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GULF TENSIONS SOAR AS U.S. SIGNALS MORE STRIKES ON IRAN



Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Saudi Arabia did not attack Iraq, it attacked Iran

WITHOUT doubt, the multinational maritime defense coalition formed by Saudi Arabia, with the participation of Kuwait and other Gulf states, is a significant step toward strengthening the regional maritime security and a fitting response to the Iranian aggression, whether direct or through the proxies of Tehran in the region.

The coalition affirms the legitimate right to secure regional maritime routes, which are being subjected to unprecedented terrorist operations that have threatened maritime security and supply chains.

This coalition was formed after a move welcomed by all the Gulf citizens -- the Saudi response to the attempts of Iranian-backed groups to destabilize regional security and attack oil facilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This step was taken after a period of considerable patience by the Gulf states, as they allowed diplomatic efforts and political dialogue to prevent escalation over the past six months.

The Iranian side, along with its outlaw militias in Iraq and Yemen, failed to grasp such dangers and continued to perpetrate terrorist crimes. These villains always argued that they are not bombing the Gulf states, but rather the American military bases in the region.

Strangely, Iran and its proxies have not targeted Israel even if it is hosting active bases, American weapons depots, and other logistical support reserves. It is worth noting that the American bases in the Gulf states have been inactive for some time.

The launching of drones and missiles at Gulf states and the targeting of vital infrastructure confirm that the intention of Iran is not to fight against the United States and Israel, but rather to weaken the Gulf states and attempt to dominate them in implementation of its expansionist project, which I have written about at length.

A Lebanese proverb is applicable to such a situation: "He could not beat my father, so he attacked my mother."

This is the reality of Iranian policy, which has been unable to fight against the United States directly, especially since it has two aircraft carriers and more than 20 warships in the region, in addition to its bases in Israel and some European countries, all of which are being used to attack Iran.

Iran has become accustomed to attacking

its neighbors, who have been trying to avert the danger through peaceful means. However, the Iranian folly has been intractable.

This led to a situation that is no longer acceptable for the governments and leaders of the region. The legitimate response was wise -- bombing sites of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) or Houthi bases in Yemen.

The Iranian leaders said, "An eye for an eye." This principle applies to them as well. The proof is that a Saudi aircraft bombed bases run by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in Iraq.

Tehran owned up to the death of five Iranian officers in Iraq, proving the existence of coordination between Iran and the terrorist factions. This coordination is being managed at the back of the Iraqi government, which is working hard to restrict weapons to legitimate forces and prevent the launching of terrorist operations from Iraqi territory.

For 47 years, Iranian leaders, along with their affiliated factions and some mercenaries, have been engaging in deception and misrepresentation, portraying the so-called 'Iranian Revolution' as a way of seeking good neighborly relations with the region. The truth is that Iran and its proxies always rush to justify aggression with fabricated stories that not even a child would believe.

These events include the Iranian demonstrations during the Hajj season, attempts to assassinate some regional leaders, terrorist bombings in Gulf states, disguised invasion of four Arab countries, creation of sectarian proxies, and incitement of discord among various components of Arab societies.

The carefully calculated Saudi and Gulf response came at the right time, conveying a strategic message to Iran and its proxies, that patience is over and accountability is on the way.

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Core facilities targeted anew

Repeated Iranian assaults draw Kuwait warning

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (Agencies): Kuwait on Saturday strongly condemned what it described as continued Iranian aggression after hostile drones targeted key facilities in the country, prompting renewed international support and regional calls for de-escalation.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs de-

nounced the attacks on a government facility in northern Kuwait and civilian vehicles belonging to a private company on Bubiyan Island, calling them a flagrant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty, a direct threat to its security and stability, and a serious breach of international law, the UN Charter, the principles of good-neighborliness and UN Security Council Resolution 2817.

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Moroccan Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Ibn Issa with Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq (left) and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Mishal (right).

Trade ties power partnership

Morocco-Kuwait relations reach new heights

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Moroccan Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Ibn Issa has affirmed that the Moroccan-Kuwaiti relationship is a model of deep-rooted Arab partnership, based on strong historical ties. Ibn Issa made the statement during the celebration of the 27th anniversary of the accession of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, which was organized by the Moroccan Embassy.

Present at the event were Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Mishal, Governor of Jahra Hamad Jassem Al-Habashi, Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Adwani, Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Sheikh



Photos by Samer Shaqair
Members of the Diplomatic Corps and guests during the celebration of the 27th anniversary of the accession of His Majesty King Mohammed VI.

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Consumer outlays reach KD 27.92 bln

Digital payments fuel Kuwait spending surge

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Data released by the Central Bank of Kuwait showed an increase in consumer activity in the local market during the first half of 2026, driven by the growing use of electronic and digital payment methods, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Total spending by citizens and residents rose by 5 percent, equivalent to KD 1.309 billion, reaching KD 27.92 billion compared to KD 26.59 billion during the same period in 2025.

The growth was not limited to spending value alone but the number of transactions also increased, reaching 809.57 million transactions compared to 718 million transactions in the first half of last year. This represents an increase of 91.57 million transactions, or a growth rate of 12.7 percent.

The value of spending was distributed between KD 14.034 billion through 392.3 million transactions in the first quarter and KD 13.888 billion through 417.26 million transactions in the second quarter.

Purchases made through point-of-sale (POS) terminals accounted for the largest share of total spending, reaching KD 9.462 billion through 505.04 million transactions

conducted both within and outside Kuwait.

E-commerce transactions totaled KD 8.533 billion across 186.98 million transactions, reflecting the continued growth of online shopping and digital payments.

Cash withdrawals made through ATMs reached KD 4.369 billion, distributed across 31.98 million transactions during the first half of the year.

The instant payment service "WAMD" continued to record strong growth since its launch.

The value of transactions executed through WAMD increased by 52.3 percent, reaching KD 5.557 billion compared to KD 3.649 billion during the same period in 2015, representing an increase of KD 1.908 billion.

The number of transactions processed through the WAMD service also witnessed significant growth, rising to 85.56 million transactions compared to 47.91 million in the first half of last year.

During the first quarter, WAMD recorded transactions worth KD 2.646 billion across 40.38 million transactions. This figure increased to KD 2.91 billion through 45.18 million transactions in the second quarter.

Jleeb cleanup nets 1,253 lawbreakers

By Munif Nayef

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: The Ministry of Interior, as per the directives of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Youssef Saud Al-Sabah and under the leadership of Undersecretary of the ministry Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib, continued its comprehensive security campaign in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, in coordination with other concerned government agencies.

The campaign aims to remove violations, maintain security and public order, and address transgressions in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

A security source stated that the campaign, which started two weeks ago, has so far led to the removal of illegal structures and

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Medical missteps meet clampdown

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Acting on the directives of Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, the Ministry of Health completed the legal and technical procedures related to a number of complaints and reports concerning healthcare practitioners and private healthcare facilities, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The results of investigations confirmed the professional violations and medical errors in accordance with Law No. 70/2020, which regulates the practice of medicine and allied health professions, as well as the rights of patients and healthcare facilities.

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Palestinians salvage their belongings from the rubble of a building and tents destroyed in an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City, Thursday, July 30, 2026. (AP)

Hamas pledges to disarm

Kuwait welcomes Trump's historic Gaza peace accord

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (KUNA): Kuwait has welcomed the announcement by US President Donald Trump of an agreement to implement a comprehensive peace

plan for the Gaza Strip, reaffirming its support for efforts aimed at ending the conflict and advancing a political solution.

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Purja among avalanche dead

ISLAMABAD, Aug 1, (AP): Renowned British-Nepali climber Nirmal Purja and all the other nine climbers

swept away by an avalanche in Pakistan have died, and search teams were trying to recover their bodies, Purja's expedition company



Nirmal Purja

said Saturday.

"The world has lost one of mountaineering's greatest climbers," the company, Elite Exped, said.

Karrar Haidri, the vice president of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, confirmed the news.

"This is heartbreaking news for all of us, and we extend our condolences to the families and friends of the climbers," Haidri said.

The 10-member expedition was swept away by an avalanche Thursday on Pakistan's Broad Peak.

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Embassy of Kuwait photo
Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikhha Al-Zain Al-Sabah during her participation in a roundtable organized by the Middle East Institute in Washington.

WASHINGTON, Aug 1, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikhha Al-Zain Al-Sabah has affirmed Kuwait's commitment to innovation and economic diversification amidst rapidly changing regional circumstances.

This came during her participation in a roundtable discussion on Friday organized by the Middle East Institute in Washington, D.C., on how Kuwait is coping with the ongoing Iran War and its economic repercussions.

Ambassador Al-Sabah addressed the impact of this crisis on Kuwait, the strong, decades-long US-Kuwaiti partnership, and the country's resilience during this challenging period.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:40	Asr	15:30
Sunrise ..	05:09	Maghrib ..	18:40
Zohr	11:54	Isha	20:08

Other Voices

The lessons of August 2 live on

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

Some dates become more than moments in history. They become lessons that shape a nation. For Kuwait, August 2 is one of those dates. It reminds us not only of the pain of the 1990 invasion, but also of the strength, unity, and resilience that carried our country through its darkest hours. Those same lessons continue to guide us today as Kuwait faces the current Iranian aggression.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 changed the lives of every Kuwaiti family. It was a day of fear, uncertainty, and heart-break. Families were separated, homes were lost, and many brave men and women made the ultimate sacrifice. The scars of those days remain, and they always will.

Yet from that tragedy came something stronger.

Kuwaitis stood together. They supported one another, refused to lose hope, and never stopped believing that their country would be free again. That spirit became one of the greatest chapters in Kuwait's history.

Today, thirty six years later, we see that same spirit once again. As Kuwait faces the current Iranian aggression, our people have remained united, calm, and determined. The challenges are different,

but the values are the same. Love of country, trust in our leadership, and standing together in difficult times continue to define Kuwait.

We also remember with gratitude the countries that stood beside Kuwait in 1990 and helped restore our freedom, especially the GCC, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, Argentina (the only Latin American country in the coalition), Japan (which contributed US\$13 billion as one of the largest financial supporters), and the many other members of the international coalition.

We also remember the friendship of Ban-

gladesh and its support during Kuwait's post-war recovery. Their support will always be remembered. At the same time, we pay tribute to our martyrs and to everyone who sacrificed for the future of our homeland. Their courage will never be forgotten.

For younger generations, August 2 is more than a history lesson. It is a reminder that peace cannot be taken for granted. Independence, security, and stability are precious. They must be protected every day through unity, responsibility, and loyalty to our nation.

The lessons of August 2 did not end with liberation. They continue to guide us through every challenge Kuwait faces today. They remind us that our greatest strength has always been the unity of everyone who calls Kuwait home.

Kuwaitis and residents alike have stood together in difficult times, supporting one another with resilience and hope. May God continue to protect Kuwait, its leadership, its people, and all who live in this beloved country, and may our homeland always remain safe, secure, and united.



Al-Hajeri

Cultural tasks hone skills of students, hoist talent

KU works to enhance self-confidence for freshmen

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (KUNA): Cultural activities at universities have become a cornerstone of student life, going beyond recreational events to provide platforms for discovering talent, developing skills and promoting dialogue, said Acting Dean of Student Affairs at Kuwait University Salem Al-Shammari.

In an interview with KUNA, Al-Shammari said cultural activities form an integral part of the university experience, helping students integrate into campus life, strengthen their affiliation with the university, discover talents and build a shared academic identity.

