three-game road losing streak and won at Sports Illustrated Stadium for the first time (1-3-1).

Milan Iloski scored a goal for his fifth consecutive game to help the Philadelphia Union beat the Sounders 1-0 to extend Seattle’s losing streak to five games.

The Sounders (7-6-3) have been outscored 12-2 during the skid.

The Union (3-10-4), who beat the New York Red Bulls 3-1 at home on Wednesday to snap an eight-game winless streak, have won back-to-back games for the first time this season.

Nicolas Fernandez scored a goal for the third



D.C. United midfielder Jackson Hopkins, left, and Toronto FC defense Jackson Gilman, right, compete for the ball during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Washington. (AP)

consecutive game, Agustin Ojeda and Malachi Jones each added a goal, and New York City FC beat the Chicago Fire 3-1.

Matt Freese had FOUR saves for NYCFC (7-6-4).

Joel Waterman scored his first goal this season for Chicago.

Dániel Gazdag scored the go-ahead goal on a first-half penalty kick and Patrick Schulte made it stand up as the Columbus Crew edged FC Cincinnati 2-1.

Columbus (5-8-4) took a 2-1 lead into half-time when Gazdag scored in the sixth minute of stoppage time. The PK was awarded after Max Arfsten was fouled by Cincinnati defender Matt Miazga. Two of Gazdag’s three goals this season have come on PKs in the last week.

Tai Baribo converted from the penalty spot in the 10th minute of stoppage time, Sean Johnson had six saves, and D.C. United beat Toronto FC 2-1 to snap a five-game winless streak.

Toronto (3-7-7) is winless in 11 consecutive games.

Charles Gil, Dor Turgeman and Brooklyn Raines all had a goal and an assist to help the New England Revolution cruise to a 4-1 victory over Atlanta United.

New England (9-5-2) grabbed a 1-0 lead in the 11th minute when Gil scored from long distance. Defender Matt Polster registered his first assist of the season on Gil’s sixth netter, and Turgeman collected his fourth this season and fifth in 19 appearances with the club.

Alejandro Alvarado scored his first career goal with a nifty shot early in the second half and San Diego FC held on for a 1-0 victory after FC Dallas lost newly acquired goalkeeper Daniel De Sousa Britto to an injury.

CJ dos Santos needed just one save for San Diego (5-7-5) for his first clean sheet in four starts this season.

Minnesota United’s Drake Callender and the Vancouver Whitecaps’ Yohei Takaoka duelled to a scoreless draw on Saturday night.

Callender finished with five saves in goal for Minnesota United (6-6-5), which has gone 0-3-3 during a six-match winless stretch. Callender earned his fifth clean sheets over 17 starts in his first season with the club after posting 10 shutouts in 91 starts with Inter Miami.

Joseph Paintsil scored a goal and JT Marcinkowski had five saves for the LA Galaxy in a 1-1 tie with the San Jose Earthquakes at Stanford Stadium.

The Galaxy (5-7-6), who had lost back-to-back games by a combined score of 6-1, are winless in three games since returning from the World Cup break.

Kuwait’s Asian Cup qualification bid hit by opening loss to Oman

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

DOHA, July 26: Kuwait’s youth basketball team opened its campaign in the Gulf Championship qualifiers for the Asian Cup finals with a 62-59 defeat against Oman. The match was played the day before yesterday as part of the tournament being held in Doha, Qatar, and running until July 30.

In the other opening-round match, Bahrain defeated Saudi Arabia 62-54 in a tournament that holds great importance, as it awards two qualification spots for the Asian Youth Championship finals, scheduled to take place in Hyderabad, India, later this year.

Kuwait will meet Qatar today at 6:00 p.m., while Oman takes on Bahrain.

The tournament is being played in a single round-robin format, with the top two teams advancing to the Asian



Kuwaiti player drives the ball during Kuwait opening match against Oman.

finals. The opening defeat has made Kuwait’s qualification mission more difficult in the race for one of the two spots, given the strength of the participating teams and their closely matched levels.

Rodri’s award ... Deserved or controversial?

By Hamad Al-Shammari

FIFA named Spain midfielder Rodri the winner of the Best Player award at the 2026 World Cup after his contribution helped guide Spain to the title following their 1-0 victory over Argentina in the final.