He said Kuwait University places significant emphasis on cultural and artistic activities through a dedicated department under the Deanship of Student Affairs, which oversees cultural, artistic, theatrical and literary programs across the university's 16 colleges with the support of an annual budget.

The university seeks to provide a safe and stimulating environment, particularly for freshmen, by encouraging them to participate in activities aligned with their interests and hobbies, helping them establish positive social relationships and adapt to university life, he added.

He also expressed appreciation to Kuwait University Director Dr. Dina Al-Mailam for her continued support of student and cultural activities, saying her backing has strengthened initiatives that enrich students' university experience and help develop their skills across various fields.

He affirmed that Kuwait University will continue expanding its cultural and artistic programs and strengthening local and international participation, maintaining such activities as a fundamental pillar in preparing a generation capable of cre-



Dr. Al-Mailam



Al-Shammari

ativity, community engagement and openness to different cultures.

Al-Shammari noted that the university's cultural programs cover a broad spectrum, including theater, poetry, fine arts, painting, exhibitions, innovation initiatives and cybersecurity-related activities, reflecting its commitment to meeting students' evolving interests and showcasing their talents.

He highlighted theater as one of the university's flagship activities, noting that Kuwait University has won several Gulf-level awards, including Best Theatrical Script and Best Theatrical Performance, and is preparing to participate in an Arab theater event in Tunisia next August.

The university also organizes the annual "People's Gathering" cultural festival to introduce students to different civilizations and cultures, in addition to its Talent and Innovation Exhibition, launched three years ago, which attracts a growing number of gifted students each year.

The exhibition is continuously being expanded to include more fields and participants while encouraging creativity and healthy competition, he said.

Al-Shammari stressed that cultural activities directly enhance students' self-confidence and provide opportunities to display their talents within the academic environment, noting increasing student interest in artistic exhibitions and creative

initiatives, which positively reflects on both their personalities and academic performance.

He added that student and academic clubs also play a vital role by enabling knowledge transfer between senior and new students while fostering volunteerism and teamwork.

The relocation of Kuwait University to Sabah Al-Salem University City has further strengthened interaction among students by bringing all colleges together in one location, making it easier to organize university-wide events after activities were previously confined to individual colleges, he said.

The university also boasts specialized facilities supporting cultural activities, including the Cultural Center, regarded as one of Kuwait's leading venues for exhibitions and events, and the Conference Center, which hosts a wide range of academic and cultural programs.

Discussing future challenges, Al-Shammari said the university's main objective is to continuously introduce innovative ideas and programs that align with students' aspirations and future interests.

He added that Kuwait University is expanding its international participation through cultural exchange initiatives, including participation in the upcoming Arab theater event in Tunisia, a planned visit to China to enhance cultural cooperation, and hosting students from Gulf universities to familiarize them with Kuwait's academic and cultural environment.

Student exchange programs, he said, extend beyond academics by exposing participants to diverse educational experiences and cultures, with the university planning to broaden participation in coming years.

Al-Shammari revealed that the Deanship of Student Affairs has finalized its annual cultural activities plan for the upcoming academic year, aiming to integrate it with public relations and college programs into a unified calendar that will allow students to access and participate in events from the beginning of the academic year.



HH the Amir



Guy Parmelin

Amir congratulates Swiss President on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations Saturday to Swiss Confederation President Guy Parmelin on Switzerland's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished President Parmelin good health and wellness, and expressed his hopes for continued progress and prosperity for Switzerland and its friendly people.

Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations

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PM congratulates

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KUNA photo

Kuwait's Ambassador to Brazil Talal Al-Mansour, representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, attended the inauguration ceremony of Peru's President Keiko Fujimori.

Amir's Rep. attends Peru's Pres. swearing-in occasion

NEW YORK, Aug 1, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to Brazil Talal Al-Mansour, representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, attended the inauguration ceremony of Peru's President Keiko Fujimori.

Kuwaiti Embassy in Brazil stated in a press release Thursday that Al-Mansour conveyed His Highness the Amir's congratulations to Fujimori, along with wishes for her good health and for Peru's continued progress and prosperity.

Ambassador Al-Mansour also conveyed greetings from His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the

Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

He expressed Kuwait's desire to strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation with Peru across various fields in a way that serves the interests of both countries.

The inauguration ceremony was held Tuesday at the Peruvian Congress in the presence of several heads of state and government, senior officials and diplomatic representatives.

Fujimori later received well-wishers at the presidential palace in a formal ceremony highlighting the importance of the occasion nationally and internationally.

KFF awareness campaign tells ways to curb fires, drowning

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), represented by its Public Relations and Media Department, held its summer awareness campaign titled "A Safe Summer with KFF" on Friday at Capital Mall, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The campaign aimed to raise awareness about fire hazards, their causes, and drowning incidents, which increase during the summer months, and promote a culture of prevention and safety awareness among community members.

Other Voices

The Jewish Diaspora and the attitudes of Muslims and Europeans towards them

By Ahmad alsarraaf

The Lebanese-born novelist and thinker Amin Maalouf, a member of the "Academy of Immortals," states in his research book, "In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong", "If my ancestors had been Muslims living in a country conquered by Christian armies, I do not think they could have continued to live for 14 centuries in their cities and villages while preserving their faith."

Maalouf highlights several historical aspects that challenge preconceived notions held by many and question prevailing views about the nature of relations between Arab Muslims, from the Umayyad era to the present day, and followers of other religions, particularly Christians and Jews. This perspective also considers historical accounts and references spanning more than 1,300 years.

There is a common misconception, or rather a widespread misunderstanding, regarding the situation and status of Jews under Islamic rule, including during periods such as Arab rule in Andalusia, the Abbasid Caliphate, the Fatimid Caliphate, the Mamluk Sultanate, and the Ottoman Caliphate until its collapse. This misconception continued throughout the Anglo-French colonial period in the region, the establishment of Israel in 1948, and the years that followed.

Generally speaking, Jews experienced their best years among Arabs and Muslims after the era of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, and they experienced their worst years in Europe.

Were it not for the intense European hostility toward them, no individual or entity would have considered establishing an independent Jewish state.



alsarraaf

Throughout their history, Jews lived as a minority in dozens of countries, a situation that was accepted due to the significant religious, social, and political differences between them.

Andalusia was a prominent example of what is referred to as the Golden Age of Jews under Islamic rule, particularly during the 10th and 11th centuries CE under the Umayyad Caliphate in Cordoba. Jews held influential positions, including roles as ministers, physicians, poets, and philosophers. Among the most notable figures were Shaprut, a physician and minister in the court of Abd al-Rahman III, and the philosopher Moses Maimonides, regarded as one of the greatest Jewish theologians in history.

This was followed by the persecution of Jews and Christians in the 12th century, and later by the Catholic conquest of Granada in 1492, which brought an end to Arab-Islamic rule in Spain. As a result, many Jews and Muslims fled or were expelled from Spain, particularly those who refused to convert, moving to North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, and other parts of Europe. These Jewish communities became known as Sephardim.

Under Islamic rule, Jews generally lived as dhimmis, a protected religious minority in exchange for paying the jizya tax and adhering to certain social restrictions, including requirements such as wearing specific clothing to distinguish them from others. Restrictions were also imposed on the construction of places of worship, among other things.

This system provided Jews with a degree of protection and stability compared to their experiences in Europe during certain periods, although it did not represent complete equality. The extent and severity of these restrictions varied depending on the state, era, and ruler.

During certain periods of the Ottoman Empire, Jewish communities enjoyed a level of protection and stability. In Morocco, Jewish communities were established and were relatively prosperous, despite occasional instances of discrimination and persecution. Jewish communities have

existed in Yemen, Iraq, and Egypt since ancient times, thousands of years before the emergence of Islam.

The situation of Jews in Christian Europe was generally harsher and more unstable. Jews were expelled from England in 1290, from France on several occasions, from Spain in 1492, and from Portugal in 1497. Beginning in the 16th century, many Jews were confined to closed ghettos and restricted from leaving after certain hours. They also suffered greatly during the Inquisition, facing persecution and repeated massacres fueled by accusations and false claims.

Following the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, a wave of emancipation began during the 18th and 19th centuries, granting Jews full citizenship rights in most of Western Europe.

The situation of Jews in the Russian Empire was among the most difficult in Europe, as they were restricted to specific geographical areas. Jews faced repeated waves of mass violence, particularly between 1881 and 1884 following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. A further significant wave of emigration took place between 1903 and 1906, leading to the migration of millions to Western Europe and the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Holocaust, perpetrated by Nazi Germany, was the most devastating event in modern Jewish history. Following the end of World War II and the establishment of Israel in 1948, Jews from Arab countries, including Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Morocco, Syria, and Libya, began emigrating to Israel. This migration was driven either by increasing pressures and restrictions in their home countries or by voluntary decisions to relocate, depending on the circumstances. This topic will be addressed in a future article.

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HH the Amir



Romuald Wadagni

Amir congratulates Benin President on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Saturday to President Romuald Wadagni of the Republic of Benin on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished President Wadagni good health and well-being, and expressed his wishes for continued progress and prosperity for the Republic of Benin and its friendly people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of con-

gratulations on Saturday to President Romuald Wadagni of the Republic of Benin on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished President Wadagni good health and well-being, and expressed his wishes for continued progress and prosperity for the Republic of Benin and its friendly people.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a cable of congratulations to President Romuald Wadagni of the Republic of Benin on his country's National Day.

MoE appoints several DGs to complete top notch slot

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei issued three ministerial decrees appointing several directors general as part of efforts to complete the leadership structure and enhance institutional efficiency, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decrees included the appointment

of Abdullah Faisal Al-Duaijani as Director of the General Department of Private Education within the Educational Affairs Sector, and Amin Mohammed Fahad Tmaihir as Director of the General Department of Human Resources and Employee Affairs within the Administrative, Financial, and Technical Affairs Sector.

Kuwaiti charities expand projects in Yemen, Chad

Healthcare, clean water, food top priorities

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (KUNA): Kuwaiti charitable organizations are increasingly shifting from emergency relief to sustainable development projects that address essential needs and improve the long-term well-being of vulnerable communities worldwide.

The growing focus on healthcare, access to clean water and food security reflects a development-oriented approach centered on investing in people and strengthening the resilience of communities facing humanitarian challenges.

Supported by generous donors in Kuwait, charitable societies continue implementing projects that reinforce the country's long-standing humanitarian role and contribute to international relief and development efforts.

In Yemen, the Al-Salam Humanitarian and Charity Society has continued supporting healthcare services by equipping kidney failure treatment centers with essential medical devices.

The society's Director-General, Hamad Al-Aoun, told KUNA that six dialysis machines were delivered to kidney treatment centers in Yemen's Abyan Governorate within just 22 days of the project's launch during the first 10 days of Dhu Al-Hijjah.

He said three of the machines were financed directly by the society's donors. At the same time, philanthropists from Kuwait and other Gulf countries funded the remaining three, enabling the project to be completed in record time.

Al-Aoun added that the society documented every stage of the delivery and installation process to ensure the equipment became fully operational and continued serving patients in need.

He affirmed that the association remains

committed to expanding its humanitarian initiatives both inside and outside Kuwait, calling on donors to continue supporting projects that improve essential services and ease the suffering of vulnerable populations.

Meanwhile, Nama Charity, affiliated with the Social Reform Society, continued implementing relief and development programs in Chad and Sudanese refugee camps, focusing on water, food assistance and healthcare.

Head of Programs and Initiatives at Nama Charity, Khaled Mubarak Al-Shammari, told KUNA that the organization's 10-day humanitarian mission reflected its commitment to reaching people in need through projects addressing their most pressing humanitarian requirements.

He said the mission included the inauguration of four artesian wells, more than 200 cataract surgeries, distribution of 840 food baskets, slaughter of 21 livestock animals, preparation of over 2,200 cooked meals and medical convoys that benefited more than 7,000 people.

Overall, more than 30,000 people benefited from the various humanitarian projects carried out during the mission, he added.

Al-Shammari noted that Nama Charity places strong emphasis on sustainable impact, particularly through water projects that improve public health and promote community stability, while regularly assessing projects in the field to ensure their continued effectiveness.

He also highlighted the ongoing "Khair Yarwih" (Goodness That Flows) campaign, which aims to establish 781 water projects in several countries to benefit more than 574,000 people, stressing that providing access to clean water represents a long-term investment in communities and reflects the enduring humanitarian impact of Kuwaiti charitable giving.



KUNA photos
Six dialysis machines were delivered to kidney treatment centers in Yemen's Abyan Governorate.



KUNA photo
Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah amidst senior officials at the launching of the 'Taafi' initiative.

'Taafi' initiative to empower recovering individuals – Min.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah said Thursday the "Taafi" (Recovery) initiative was a national effort to empower recovering individuals and reintegrate them into society.

The minister made the remarks during the launch of the initiative, implemented by the Human Building Society for Social Development under the ministry's umbrella.

The project is in partnership of UN organizations in Kuwait and backed by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED).

Al-Huwailah said the initiative reflects Kuwait's belief that true investment begins with human capital. She noted that complete recovery requires comprehensive health, psychological and social care, alongside rehabilitation, training and economic empowerment.

This comprehensive system opens new horizons for recovering individuals to actively participate in building their community, she added.

The initiative aligns with the "New Kuwait 2035" vision and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by promoting active partnerships, enhancing social protection, improving quality of life and empowering individuals, the minister explained.

She noted that Taafi complements an expanding partnership that culminated in the launch of the UN joint program to support employment and comprehensive rehabilitation in Kuwait.

Al-Huwailah stressed the importance of cooperation among government bodies, international organizations, the private

sector and civil society to achieve sustainable development and social cohesion.

She expressed appreciation to KFAED, the UN, the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Human Building Society for their roles in supporting the initiative.

For her part, UN Resident Coordinator in Kuwait Ghada Al-Taher said the initiative embodies a fruitful strategic partnership between Kuwait and the UN, with developmental support from KFAED and local execution by the Human Building Society.

Al-Taher explained that the initiative is a strategic step toward building a more cohesive society, providing integrated care and psychological support to recovering individuals in line with the UN principle of "leaving no one behind."

Meanwhile, WHO Representative in Kuwait Dr. Asad Hafeez said substance use disorders are a public health issue requiring a comprehensive response encompassing prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration.

Hafeez noted that recovery does not end with treatment, but rather when individuals rebuild their lives, regain their independence and actively participate in their communities.

He affirmed WHO's continued commitment to supporting Kuwait in addressing substance use disorders through an evidence-based, human-centered approach to expand recovery opportunities.

The launch event also witnessed the UN honoring Sheikhha Sheikhha Abdullah Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah for her humanitarian contributions and continuous support for community and developmental initiatives.

MEW begins disbursement of bonuses to employees

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has begun disbursing the first phase of the excellent performance bonus to its employees, sending notifications through the Sahel app to inform beneficiaries that the

disbursement procedures have been completed.

A number of ministry employees received notifications via Sahel app, confirming the approval and processing of the bonus, paving the way for the payments to be deposited into their bank accounts in accordance with approved financial procedures.

Room Description	Price
One night stay in a Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons with inclusive of Breakfast	BD 53.361 / Net
One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast	BD 119.173 / Net

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Continued from Page 1

Jleeb cleanup

serious violations in the area.

The Interior Ministry affirmed that the security forces and field teams continue to inspect vacated residences, foil attempts to violate security procedures and issue decrees.

The source stressed that legal measures will be taken against those proven to have committed violations, and that the security campaign will continue according to a comprehensive field plan covering all areas where violations are uncovered.

The recent Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh campaign led to the arrest of 1,253 individuals wanted by law for security reasons and for violating the Residency and Labor laws.

A total of 36 children born out of wedlock were found with their mothers and referred to the relevant authorities.

During the campaign, the Kuwait Municipality issued 777 violation reports, removed 27 abandoned vehicles, put 64 warning stickers on abandoned vehicles, and carried out cleaning operations on street of Al-Tamayoz Private School, Street 162 and surrounding streets.

The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy cut off power from 1,200 illegally constructed residences, resulting in 60 percent reduction of electricity load Farwaniyah Governorate.

The Ministry of Public Works identified 1,432 dilapidated houses, closed 20 illegal sewage connections, and dealt with 60 cases of sewage overflows.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued 256 violation reports and 10 closure orders for various establishments.

The Ministry of Health administered treatment for 784 individuals at the shelter and referred 61 patients to the hospital.

The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) enforced 188 administrative closure orders.

The Environment Public Authority (EPA) issued 90 environmental violation citations and referred them to the Public Prosecution.

The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) issued 315 violation reports, in addition to nine reports on the destruction of food products and 12 requests to close violating establishments.

The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) conducted 6,511 inspections in shops and investment establishments, during which 1,471 violating establishments were identified and legal action was taken against them, 376 individuals were checked in the field, 129 cases of bribery related to residency permits were uncovered, and 110 individuals from the expatriate workers shelter were referred to the Deportation Department.

Kuwait eyes

She discussed the economic cost of the war alongside the ongoing opportunities, highlighting the recent announcement of a USD-16 billion pipeline deal between the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and US companies; the largest foreign direct investment in Kuwait's history.

Ambassador Al-Sabah also discussed Kuwait's focus on innovation and economic diversification, from artificial intelligence to the medical field and beyond, in an effort to build a promising future for the country's youth.

Medical missteps

The cases involve seven healthcare practitioners, including a consultant, medical directors, healthcare facility license holders, and heads of medical departments, in addition to several private hospitals, clinics and medical centers.

The measures taken resulted in fines totaling KD5,700, along with the permanent closure of one clinic and the revocation of the license of a private healthcare facility found to be in violation of the regulations.

Other actions taken included the reopening of one private medical center and the continuation of the closure of the dental department at another private medical center until it complies with the requirements of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), as per Ministerial Resolution No. 36/2024.

The ministry affirmed that it will continue its monitoring and inspection of private healthcare facilities, take legal action against anyone proven to have committed violations, and refer cases to the concerned authorities to complete the required technical and legal procedures.

Kuwait welcomes

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry praised the diplomatic efforts of Egypt, Qatar, Türkiye, the United States, the Board of Peace and all parties involved in reaching the agreement.

The ministry reiterated Kuwait's commitment to supporting the full implementation of the comprehensive peace plan in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2803. It said the plan includes the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, unhindered humanitarian aid, reconstruction efforts, and the return of the Palestinian Authority to administer the territory.

Kuwait also stressed that the agreement should pave the way for

a comprehensive political settlement leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Trump announced late Thursday that a "historic" agreement had been reached for the complete disarmament of Hamas and all other armed groups in Gaza, describing it as a major milestone toward lasting peace and regional security.

According to the plan, disarmament will be carried out in phases, followed by the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the deployment of an International Stabilization Force working alongside a new Palestinian police force. Trump said the agreement forms part of his 20-point peace plan and would allow a new Palestinian government to assume responsibility for governing Gaza.

The Board of Peace later confirmed that Hamas had formally accepted a roadmap for implementing the next phases of the Gaza ceasefire agreement, marking what it described as the first official commitment by the group to relinquish its weapons.

The agreement, reached after months of negotiations involving the United States, Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye, also outlines measures for new governance, humanitarian relief, reconstruction and economic recovery in Gaza under the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 2803.

Speaking during a Cabinet meeting at Camp David on Friday, Trump described the accord as "a great breakthrough," saying many had believed disarming Hamas was impossible. He said the agreement represented a significant step toward stability in the Middle East.

The announcement drew broad international support.

Bahrain welcomed the agreement as a positive step toward ending Palestinian suffering and strengthening regional security, while reaffirming support for implementing the peace plan and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The United Arab Emirates described the accord as a major breakthrough that could help halt regional escalation, facilitate humanitarian assistance and lay the groundwork for a sustainable political settlement based on a two-state solution.

Qatar welcomed Hamas' acceptance of the roadmap and urged the international community to ensure full implementation of the agreement while pressing Israel to uphold its commitments.

Egypt announced it will soon host a meeting of mediators from Egypt, the

United States, Qatar and Türkiye to discuss implementation of the agreement's second phase, including the deployment of the National Committee for Gaza, the International Stabilization Force and the start of reconstruction efforts.

The United Kingdom and France also welcomed the agreement, calling for its full implementation, the withdrawal of Israeli forces, expanded humanitarian access to Gaza and continued progress toward a two-state solution.

Morocco-Kuwait

Jawahir Al-Duaij, and a large number of heads of diplomatic missions and members of the Moroccan community.

Ibn Issa asserted that Kuwait is not just a strategic partner for Morocco, but a sisterly country with which the Kingdom enjoys relations built on mutual respect, solidarity and cooperation.

He expressed his appreciation for the sincere brotherly feelings that Kuwait, its leadership, government and people hold for Morocco. He praised the principled and unwavering stance of Kuwait in support of the territorial integrity of Morocco, emphasizing that this position is highly valued in Rabat and it reflects the depth of relations between the two countries.

He said the Kingdom continues to achieve diplomatic gains, coinciding with growing international support for the autonomy initiative as a serious and realistic solution to the Western Sahara issue, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

He confirmed that the Kingdom, under the leadership of King Mohammed VI, made economic development the main pillar of its modernization process. He pointed out that the Kingdom is now an attractive economic, industrial and logistical hub for investment, thanks to its political and institutional stability, advanced infrastructure and supportive legal framework.

He also cited the development of the automotive, aerospace, renewable energy, green economy and digital economy sectors.

He indicated that preparations for hosting the 2030 FIFA World Cup, in partnership with Spain and Portugal, will provide extensive investment opportunities in the infrastructure, tourism, transportation, services and sports economy sectors.

He stressed that economic relations between Kuwait and Morocco witnessed remarkable development in recent years, with the value of trade exchange reaching 943 million Moroccan dirhams in 2024. He added that the Moroccan exports to Kuwait increased by 7.1 percent in the first half of 2025.

He went on to say that Kuwait is the

third largest Arab investor in Morocco, with investments covering the real estate, renewable energy, telecommunications, financial services and tourism sectors.

He stated that the direct flight route between Kuwait and Casablanca boosted travel and tourism, such that the number of Kuwaiti visitors to Morocco exceeded 38,000 in 2025.

He disclosed that 2025 witnessed a surge in economic cooperation through the organization of two business forums in coordination with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), and the participation of Moroccan economic institutions.

He said his country is hoping that the upcoming session of the Moroccan-Kuwaiti Joint Higher Committee, which will be held in the Kingdom of Morocco in the coming months, will be a significant milestone in terms of updating the legal framework for bilateral relations, signing new agreements and memoranda of understanding, and launching practical cooperation programs in various fields.

He reiterated his gratitude to the State of Kuwait, its leadership, government and people, for continuously supporting Morocco, wishing that Kuwait will keep on enjoying security, stability and prosperity.

Core facilities

The ministry said the repeated attacks reflect a persistent hostile approach that undermines regional security and escalates tensions, reiterating Kuwait's legitimate right to take all necessary measures to protect its sovereignty, national interests, resources, and the safety of citizens and residents.