Few would question Rodri’s exceptional ability. He is a natural leader, a midfield orchestrator, and widely regarded as one of the finest players in the world in his position. However, the debate remains: was he truly the most influential player at the tournament and the rightful recipient of the award?

According to statistical ratings from SofaScore, Lionel Messi finished as the highest-rated player at the World Cup, ahead of Kylian Mbappé, Ousmane Dembélé, Erling Haaland, and Jude Bellingham, while Rodri did not feature among the top five performers.

Rodri’s numbers also raise questions. The Spanish midfielder finished the tournament without a goal or an assist and was named Man of the Match only once, in the game against Portugal. Meanwhile, Messi earned the award five times and led Argentina to the final, while Mbappé claimed the Golden Boot after scoring 10 goals.

That said, Rodri’s importance cannot be measured solely through



attacking statistics. His tactical intelligence, control of the midfield, and leadership were crucial to Spain’s success. Yet awards such as the World Cup Best Player honor have often gone to those who produce the most decisive moments and leave the biggest mark on the tournament.

Ultimately, the discussion remains open: was Rodri rewarded for his tactical influence and role in Spain’s triumph, or did another player make a stronger case for the individual prize?

English gymnast released from hospital after frightening fall

GLASGOW, Scotland, July 26, (AP): English gymnast Gabriel Langton has been released from hospital after a frightening fall during the men’s team final at the Commonwealth Games.

The 18-year-old received extensive treatment before being stretchered from the arena after missing a grab during his high bar

routine and landing on his head and neck.

“Gabriel was transferred to the hospital as a precautionary measure overnight and underwent multiple scans today, with very positive results,” England team management said in a statement. “Thankfully, he has been cleared of any serious in-

jury complications and will be discharged to return to the team hotel this evening.

“He is in good spirits and hugely grateful for the many messages of support and the excellent care provided by the medical teams.

“He is looking forward to being reunited with the team to celebrate

his silver medal.”

Langton was absent from the medal ceremony as teammates Luke Whitehouse, Alex Yolsin-Cash, Josh Nathan and Adam Tobin collected the England team’s silver medals.

It was the first time England’s men had failed to win the team title since 2010.

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India's batsman Vaibhav Sooryavanshi plays a shot during the third T20 cricket match between Zimbabwe and India in Harare, Zimbabwe. (AP)

Sports

Sooryavanshi hits another half century as India sweeps Zimbabwe



India's captain Shreyas Iyer, center, holds a trophy as he celebrates with teammates following the third T20 cricket match against Zimbabwe in Harare, Zimbabwe. (AP)

HARARE, Zimbabwe, July 26, (AP) — The 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi hit his second international half-century for India as Zimbabwe lost the third and final Twenty20 match by 35 runs on Sunday and India swept the series 3-0.

On a slow surface, opener Sooryavanshi scored 81 runs off 49 balls with four sixes and eight fours as India reached 192-5 in 20 overs.

In reply, Zimbabwe was restricted to 157-7 with Ryan Burl scoring 54 not out off 43 balls. Pacer Mayank Yadav took 3-29 in four overs.

India had already clinched the series with a 90-run victory on Saturday. It won the first T20 on Thursday by seven wickets, when Sooryavanshi smashed 50 off 18 balls.

Opting to bat first, India lost Abhishek Sharma for two runs off Blessing Muzarabani. Sooryavanshi and Ishan Kishan (29) then added 75 off 50 balls. India scored 64-1 in the powerplay.

Sooryavanshi's second 50 came off 31 balls this time. He hit another two sixes after crossing the 50-mark and looked set for a maiden hundred, before holing out off Wessly Madhevere.

Sooryavanshi was named player of the series with 151 runs in three innings. "I try to replicate what I do in training," he said. "I had good preparation time after the England tour and I am glad to score these runs for the team, and contribute to the series win."

Shreyas Iyer scored 27, with Rinku Singh providing a final flourish with 25 off 14 balls including two fours and a six.

In reply, Zimbabwe lost Brian Bennett off the first ball of the innings against Mayank Yadav.

Ben Curran (20) and Dion Myers (19) added 34 runs for the second wicket, but Zimbabwe lost a couple of quick wickets, including skipper Sikandar Raza. Yash Thakur (2-45) dismissed him for a golden duck with a brilliant one-handed catch.