The Ministry of Defense said Kuwait's Armed Forces detected hostile drones that entered the country's airspace from dawn on Saturday and successfully intercepted them.

Official spokesperson Col. Saud Al-Atwan said the drones targeted a government installation in northern Kuwait and civilian vehicles belonging to a private company on Bubiyan Island. The attacks caused material damage from falling debris but no casualties.

He affirmed that the Armed Forces remain on high alert and continue coordinating with relevant authorities to safeguard the country's sovereignty, security and stability.

Later Saturday, Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held talks by telephone with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud to discuss regional developments and diplomatic efforts aimed at easing tensions, preserving regional security and ensuring the safety of international maritime navigation.

The attacks drew swift condemnation from regional and international partners.

Saudi Arabia denounced the Iranian strikes on Kuwait and Jordan, reaffirming its full solidarity with both countries and expressing condolences over the death of a worker in Kuwait. Riyadh called for an immediate end to attacks targeting civilian areas and vital infrastructure.

GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi condemned the attacks as a blatant violation of international law and Kuwait's sovereignty, reiterating the Gulf bloc's full support for all measures taken by Kuwait to protect its security and stability.

Jordan, Palestine and Yemen also condemned the attacks, describing them as dangerous escalations that violate international law and threaten regional peace. All three reaffirmed their support for Kuwait's right to safeguard its sovereignty and protect its citizens and residents.

China said it opposes attacks on civilians and non-military facilities, urging all parties to exercise restraint and resolve differences through dialogue. Beijing confirmed that no Chinese nationals were injured in the strike on a Chinese company's facility in Kuwait, although a Nepalese employee was killed, and said it remains in close contact with Kuwaiti authorities regarding the safety of Chinese citizens and businesses operating in the country.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump threatened more strikes on Iran as the United States presses for the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Speaking to reporters Friday during a meeting with members of his Cabinet at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland, Trump said "we just want to win" in Iran and signaled that he expected U.S. military action to continue for some time.

He said the U.S. will hit Iran "very hard" until they can't take it anymore.

Later that day, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt expressed the U.S. administration's frustration anew, charging that Tehran last month signed a memorandum of understanding with the U.S. on a truce but then quickly "broke it, shot at commercial ships, and killed American soldiers."

"President Trump is not going to stand by and allow this terrorist behavior to occur," Leavitt said in a statement on Friday evening. "Iran will continue to pay until they come to the table in, what President Trump deems, a meaningful way."

On Saturday, the U.S. State Department issued new security alerts for Americans in 10 countries in the region to exercise heightened caution due to the escalating tensions with Iran.

The warnings - covering Bahrain, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates - urged U.S. citizens to prepare for the possibility of flight cancellations, temporary airspace closures and other travel disruptions.



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Minnesota governor blamed for cyberattacks against the state

US President Trump hails ‘unique’ Cabinet meeting at Camp David

CAMP DAVID, Md., Aug 1, (AP): US President Donald Trump took Friday’s Cabinet meeting on the road to Camp David, using the historic rustic backdrop of the presidential retreat to boast of his administration’s achievements while seizing on a migrant crisis in Spain to make his case for why voters should keep the Republican Party in power.

The Cabinet meeting, the 13th such gathering of Trump’s second term, came just three months before the November midterm elections that could serve as a check on his power if Democrats take control of one or both chambers of Congress. His warnings about Spain echoed language he used ahead of the 2018 midterms, when he warned of caravans of migrants headed to the southern US border.

“You know, I saw Spain yesterday, and I watched the catastrophe that took place. It looks like an invasion of a country by hundreds of thousands of people,” Trump said. “And that same thing is going to happen to us if the Republicans don’t get elected. Except worse, much bigger.”

Some 60,000 migrants crossed from Morocco into Spain’s tiny Ceuta territory over the past 24 hours. Roughly half of them have already

made their way back voluntarily, according to the Spanish government, but at least 57 have died on the journey.

Separately, he deflected blame for a series of cyberattacks that targeted 30 water systems in Minnesota on the state’s “grossly incompetent” Democratic leadership. Officials have not publicly identified who was behind the attacks, though the FBI, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and other agencies warned in an advisory last week that Iranian hackers have been targeting water and wastewater systems and the operational controls of other critical infrastructure sectors.

“They blame it on Iran,” Trump said, without offering evidence. “I don’t think so. I think I blame it on Minnesota because they’re grossly incompetent.”

The president regularly convenes his Cabinet throughout his terms as a setting to promote his administration’s policies while fielding questions on the news of the day, but what made Friday’s unusual was that it was at Camp David, the government-owned retreat nestled in Maryland’s Catocтин Mountains where Trump held one Cabinet meeting during his first term.



US President Donald Trump, (seated center), joined by Interior Secretary Doug Burgum, from left, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, and acting Labor Secretary Keith Sonderling, attends a cabinet meeting at Camp David, the presidential retreat, near Thurmont, Md. on July 31. (AP)

Trump began the meeting by noting it was “something very unique.” The White House called it the first-ever televised Cabinet meeting from the presidential retreat.

“It’s Camp David, and this room is a very, very special room,” Trump said.

swer session, Trump commented on the latest developments regarding the war in Iran and a deal he announced Thursday that would lead to the disarmament of the Palestinian group Hamas. He also lamented that a \$1.8 billion anti-weaponization fund to compensate his allies was “dead” and appeared to back off a pledge he made earlier this month to grant Ukraine a license to manufacture Patriot air defense systems.

“I don’t think this would ever happen, but, you know, there’s people that, you give that technology, they can someday turn on you,” Trump added. “You look at war, that’s happened a couple of times over the years, right? So we have to be very careful.”

On the Hamas agreement, Trump acknowledged that the agreement that would also lead to Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza will have “ups and downs.” Still, he called it a “great breakthrough” that has been helped along by the U.S. and Israel’s war with Iran, which has served as Hamas’ prime backer.

Trump also remarked on the anti-weaponization fund that is holding up the confirmation of Todd Blanche as his attorney general, saying the pot of money is “dead” and that “I

wish it weren’t, to be honest with you.”

The president continued to defend the people who could potentially benefit from the fund, mainly those who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, to stop the certification of Democrat Joe Biden’s victory over him.

“Their families have been ruined,” Trump said. Those people “wanted to go to a rally or an event and ended up spending the rest of their lives in horror.”

Trump said Blanche has been a “pawn in this whole thing.” Blanche, who was present, did not speak in the public portion of the Cabinet meeting.

The camp’s primary purpose is to provide presidents a place to rest, relax and recharge. It was established in 1942 during Franklin Roosevelt’s presidency and has been used by every president since.

Roosevelt had enjoyed relaxing aboard a presidential yacht, but the military and the U.S. Secret Service began to worry about his safety on open water during World War II. As a result, Roosevelt asked the National Park Service to find sites within 100 miles (160 kilometers) of the White House that he could use for rest.

Trump limited-edition passports will become available across US

WASHINGTON, Aug 1, (AP): Americans outside the nation’s capital will soon be able to get limited-edition US passports that feature a picture of President Donald Trump and celebrate America’s 250th birthday, the State Department said.

The department’s 27 passport agencies nationwide will start offering the special travel documents next month. They previously had only been available at the Washington, DC, passport office for in-person applicants.

Trump, whose stern portrait is emblazoned on an inside page, is the first living president featured in the travel document.

The passports are the latest instance of Trump having his name and likeness added to buildings, documents and other highly visible tributes. His image is on a gold-finished commemorative coin celebrating the country’s founding that the US Mint has begun producing, and there are efforts to put Trump’s signature on all new US paper currency, also a first for a sitting president.

“In response to overwhelming demand, the Department of State is making an additional 250,000 of the special commemorative pass-



A sample of a limited release of a commemorative US passport that celebrates America’s 250th birthday and features a picture of President Donald Trump, is photographed, April 28, 2026. (AP)

ports available to the public,” it said in a statement. “Americans all across the country will now have the opportunity to apply for one of these additional special passports, known as the ‘Patriot Passport.’”

Passport offices in Centennial, Colorado; Chicago; Dallas; Detroit; New Orleans; New York; and Stamford, Connecticut, will offer the Trump passports at one-day special events starting Aug 8. The list will grow to include other passport offices throughout August.

United States to make visa bond requirements permanent, affecting mostly African countries

WASHINGTON, Aug 1, (AP): The State Department is making permanent a pilot program under which citizens from 50 countries, mainly in Africa, are required to post bonds to apply for a U.S. visa, and it’s raising the cost as well, to as much as \$20,000.

A draft notice published Friday in the Federal Register says a nearly year-long review “provided sufficient data” to suggest the bond program effectively enforces compliance with visa conditions, and would be made permanent.

The notice is to be formally released on Monday, the day the program becomes permanent, and additional countries may be added to the list, which can be found here.

The pilot program set the maximum bond amount at \$15,000, with lower amounts of \$5,000 and \$10,000 based on a consular officer’s discretion. The final regulation raises the maximum to \$20,000 and removes the \$5,000 low-end payment.

The program requires holders of passports from the affected countries to pay the bond to be interviewed for



The State Department seal is seen on the briefing room lectern at the State Department in Washington, Jan. 31, 2022. (AP)

business and tourist visas - known as B1 and B2 visas - to travel to the United States. The bond is refunded if the visa application is denied or, if granted, if the person adheres to the visa terms.

The Trump administration rolled

State Department officials have hailed the program as a great success. In 2024, nearly 45,500 visitors from the 50 countries in the program overstayed their visas, according to the notice. In the first 10 months of the pilot visa bond program, the number of overstays from those countries was fewer than 50, it said.

Critics have said it imposes an unnecessarily harsh burden on people from impoverished countries to visit family members or to pursue education or business opportunities in the U.S.

According to government projections and statistics from the first year of the program, the State Department initially expected that about 2,000 visa applicants would be required to post the bond. Instead, the department found that roughly 20,000 applicants were covered by the bond requirement.

Nearly half of those applicants chose not to pay the bond and there was an 83% decline in the number of business and tourist visas issued to citizens of countries on the list.



People walk on a beach after attempting to cross from the Moroccan northern town of Fnideq to the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on July 31. (AP)

Spain to put fence on Ceuta’s border with Morocco after frontier rush kills 67

CEUTA, Spain, Aug 1, (AP): Spain announced it was installing a 500-meter-long (1,600-foot) containment barrier on the sea border between its North African territory of Ceuta and neighboring Morocco after between 50,000 and 60,000 migrants breached the frontier earlier this week.

The death toll has climbed to 67, including some who drowned and others who were killed in a stampede to cross a breakwater barrier, the

Spanish government said Saturday.

A handful of exhausted migrants who swam to Ceuta’s urban Tarajal beach Saturday morning were met by soldiers who escorted them back across the border. Spain’s interior ministry says the majority of those who entered the Spanish territory in North Africa have already returned to Morocco.

“We are relentless against those who break the law,” Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-

Marlaska told journalists in Ceuta on Saturday.

Questioned how this massive border breach could have happened given the heavy security on both sides of the border and whether Morocco posed a threat to Ceuta, Marlaska defended the government in Rabat.

“The events require an evaluation by Spain and Morocco,” he said. But it was the cooperation with its neighbors that allowed Spain “to revert the situation in 24 hours.”

America

F-35B stealth fighter crashes: The US Marine Corps says the pilot of an F-35B stealth fighter is expected to live after ejecting from the jet before it crashed in California.

The jet went down Friday near the Miramar air base in San Diego. “The pilot ejected, was transported to a local medical facility in stable condition for evaluation and treatment of non-life-threatening injuries,” the Marine Corps said in an updated statement.

Aerial video from a news helicopter showed a plume of black smoke rising from the wreckage in a dirt field, with multiple military and firefighting vehicles and people standing nearby. What appeared to be white flame retardant covered the ground, and at least one person was spraying the wreckage with a fire hose.

Wade Lott saw the crash as he drove to work at a

concrete company just south of the flight line. (AP)

□ □ □

Flooding in NY leads to water rescues: Cleanup efforts were underway in parts of upstate New York on Thursday following two days of heavy rains that led to flash flooding, water rescues and the destruction of a centuries-old grist mill.

Nearly a foot (30 centimeters) of rain fell in parts of Columbia and Rensselaer counties near Albany during a 48-hour period ending Thursday morning, the National Weather Service said. Albany, the state capital, was hit with 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rain over the same period.

First responders in Albany and several other towns said they rescued people from their homes and vehicles on Wednesday as waterways and streets flooded. Crews also pumped out waterlogged basements. There were no reports of deaths or injuries, and the flood waters were receding Thursday. (AP)

Russia missile attacks kill at least nine in Ukraine’s capital: officials

KYIV, Ukraine, Aug 1, (AP): Russia launched an intense barrage of ballistic missiles and drones overnight into Saturday, killing at least nine people and wounding 30 civilians in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, authorities said.

The strikes follow a major Russian attack two days earlier that killed at least 10 people and wounded more than 50 others across Ukraine, as Moscow apparently looks to exploit Kyiv’s critical shortage of Western-supplied anti-ballistic missile defenses. The relentless cycle of attacks dims the potential of reaching a diplomatic end to Russia’s more than 4-year-old invasion of its neighbor.

A five-story residential building in the city’s Solomianskyi District was damaged by falling debris and a fire broke out. Rescue workers evacuated 35 people from the upper floors of the building and two people died, with eight reported injured, including two children, according to



A burned car is seen after a Russian missile attack in Kyiv, Ukraine on Aug 1. (AP)

Ukraine’s state emergency service.

In the Darnytskyi District of Kyiv, seven people were killed and another 14 injured after the attack caused fires and damage to houses, vehicles, an administrative and non-residential building, the emergency services said.

Elsewhere, emergency workers extinguished a fire in a non-residential building in the capital’s Shevchenkivskyi district. There was no additional information about earlier reports by the district mayor that people were trapped in another residential building.

Britain’s PM shifts power from Downing Street to Manchester with ‘No. 10 North’

MANCHESTER, England, Aug 1, (AP): Britain has a new hub of power: a bland modern office block about 165 miles (260 kilometers) from the prime minister’s official London office and residence at 10 Downing St.

The Manchester low-rise is home to “No. 10 North,” the flagship of new Prime Minister Andy Burnham’s pledge to be a different kind of U.K. leader. Burnham was mayor of Greater Manchester before vaulting back into national politics, and one of his first acts was to set up a branch office in the city. It’s both symbol of and engine for his pledge to give local leaders more powers and spread economic growth around the country.

Burnham calls it “a North Pole that balances the South Pole” of Westminster politics in London. Critics have called it a gimmick.

It’s certainly a novelty. While past British leaders have spent weekends in their local constituencies, or at the prime minister’s official Chequers country retreat, none in living memory has had a large-scale office outside London. Burnham plans to



Britain's Prime Minister Andy Burnham holds a National Economic Council meeting at No. 10 North at Heron House in Manchester, England on July 24. (AP)

work there at least one day a week, alongside a full-time staff of aides, experts and civil servants.

“It’s not another office,” Burn-

ham said Friday. “It is a fundamental change to the way the country thinks about growth and investment.”

Burnham believes Manchester holds the key to avoiding the fate of Keir Starmer, his predecessor as Labour Party leader and prime minister.

Starmer stepped down in July after two years in office, following missteps, policy U-turns and his failure to get Britain’s sluggish economy growing.

During nine years as Manchester mayor, Burnham was praised standing up to central government on behalf of a proud, battle-scarred northern city that gave birth to the Industrial Revolution, movements for social change and a dynamic music scene. He gained the nickname King of the North for his championing of the city - and his political ambition.

Burnham promoted what has been called “Manchesterism,” a form of business-friendly socialism that involves harnessing private investment for major projects and decentralizing government to give communities more control over housing, transport, training and public services.

Pakistan rejects UN report of civilian deaths in strikes on Afghanistan

Broad Peak avalanche kills 4, search continues for climbers

ISLAMABAD, Aug 1, (AP): Rescuers backed by military helicopters resumed the search Saturday for at least six members of a 10-member expedition swept away by an avalanche on Pakistan's Broad Peak, officials said, a day after authorities recovered three of four bodies found so far.

A local police official, Tahir Khan, said the remains of Omani climber Nathira Ahmed were being flown to the capital, Islamabad, while the bodies of American climber Mallory Geis and Nepalese climber Bahadur Gurung remained at a hospital in Skardu, the main city in Pakistan's northern Gilgit-Baltistan region.

He said the search and rescue efforts were ongoing despite fading hopes. The team lost contact with their base camp Thursday after an avalanche struck Broad Peak as they attempted to scale the mountain, said Karrar Haidri, vice president of the Alpine Club of Pakistan on Friday.

He said there has been no contact since then and that experienced Pakistani climbers and army helicopters are taking part in the search-and-res-



In this photo released by the Alpine Club of Pakistan on July 31, members of a mountaineers rescue team prepare to depart from an airbase on a search operation for climbers missing after an avalanche on Pakistan's Broad Peak, in Skardu, in Gilgit-Baltistan's region, in northern Pakistan. (AP)

cue operation.

According to the Alpine Club, the expedition included five Nepalese climbers, the Omani and American

climbers, Pakistani climber Sohail Sakhi, a Chinese climber identified only as Wang and another foreign climber whose identity has not been

released.

Also:

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's military on Friday rejected as "baseless" a recent UN report that said Pakistani cross-border military operations killed nearly 500 civilians and wounded over 1,000 in neighboring Afghanistan between October and June.

At a televised news conference, military spokesman Lt Gen. **Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry** said Pakistan had targeted only hideouts and infrastructure used by the Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, during that period, and said those killed in the strikes were militants.

He said the operations were carried out in self-defense to protect the lives of people in Pakistan.

Chaudhry questioned recently released reports by the UN Assistance Mission in **Afghanistan**, or UNAMA, and Amnesty International, saying they relied largely on accounts from Afghans despite what he described as restrictions on freedom of expression under Taliban rule.

2 ex-Sri Lanka officials get death for negligence in Easter bombings

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Aug 1, (AP): A Sri Lankan court on Friday sentenced a former police chief and a former top Defense Ministry official to death after finding them guilty of criminal negligence that allowed Islamic State-inspired bomb attacks on Easter Sunday in 2019, which killed more than 260 people.

A death penalty in Sri Lanka typically means life in prison because the country has had a moratorium on executions since 1976. Current President Anura Kumara Disanayake supports maintaining the moratorium.

Former Police Chief Pujith Jayasundara and former Defense Ministry Secretary **Hemasiri Fernando** were convicted and sentenced Friday by the three-member High Court bench. They have the right to appeal the ruling.

The near-simultaneous bombings in 2019 were carried out at three tourist hotels and three churches - two of them Catholic and one Protestant - and killed 42 foreigners. A parliamentary committee found that police and intelligence officials failed to act on repeated intelligence warnings of the attacks.

The court delivered the verdict against Jayasundara first and then against Fernando later in the day. The death sentence came as a majority decision, with two judges agreeing and one judge writing a dissent arguing that both should go free.

Two Sri Lanka-based Islamic militant groups were accused of carrying out the bombings, and none of those believed to have been directly involved are living. Separate trials are taking place for people allegedly connected with the perpetrators.



Fernando

Government would continue implementing military's conscription: Min Aung Hlaing

Myanmar's president outlines policy road map for administration

BANGKOK, Aug 1, (AP): The head of Myanmar's military-backed government on Friday marked his government's first 100 days in office with a speech defending his record and outlining a five-year road map for his administration, which faces ongoing conflict and international criticism.

President Min Aung Hlaing, the former army chief who had originally seized power in 2021 from a civilian government, was sworn in as president in April following an election that critics said was designed to entrench the military's grip on power.

Addressing more than 900 lawmakers, officials and military representatives at Parliament in the capital, Naypyitaw, he said his government had laid "important foundations" since taking office by pursuing two priorities - restoring peace and stability and promoting national development.

Min Aung Hlaing said he would spend two years accelerating efforts to build a modern and developed nation based on democracy and a federal system, followed by another three years carrying out build-up at full speed.

He also said special elections would be held in 2027 in constituencies across 102 townships that were unable to vote during the three-phase election held late last year because of armed conflict.

He said the government would continue implementing the military's conscription law while strengthening the armed forces and police as they fight pro democracy activists and ethnic minority rebels throughout much of the country. He noted that his administration had invited armed groups fighting the military to lay down their weapons and had held talks with 13 ethnic armed groups.

At the same time, Min Aung Hlaing criticized a five-point consensus



Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing walks as he leaves after delivering speech at the Union Parliament in Naypyitaw, Myanmar on July 31. (AP)

reached by Southeast Asian leaders in 2021 to end Myanmar's civil strife, saying it had been issued without the agreement of all member states and that the regional bloc had discriminated against Myanmar. ASEAN had asked Myanmar to immediately end the violence, and dialogue among contending parties to be brokered through an ASEAN special envoy.

He also outlined energy and major infrastructure development plans, saying the government would proceed with 10 power generation projects, including the controversial Myitsone hydropower project, while continuing efforts to build a nuclear power plant. The hydropower project was suspended more than a decade ago after protests over its possible impact on the environment.

Myanmar authorities were also working to combat money laundering, drug trafficking and online scam centres, he said, adding that more than 72,000 foreigners linked to scam operations had been repatriated to 58 countries.

Min Aung Hlaing acknowledged that the departure of large numbers of young Myanmar people was hurting economic development, but did not acknowledge the role of the military's conscription law, which has been widely cited as one of the key factors behind the outflow of young people.

Nan Lin, a spokesperson of the General Strike Coordination Body, a leading nonviolent activists group, said the speech showed the military's intention to maintain its grip on power, adding that the country would face worsening hardship under what he described as the junta's failed policies.

"No meaningful change can be expected from the junta" Nan Lin said. "They will use the conscription law to control young people through fear, and the situation could worsen as they continue to sacrifice young people in order to hold on to power."

Africa

Algerian bus accident kills 25: At least 25 people were killed and 44 injured on Friday in a bus accident in Algeria, according to a provisional report from the Algerian Civil Protection.



Tebboune

The bus, which was carrying passengers from Sétif to the Algerian capital, skidded in the locality of El Karma, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) from Algiers, before plunging into a deep ravine.

Rescue teams were working at the scene, with a constant flow of ambulances transporting the injured to the nearest hospitals.

Algerian President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** has declared three days of national mourning, according to state television.

On Aug. 15, 2025, a public transport bus crashed through the safety barrier of a bridge in Algiers and plunged into a river into which the city's sewage is discharged. The toll from that accident was 18 dead and 21 injured. (AP)

'Russia-linked airstrike in Mali killed 8': Human Rights Watch said Friday that Russian government-controlled Africa Corps aircraft killed eight civilians, including three children, in an airstrike on a village in central Mali last month.