Burl held the Zimbabwe innings together, with five fours, and scored 50 off 42 balls. He added 60 off 50 balls with Madhevere (28).

India dropped five catches but Zimbabwe was outplayed with both bat and ball.

Sooryavanshi replaced Sachin Tendulkar this month as the youngest player to represent India but his output in a T20 series in England was modest: 14, 13, 15 at a strike rate of 168. He was replaced for the last match and India lost the series 4-0.

The selectors - successfully - hoped Sooryavanshi would thrive in a low-key series at the same cricket ground where he blasted 175 off 80 balls against England in February in the final of the Under-19 World Cup.

Fifth place at stake

Kuwait concludes campaign against Chinese Taipei

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

BEIJING, July 26: Kuwait wraps up its campaign at the 19th Asian Junior Handball Championship in China today, taking on Chinese

Taipei in the fifth-place playoff. The Blues have produced a strong showing throughout the tournament, competing well against some of Asia's leading teams. However, they missed out on a semifinal berth, ending their

hopes of securing qualification for the 2027 World Championship.

Kuwait bounced back in the placement round with a victory over host China the day before yesterday, setting up today's clash with Chinese Taipei. The team will look to finish its Asian campaign in fifth place and underline the positive performances it displayed during the competition.

The Kuwait squad featured Hassan Mundhir, Obeid Al-Shammari, Abdulrahman Al-Hashel, Hussein Boland, Salem Al-Mahmoud, Yousef Madouh, Hussein Mundhi, Mohammed Faisal, Yaqoub Hassan, Abdul Latif Salmeen, Hassan Rajab, Abdul Wahab Al-Mutawa, Hassan Boland, Saad Al-Khamis, Faisal Al-Enezi, Hussein Sami, Khairallah Abdullah, and Abdul Latif Al-Wahib.

The team is coached by Danish tactician Hani Jensen, with Saud Mufreh serving as assistant coach. Yassin Idrissi is the goalkeeper coach, while Yousef Al-Shahin handles team administration.



Kuwaiti player makes a goal attempt during the 19th Asian Junior Handball Championship in China.

Maclauchlan beats Russell in historic final

Shin claims first LPGA win in over decade at Women's Scottish Open

TROON, Scotland, July 26, (AP) — After waiting more than 10 years for her second LPGA win, South Korean golfer Jenny Shin secured a two-shot victory at the Women's Scottish Open on Sunday.

The 33-year-old Shin, who won the Texas Shootout in May 2016, carded a 3-over 75 on the Dundonald Links to finish at 9 under.

"My first one didn't really feel like a win at the time," Shin said. "I didn't feel like I deserved it. It felt very accidental. But this one definitely feels a lot different. This one feels like I earned it. I worked hard for it."

Shin was in tears after the final putt dropped on the 18th and was doused with water and champagne by a group of friends.

Leading since the first round, Shin could afford three straight bogies on Nos. 6-8 after starting the final round with a five-shot lead over Thailand's Pajaree Anannurakarn (74). Shin also bogeyed two of the last three holes but had made two birdies earlier.

"I wasn't as nervous as yesterday," Shin said. "I feel like I've done everything right but just wasn't hitting it like I was the last three days and just hitting it into bunkers and bushes and that wasn't fun."

"With three bogies in a row, I thought, 'oh boy, I don't know where this is going to go'. But yeah, I hung in there, so I'm quite proud of myself and very happy."

A Lim Kim finished second after a 4-under 68, with four straight birdies helping her leapfrog two shots ahead of Anannurakarn, who dropped to third.

The Women's Scottish Open is part of a three-tournament swing through Europe between the final two majors - the Evian Championship and the Women's British Open starting Thursday at Royal Lytham & St. Annes.

□ □ □

Noah Maclauchlan of Moseley, Virginia, beat Miles Russell of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, 6 and 5 in the U.S. Junior Amateur on Saturday in the first all-left-hander final in USGA history.

The 18-year-old Maclauchlan - No. 2,047 in the world amateur ranking - joined Brian Harman (2003) and Cory Whitsett (2007) as the only left-handed winners in the event.

"I don't really have words right now," Maclauchlan said. "It's pretty surreal, pretty unbelievable to call myself a United States Junior champion. To have my name next to all the legends that have won this, including Tiger (Woods) and so many more, is so special."