The rights group said an attack aircraft identified as a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 dropped two munitions on Kyrnia village in the Mopti region on June 15. One strike hit near the home of the village chief, killing his wife and three children. The second hit a nearby cattle market, killing four men. No fighters from the Islamic militant group JNIM, which has controlled the village for six years, were reported among the casualties.

The Associated Press was not able to independently verify the claims by Human Rights Watch.

Mali has been plagued for over a decade by militants affiliated with al-Qaida and the Islamic State group, including JNIM, as well as a Tuareg separatist rebellion in the north.

Violence escalated in recent months after an alliance of JNIM and Tuareg separatists carried out the largest coordinated attack in over a decade, targeting the airport of the country's capital, Bamako, the nearby garrison town of Kati, and several northern and central cities.

April's attacks exposed the weaknesses of Mali's strategy to combat the rebellion, including relying on Russia, which has partnered with the military-led government after it distanced itself from former allies such as France. (AP)

Milei empowers Argentina to bar or deport foreigners over hateful remarks about nation

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, Aug 1, (AP): After a bruising World Cup defeat gave way to what many Argentines saw as a sweeping wave of hatred against their country, Argentine President Javier Milei on Thursday signed an emergency decree empowering the government to deny entry to or expel foreigners who incite discrimination or violence against Argentines because of their nationality.

Milei's office cast the decree as a response to weeks of criticism from celebrities, opposing fans and social media users after controversial refereeing decisions fueled speculation that FIFA had tilted the soccer tournament in favor of the Argentina team and superstar Lionel Messi. Detractors directed their anger about occasionally aggressive Argentine fans and the team's roughhousing on the pitch not only at players but increasingly at Argentine society as a whole.

The measure adds new grounds to Argentina's immigration law, allowing authorities to bar, deport and revoke visas of people found to have promoted hatred against Argentines in spoken or written statements or who have desecrated national symbols.

"In light of recent displays of hostility toward the Argentine Republic and Argentines, the national government reaffirms that the defense of the nation, its citizens and its symbols is non-negotiable," the president's office said.



Argentine President Javier Milei speaks at the opening ceremony of the Rural Society's annual exposition in Buenos Aires, Argentina on July 26. (AP)

He said. "Anyone who attacks the Argentine Republic is not welcome in our country."

It's a shift for a country that has long prided itself on welcoming immigrants. Argentina's Constitution explicitly encourages immigration, and for decades the country has offered foreigners broad civil rights and relatively easy access to legal residency, public education and health care.

Milei, however, has introduced tougher immigration measures that

have raised the bar for permanent residency and expanded government powers to deport foreigners accused of crimes, often publicizing the moves with rhetoric similar to that of the Trump administration.

The widespread scorn for Argentina has played on long-standing stereotypes, particularly in Latin America, that Argentines view themselves as culturally and economically superior to their neighbors, in part due to the large share of the population descended from European im-

migrants. The backlash intensified when Argentina players and staff attacked their Spanish opponents in a post-match brawl after the World Cup final. Online petitions to expel Argentina from the World Cup drew hundreds of thousands of signatures.

FIFA, global soccer's governing body, on Wednesday opened disciplinary proceedings against the Argentine Football Association over the scuffle, as well as over alleged racist abuse and fan misconduct. Players also faced a FIFA investigation into their parading of a banner that asserted Argentina's claim to the British-controlled Falkland Islands after the team's semifinal victory over England.

Milei, a close ally of US President Donald Trump, has described the torrent of criticism as a coordinated "anti-Argentina campaign." He alleged without evidence last week that the left-wing governments of Brazil and Mexico and the US Democratic Party had financed the campaign to undermine his right-wing libertarian administration. That helped trigger a diplomatic crisis with neighboring Brazil, which recalled its ambassador to Argentina over the accusations and Milei's insults against Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Thursday's decree says the punishments don't apply to ideological disagreement or political, academic or civic criticism protected under Argentina's Constitution.

Haiti starts to register voters in violent capital under widespread gang menace

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Aug 1, (AP): Voter registration began in Haiti's capital and beyond, marking a critical milestone in the push for general elections even as concerns over widespread gang violence persist.

The government opened 10 registration centers across Port-au-Prince in neighborhoods considered generally safe as dozens of hopeful Haitians trickled through.

"This may be the first time that I'm going to vote," said 34-year-old construction worker Vadley Bernadel.

Haiti hasn't held general elections in more than a decade, and the country hasn't had a president since President Jovenel Moïse was killed at his private residence in July 2021.

Gang violence has only surged since then, but Haiti's unelected prime minister is under pressure to hold elections, with Dec. 13 marking the first round.

"Haiti needs someone with a vision, someone who can lead the country in a better direction," said Bernadel, who decried his country's

multiple crises.

Gang violence has displaced more than 1.4 million people, with armed men controlling an estimated 70% of Port-au-Prince and the main roads that lead to the country's Central and Artibonite provinces, which also are under fire.

More than 50% of Haiti's electorate live in those three regions, and it's unclear whether all those seeking to vote will be able to register, let alone vote, given the violence.

"The country can hold elections in three months if it chooses to." The question is, what kind of elections?" said Diego Da Rin, an analyst with the International Crisis Group.

If the government insists on holding elections on Dec. 13, "a large part of the electorate will be left out," he warned.

Da Rin noted that police and a UN-backed mission have seized back areas near the National Palace in Port-au-Prince and made other inroads, but powerful gangs still control vast amounts of territory.

"There has been no significant

progress," he said. "The government will not be able to organize elections in territories controlled by gangs."

Jacques Desrosiers, president of Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council, said he plans to open more voter registration centers in upcoming weeks, including 20 in Pétion-Ville, considered one of the safest areas.

As for the possibility of opening centers in other communities, he said that lies in the hands of the Haitian government.

Lawyer Francky Cavetan said he does not plan to vote because it's too risky, but he did visit one registration center out of curiosity.

"Elections are not going to happen because the government and electoral council are lying to the population," he asserted. "They are making people believe that elections will bring security, but they have to have security before elections."

More than 5,900 people were killed last year across Haiti, and more than 1,600 others from January to March of this year, according to the United Nations.



Haitians register to vote in the upcoming general election in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on July 31. (AP)

Oil price down \$1.41 to \$85.28 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by USD 1.41 to reach USD 85.28 per barrel (pb) in Friday's trading, compared with USD 86.69 per barrel in the previous session, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

said Saturday. In global markets, Brent crude went up by USD 1.07 to settle at USD 90.12 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate surged by USD 1.09 to reach USD 84.67 pb.

Main 50 indices advance

Kuwait stocks gained in July despite lower trading value

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (KUNA): Most indicators on Kuwait's stock market recorded positive performance in July despite a decline in average daily trading value compared with June, according to a specialized economic report released on Saturday.

The report, issued by Al-Shall Consulting and Investment, said the Premier Market Index rose 1.5 percent, while the Main 50 Index gained 2.4 percent and the All Share Index increased 0.6 percent. The Main Market Index, however, fell 3.6 percent.

It noted that total market liquidity declined to about KD 1.6 billion (around USD 5.2 billion) in July from KD 2.1 billion (around USD 6.8 billion) in June, a drop of 24.8 percent, attributing the decline to renewed military operations in the region.

Average daily trading value also fell 28.3 percent to KD 72.8 million (around USD 237 million) in July, compared with KD 101.5 million (around USD 330.4 million) in June.

The report added that total market liquidity during the first seven months of 2026 reached KD 11.4 billion (around USD 37.1 billion), with average daily trading value standing at KD 82.8 million (around USD 269.5 million), down 23.8 percent from the corresponding period last year.

It said liquidity trends since the beginning of the year showed that half of the listed companies attract-

ed only 6.7 percent of total market liquidity, including 50 firms that accounted for just 2.7 percent, while two companies recorded no trading activity.

The report also indicated that 12 relatively small but highly liquid companies, representing only 3.2 percent of the total market capitalization, accounted for 20.3 percent of total market liquidity.

Regarding market distribution, the report said the Premier Market attracted KD 922.5 million (around USD 3 billion), representing 57.6 percent of total liquidity in July. Nearly half of its listed companies accounted for 74.6 percent of the market's liquidity, equivalent to 43 percent of total market liquidity.

The remaining companies in the Premier Market accounted for 25.4 percent of its liquidity, while two companies alone captured 32.6 percent. The Premier Market represented 67.4 percent of total trading value during the first seven months of the year.

The Main Market attracted KD 678.7 million (around USD 2.2 billion), or 42.4 percent of total liquidity in July. About 20 percent of its listed companies accounted for 76 percent of the market's liquidity, while the remaining 80 percent shared 24 percent. The Main Market represented 32.6 percent of total trading value during the first seven months of 2026.

Other Voices

Oil companies cash in as Middle East tensions rise

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

THE current relationship between the US administration and oil companies is strange. Despite the fact that the president owns shares and investments in US oil companies such as ExxonMobil, Chevron, and Phillips 66, with a personal portfolio that includes multi-million-dollar holdings in these well-established energy companies, these companies continue to generate substantial profits and earnings on a quarterly and annual basis.

For this reason, it appears strange that the administration is criticizing or targeting these companies while they continue to generate huge revenues. Is this part of an effort by the administration to gain public attention and support for a reelection campaign, while simultaneously benefiting from substantial financial returns and investment gains?

The administration is seeking an orderly investigation, accusing oil companies of gouging drivers and failing to reduce fuel prices. However, oil companies claim that they need time to assess market conditions and evaluate the impact before adjusting petrol prices at service stations.

With the announcement of second-quarter results from major oil companies, substantial profits and earnings have been reported, providing the US president with additional financial gains during the quarter.

Meanwhile, ongoing tensions between the United States and Iran, including the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, are creating tighter global oil supplies from the Arabian Gulf region. This situation is forcing global consumers to rely on strategic oil reserves and prompting the United States to increase oil exports to Europe in an effort to stabilize oil markets and prices. The question remains - how long will this situation continue?

Oil prices are currently at \$87 a barrel for Brent crude oil. Russian crude oil, which is readily available for sale to East of Suez markets such as India and China, stands at \$104 a barrel, while

Dubai crude oil is at \$93 a barrel. This difference is due to the limited availability of Dubai crude oil compared to Russian crude oil, which is freely available for sale.

Strangely, the US administration stands against the oil companies, despite them having no responsibility or fault in the current situation. With the Strait of Hormuz closed, along with the Bab el-Mandeb Strait in the Red Sea linking to the Gulf of Aden and leading to Asia and Africa, alternative routes have become necessary.

The closure of the Arabian Gulf routes has increased reliance on Saudi crude oil exports through the Red Sea as another route to Asian markets and crude oil customers. With the Strait of Hormuz partially closed or experiencing very limited movement, the current tight supply situation continues, making oil prices increasingly difficult to predict.

It is difficult to predict oil prices or availability due to the lack of accurate and reliable information regarding the status of oil movements in the Gulf, including the number of oil tankers and their movements.

The question remains - can we be certain that the Strait is safe for navigation and for the lifting of crude oil and petroleum products to global markets? Certainly not. There is still no reliable source of information to fully depend on. The situation is unclear, fragile, risky, and unpredictable, causing oil prices to remain strong and difficult to forecast, with a high risk premium.

Russian crude oil is being sold at around \$16 below Brent crude, which stands at approximately \$88 a barrel, depending on availability in the oil market and strong demand.

The oil situation is clear. Availability remains limited, with the Arabian Gulf nearly closed due to the risks of attacks at any time, resulting in a high risk premium attached to movements in the region.

The uncertainties surrounding the oil situation in the Gulf, particularly regarding safety and security, represent huge risk factors that make navigation and oil transportation more challenging. This has caused oil prices to remain strong and high, while providing limited financial benefits to oil producers in the Gulf due to the reduced volume of oil lifting.

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Al-Harami

Business

Financing of up to KD 95,000 & exclusive offers from more than 70 strategic partners

NBK Al Manzel strengthens its position as Kuwait's largest home financing program

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continued to advance NBK Al Manzel, Kuwait's largest and most comprehensive specialized home financing program. Offering integrated financing solutions of up to KD 95,000, the program is supported by a network of more than 70 strategic partners across design, construction, furniture, and home furnishings, providing customers with a seamless, end-to-end experience tailored to their diverse needs, whether building, restoring, renovating, or furnishing their homes.

In a further step to elevate the customer experience and broaden access to the program's benefits, NBK now enables customers to add NBK Al Manzel to Apple Wallet, providing seamless access to exclusive offers and privileges from participating partners.

NBK Al Manzel embodies the Bank's vision of delivering solutions that go beyond traditional financing by combining financial flexibility, value-added services, and exclusive offers that support customers at every stage of their home ownership journey, from initial planning through to the completion of their residential project.

The program offers a compelling suite of competitive benefits designed to provide customers with greater flexibility and convenience. These include flexible repayment terms tailored to their financial needs, an instalment grace period of up to 12 months, streamlined processing, and the option to secure financing without transferring their salary.

Customers also benefit from an extensive portfolio of exclusive offers developed in collaboration with NBK Al Manzel partners, helping them unlock tangible added value and reduce the cost of building, renovating, or furnishing their homes. For example, customers



- NBK enhances access to Al Manzel benefits through Apple Wallet
- Flexible repayment terms and an instalment grace period of up to 12 months
- Access to financing without the requirement to transfer salary
- From ABYAT and IKEA to The Bed Shop...an extensive range of exclusive benefits for NBK Al Manzel customers

nishing their homes. For example, customers

Refiners win big as Middle East supply tightens

US oil majors post record gains in wartime market

NEW YORK, Aug 1, (AP): American oil and gas giants raked in massive spring profits while fighting between Iran and the U.S. impeded petroleum shipments and consumers around the world paid more for fuel and confronted shortages.

The conflict, now in its sixth month, halted most shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway that previously served as a delivery route for a fifth of the world's oil and natural gas. With global supplies constrained, prices for Brent crude, the international standard, soared from about \$70 to above \$100 a barrel for much of March, April and May, and at one point reached \$126.

The money that oil companies accrued between the beginning of April and the end of June could receive extra scrutiny this year. Gasoline, diesel and jet fuel prices climbed sharply during that period, increasing costs for drivers and airline passengers. Supplies ran low in some countries, leading to sporadic fuel rationing in Australia and government office closures in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Exxon Mobil on Friday reported that its second quarter profits doubled to \$14.53 billion, boosted by record diesel production. The oil giant, based in Spring, Texas, brought in \$116.02 billion in revenue, up 42%.

Chevron, based in Houston, nearly quadrupled its profits to \$12.07 billion and revenue jumped 56% to \$70.06 billion.

Six of Europe's largest oil companies posted combined first-quarter profits of \$22 billion, more than 40% higher than last year.

"There are constituencies around the world who are having a very good crisis, and the oil producers are one of them," said Patrick Galey, fossil fuels lead at Global Witness, a nonprofit organization that investigates environmental issues. "When you compare that to the hundreds of millions of people who are struggling with rolling blackouts, with electricity curbs, rationing, waiting in line for food queues, or the disruption to fertilizers and the potential impact that that has on food prices, we don't think that it's a justifiable price for the rest of the world to be paying."

Energy companies such as Exxon and Chevron do not set the price of American oil, which ricocheted from \$68 to \$115 a barrel during the quarter. It's driven by supply and demand, and what traders, refiners and other buyers are willing to pay.

Nevertheless, Democrats in Congress introduced bills in March to tax major oil producers for profits they show from 2026 onward and have the tax proceeds redistributed to consumers.

"It's fair to put a windfall profits tax on inordinate windfall profits rather than cut off children's food programs," Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, a Rhode Island Democrat who introduced the Senate version of the legislation.

Whitehouse's measure and a companion bill introduced by U.S. Rep. Ro Khanna of California would amend the U.S. tax code to impose a per-barrel tax on companies that produced or imported at least 300,000 barrels of oil per day in 2025.

"We cracked \$4 again per gallon last weekend in gas stations that I drove by, and that's a big expense, particularly for families that get their income from driving around from job to job in the work van or the work truck," Whitehouse said.

The average price for a gallon of regular



The sun sets as a pump jack operates near Loving, N.M., on Tuesday, May 20, 2025. (AP)

gasoline in the U.S., which was below \$3 before the U.S. and Israel launched attacks on Iran, reached \$4.11 Friday, about \$1 more than last year at this time.

The UK and other European countries implemented temporary windfall profits taxes on fossil fuel companies in 2022. The UK extended that to 2030, according to Tax Foundation Europe.

"Penalizing the businesses who stood by those countries and provided that product going forward is very short-sighted," Exxon CEO Darren Woods said in a call with investors Friday. "We canceled investments that we had planned for Europe based on the last time they passed a windfall profits tax."

Outfits such as Exxon and Chevron, which also own refineries, are in the best position to profit from the current market conditions, said Tom Seng, assistant professor of energy finance at Texas Christian University.

Refineries turn oil into gasoline, diesel, jet fuel and home heating oil. Higher prices for those products meant Chevron's quarterly refinery profit was six times as big in 2026, despite processing less crude and selling less products.

"The return on refining, on a percentage basis, has skyrocketed," Seng said. "Oil right now is priced what it is priced because of the Iran war. But in the meantime, the refineries are making money hand over fist."

The global refining market is under-supplied, and with countries such as Russia and China no longer exporting, companies like Exxon and Chevron have to pick it up, said Rob Thummel, senior portfolio manager at Tortoise Capital. "The world is going to be short jet fuel, diesel and gasoline, so we'll probably continue to see higher profits there."

Globally, not all refineries have been able to get the supply of crude oil they need to meet demand since the conflict began, said Timothy Fitzgerald, a University of Tennessee professor of business economics who studies the petroleum industry.

As a result, refineries that have ample oil to work with, including those in the U.S., are turning high profits, particularly when

can save up to KD 5,000 when spending approximately KD 25,000 on home construction, renovation, or furnishing by taking advantage of the program's wide range of benefits and offers.

Among the program's exclusive benefits is 10% cashback through ABYAT's Aamer Loyalty Program. Customers also enjoy special privileges at IKEA, including a KD 200 shopping voucher when spending KD 500, enabling them to realize meaningful savings and redeem the benefit across multiple visits. In addition, the program offers exclusive discounts at The Bed Shop, including 20% off beds and mattresses and 10% off accessories.

The success of NBK Al Manzel is underpinned by an extensive network of strategic partners comprising leading companies and institutions across the design, construction, furniture, and home furnishings sectors. This broad ecosystem provides customers with diverse choices and trusted services that address their full range of home-related needs under one integrated program.

The program's growing popularity underscores its success in meeting the needs of customers seeking flexible and well-structured home financing solutions, supported by an integrated ecosystem of services, offers, and benefits that simplifies the process of building or enhancing a home while delivering greater convenience, efficiency, and value.

NBK Al Manzel embodies NBK's strategic commitment to delivering innovative banking solutions with customers firmly at the center of its priorities. The Bank continues to develop products and services that keep pace with their evolving needs and aspirations, further reinforcing its position as a trusted partner throughout every stage of their lives.

they make jet fuel and diesel, which is priced about 41% higher in the U.S. than before the Strait of Hormuz was blocked.

"If you're a company that owns a bunch of refinery capacity, things look pretty good," Fitzgerald said.

American refineries are running at near-full capacity and poised to benefit because some refineries in the Middle East and Russia were damaged. And Asia can't get the amount of Middle East oil needed for refining.

"Ultimately, users of the energy services pay," Fitzgerald said. "Consumers, people like you and me buying retail motor gasoline or diesel fuel or airplane tickets. But it also means that almost everything else we buy has an embedded energy content to it ... and this is where you start to worry about it driving increases in costs."

In the present geopolitical environment, some companies are winners while others are losers, Fitzgerald said.

"If you're a company like a U.S. (oil) producer, even a U.S.-based international company like an Exxon or Chevron who's got lots of production outside the Gulf, things are good. You're selling your product at a higher price," he said.

But companies in the Middle East that are not able to benefit from higher prices because they are struggling to get their liquefied natural gas out of the Persian Gulf or have a lot of damaged oil fields or processing facilities have a very different take on recent events, Fitzgerald added.

"Your ability to sell anything and the volume that you may be getting out is so curtailed that your revenues are way down and you're incurring higher transportation costs and security costs," he said.

Exxon and Chevron weren't as profitable in the first quarter due to the way oil is traded; the first real opportunity they had to take advantage of higher prices oil was in April. Companies that had a lot of oil stored in floating tankers and available for spot-market trading, including some European ones, were able to benefit from March's higher oil prices, Seng said.

Issuances set to reach record levels led by infrastructure funding

By KAMCO Invest

Global debt capital markets activity reached USD 7.1 trillion during 1H-2026, registering a y-o-y increase of 7% after seeing the strongest first half for DCM activity since records began in 1980, as per data from LSEG. The growth comes despite a 12% decline in the volume of new offerings brought to market reaching a three-year low level at around 17,000 offerings, indicating that that year was characterized by fewer but much larger deals. In terms of quarterly performance, offerings in Q2-2026 declined 6% q-o-q from a record high level in Q1-2026. In terms of quality of issuers, both investment grade corporate debt and high yield issuances witnessed double-digit growth during 1H-2026. Global investment grade corporate debt offerings reached USD 3.4 trillion in 1H-2026, up 10% y-o-y. This was the strongest first six months for the global high-grade corporate debt market on record, with two consecutive quarters with over USD 1.5 trillion in issuances.

In terms of sectors, Technology sector names dominated the top deals table during the year. Both Technology and Retail sector issuances more than doubled y-o-y, and Telecom/Media posted strong double-digit gains. On the other hand, Consumer Staples issuances dropped 39% and Materials fell 25%. At the regional level, international cross-border debt increased by 16% y-o-y to a record USD 3.83 trillion. However, emerging market corporate debt contracted 7% y-o-y to USD 245.3 Bn, with India, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and Brazil generating 51% of EM activity.

Yields on US sovereign bonds remained highly volatile through 1H-2026, trading mostly in a contained 4.0%-4.5% band from early March as the Federal Reserve held a cautious, wait-and-see stance.