Maclauchlan earned a spot next year in the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach. Both finalists are exempt next month in the U.S. Amateur at Merion, although Russell was already in that field.

Maclauchlan will be a freshman this year at Liberty University. Russell - the highest-ranked player in the field at No. 7 - plans to begin play at Florida State in 2027.

On Saturday on the Old Course, Maclauchlan tied the match with a par win on the par-4 16th, then took Nos. 17, 19, 21, 23, 24 and 28 - all with birdies - for a 6-up lead. Russell won the par-3 29th with a par, and Maclauchlan ended it with a 6-foot birdie putt on par-4 31st.

"It was a good match there the first 18, and kind of got my teeth kicked in there early (in the second 18)," Russell said.

A few weeks ago, Maclauchlan thought his chance to play at Saucon Valley was dashed when he was the first alternate in the Portsmouth, Virginia, qualifier. But then Rawlin Sutter, one of the Portsmouth qualifiers, won the Alabama State Boys Junior, thus giving the spot to Maclauchlan.



Jenny Shin of South Korea celebrates winning the 2026 ISPS HANDA Women's Scottish Open at Dundonald Links, Ayrshire. (AP)

Norris ends drought in Hungary, Kimi extends championship lead



McLaren driver Lando Norris of Britain, left, leads the field after the start during the Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix auto race, at the Hungaroring racetrack in Mogyorod, near Budapest, Hungary. (AP)

Verstappen takes second

MOGYOROD, Hungary, July 26, (AP) — Lando Norris ended an eight-month wait by "flying" to a Formula 1 victory with strong pace and a dose of good fortune at the Hungarian Grand Prix on Sunday.

The defending champion was on pole but lost the lead to his McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri when he ran wide at the second corner.

Norris got the lead back after Piastri was delayed by a collision with Carlos Sainz Jr. while lapping the Williams driver, allowing Norris to come out of the pits ahead of his teammate. He cruised to the win from there.

"Car was unbelievable today, well done guys, incredible. We were flying," Norris said. "Nice to be finally able to do it all for you. Feels like it's been a while."

Piastri then stopped with a broken gearbox, paving the way for Max Verstappen to take second, with Kimi Antonelli third.

Even with Mercedes largely off the pace for once and a three-place grid penalty in qualifying, Antonelli recovered from seventh to take his ninth podium finish in 11 races and make a statement to his title rivals.

Antonelli increased his stand-

ings lead to 50 points over Lewis Hamilton, who was fifth after a penalty for speeding in the pits. George Russell was barely a factor as he drove through the field to seventh after a near-stall at the start dropped him to the back. He drops 59 points behind his Mercedes teammate Antonelli.

Norris hadn't won a full Grand Prix race since Sao Paulo in November, though he did win a sprint in Miami in May.

Hungary was the last race before

the mid-season break. The next race is the Dutch Grand Prix on Aug. 23.

"Sometimes you just can't catch a break," Hamilton had written on Instagram on Saturday. He discussed how his three-place penalty in qualifying - Hamilton's third penalty in three race weekends - made it "difficult to hang on to that positivity".

A fourth penalty won't have helped, and nor will yet another Ferrari strategy blunder.

When Piastri's breakdown at the side of the road brought a virtual safety car slowdown, Ferrari decided it was worth calling in Hamilton for fresh tires.

Unfortunately for the seven-time champion, he left the pit lane to see Antonelli approaching fast. In what appeared to be a rush to keep the Mercedes driver at bay, Hamilton broke the pit lane speed limit.

Hamilton ended up being asked to give the place back to Antonelli and was then given a five-second penalty that dropped him behind teammate Charles Leclerc in the final standings.

"Handing out penalties like crazy," he told Ferrari over the radio.

Isack Hadjar took sixth after a tactical race holding up drivers who threatened his Red Bull teammate Verstappen, with Russell seventh. Liam Lawson was eighth for Racing Bulls ahead of Audi's Nico Hulkenberg in ninth and Lawson's teammate Arvid Lindblad 10th.



McLaren driver Lando Norris of Britain celebrates after winning the Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix auto race, at the Hungaroring racetrack in Mogyorod, near Budapest, Hungary. (AP)