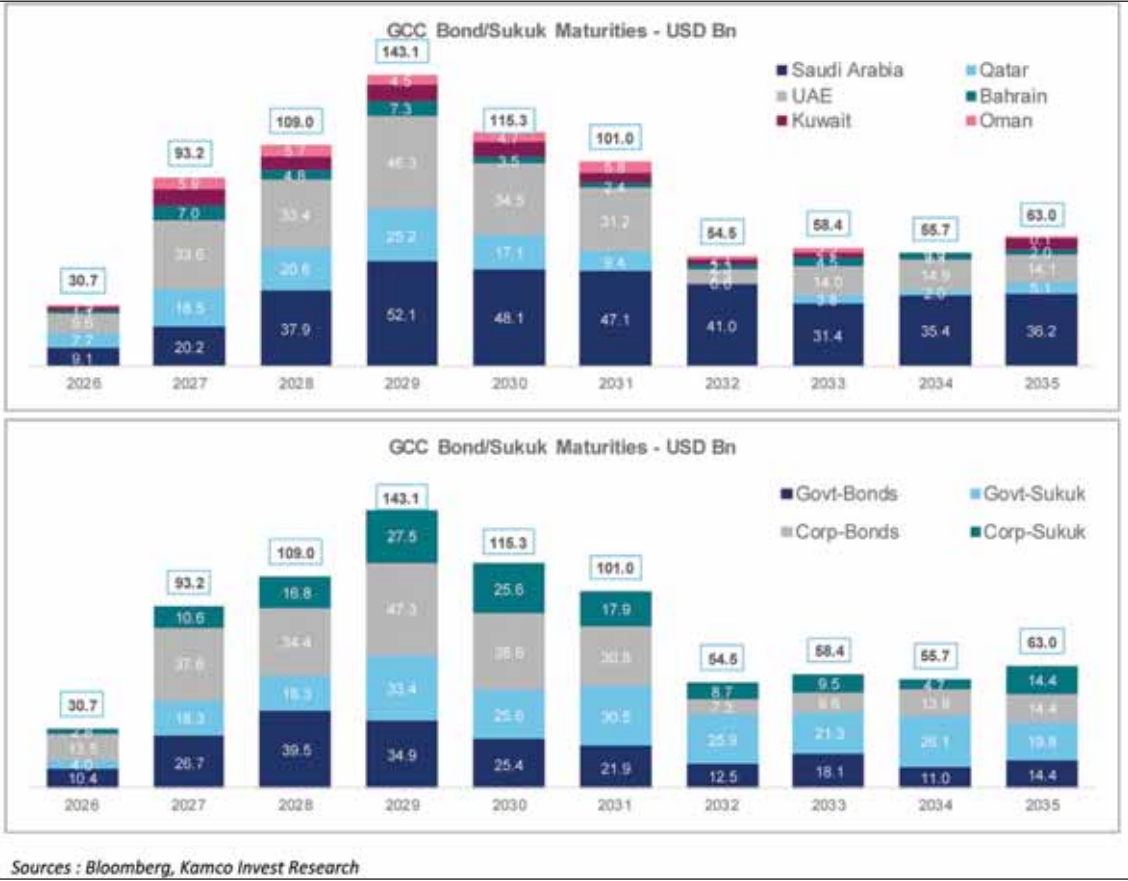
However, a sharp rebound occurred during the first week of July wherein the 10-year yield climbed over four consecutive sessions to reach 4.69% by 23-July-2026, its highest level since January-2025, as escalating geopolitical conflict between the US and Iran pushed oil prices sharply higher over the USD 100/b level and reignited inflation fears, before easing modestly as tensions cooled (the 10-year finished at 4.64% on 27-July-2026). The recent trend in yields also reflected a marked shift in Fed communication with several officials signaling that the balance of risks had flipped toward high inflation and away from labor-market weakness. The most recent minutes from the June-2026 FOMC meeting showed the Committee split on the inflation outlook, with nine of eighteen officials penciling in at least one rate hike for 2026, as core PCE inflation ran near 3.3% and tariff pass-through kept price pressures elevated.

Inflation and interest rate hikes

The minutes of the most recent Fed meeting held last month once again showed a divided Committee, though the axis of disagreement has shifted meaningfully as the debate is no longer just whether to cut, but whether tariff-driven inflation now warrants holding or even implementing a rate hike. Most officials agreed tariffs are having a lasting rather than one-off impact on prices. The Fed, now under new Chair, held the federal funds rate steady at 3.50%-3.75% for a fourth consecutive meeting in June-2026, defying renewed pressure from the administration to cut. That caution persists despite a notably weak payroll report for June-2026 with just 57,000 jobs added, among the softest of the cycle which some officials weighed against core PCE inflation running near 3.3% and CPI near 3.5% in choosing to stay data-dependent. For the upcoming meeting, the market pricing has swung sharply hawkish with futures now implying an 80% cumulative probability of at least one hike by September-2026, as rising oil prices tied to the US-Iran conflict complicate the inflation picture further. The impact of tariffs imposed last year has also seen a shift with the US Supreme Court striking down the administration's original tariffs in February-2026. This forced the US government to sign several bilateral deals with the EU moving to a 15% all-inclusive ceiling effective 1-July-2026 and imposing Section 301 tariff imposed on several emerging market countries including Brazil, China and India. According to Bloomberg analysis, the average effective tariff rate on US imports is estimated to settle between 12 % and 15.5% in baseline scenarios—a stark rise from the pre-trade-war baseline of 2.3%—though the net impact varies widely by product category.

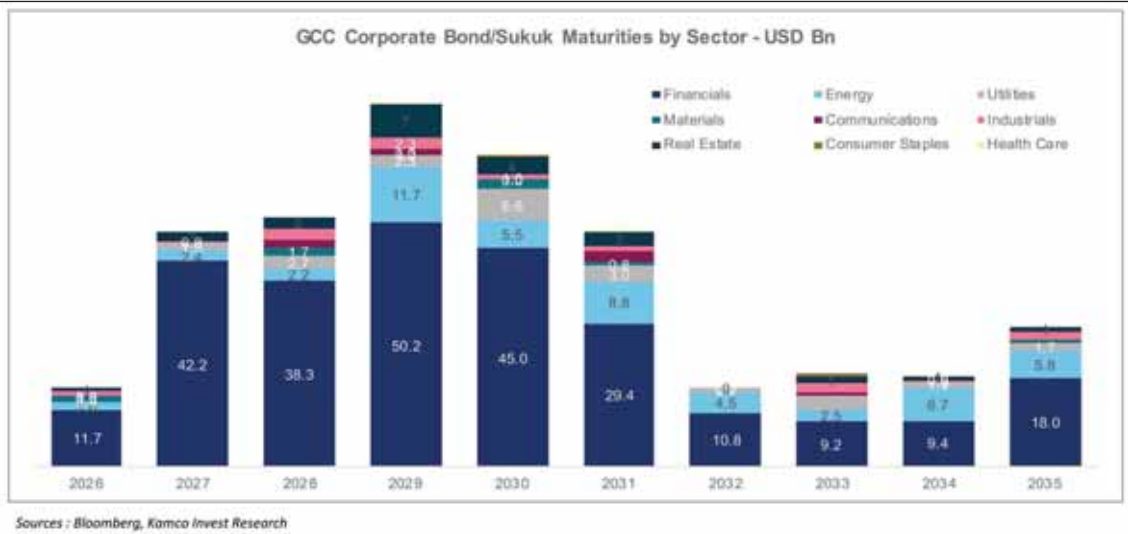
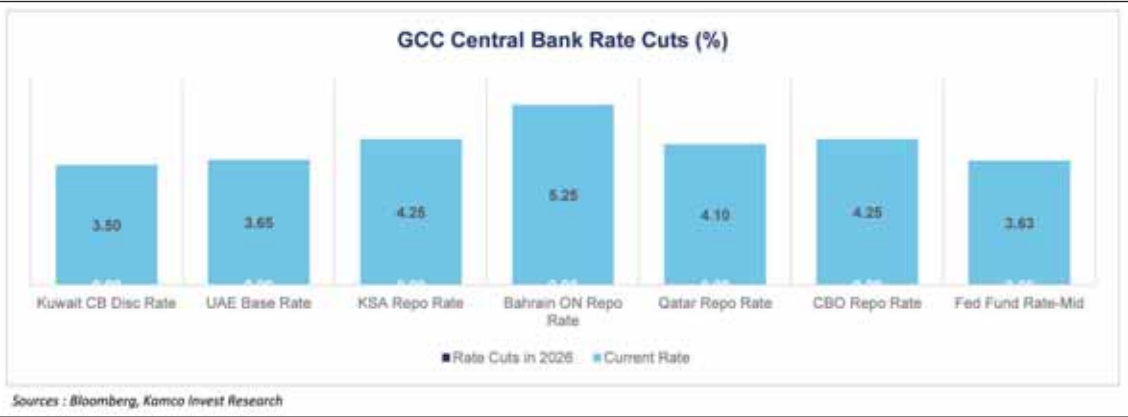
In Europe, the ECB reversed course entirely. After cutting rates eight times between June-2024 and June-2025 and then holding steady for several meetings, the ECB unexpectedly raised its deposit rate by 25 bps to 2.25% in June-2026, its first hike of the cycle, citing inflation pressures from the conflict in the Middle East and the resulting spike in energy prices. The ECB held the rate steady in its latest meeting this month. The bank's updated projections now see headline inflation averaging 3.0% in 2026, well above target, easing to 2.3% in 2027, and markets remain split on the path from here, with some pricing a further hike as soon as September-2026 and others still expecting the cutting cycle to eventually resume once the energy shock fades. In terms of currency pressure, the Euro eased against the USD mainly driven by Fed repricing than ECB policy and the forecast for the year end hinges mainly on the rate path adopted by the USD Fed.

Meanwhile, GCC central banks have kept interest rate decisions closely aligned with the US Fed, maintaining key policy rates steady (matching the



GCC - Sovereign Credit Ratings Profile						
	S&P		Moody's		Fitch	
	Rating	Outlook	Rating	Outlook	Rating	Outlook
Bahrain	B	STABLE	B2	NEG	B	STABLE
Kuwait	AA-	STABLE	A1	STABLE	AA-	STABLE
Oman	BBB-	STABLE	Baa3	STABLE	BBB-	STABLE
Qatar	AA	STABLE	Aa2	STABLE	AA +	NR
Saudi Arabia	A+	STABLE	Aa3	STABLE	A+	STABLE
UAE	AA	STABLE	Aa2	STABLE	AA-	STABLE
Abu Dhabi	AA	STABLE	Aa2	STABLE	AA	STABLE

Sources : Bloomberg



3.50%-3.75% reference target) to protect currency pegs against the US dollar. GCC debt instruments continue to benefit from tight spreads relative to US corporate credit, with strong sovereign balance sheets shielding region al issuers from trade-related volatility as well as geopolitical threats. Crude oil spiked sharply during the height of the US-Iran conflict but has since retreated. Economic growth forecast remains uneven across the GCC with countries more exposed to the Strait of Hormuz closure and with no alternative routes, facing pressure on the fiscal front and tapping the debt market while continued non-oil economic momentum should keep supporting overall issuances.

GCC Bond/Sukuk Maturities

GCC governments are expected to see elevated levels of maturities over the next five years, especially for bond issuances during the years after the pandemic. According to data from Bloomberg, GCC sovereign maturities stands at USD 236.6 Bn over the next five years (2026-2030), whereas corporate maturities stand at slightly higher at USD 254.8 Bn. Both bond and sukuk maturities are expected to remain elevated starting from 2027 until 2031 and then gradually taper for the rest of the tenor. The higher maturities during the next five years reflects a number of short-term (less than 5-year maturity) issuances by governments and corporates. A majority of these maturities are denominated in USD at 64.5% followed by local currency issuances in SAR and QAR at 9.2% and 7.3%, respectively. In addition, due to the credit rating profile of the GCC governments, a majority of these maturities are in the high investment grade or A rated instruments with maturities of USD 199.2 Bn while maturities of investment grade instruments stood at 224.9 Bn. In terms of type of instruments, conventional bonds dominate with USD 308.4 Bn in maturities over the next five years, whereas sukuk maturities are expected to be at USD 183.0 Bn. In terms of conventional bond maturities, corporate maturities stood at USD 171.4 Bn, surpassing government bond maturities at USD 137.0 Bn. In the sukuk market, government sukuk maturities

stood at USD 99.6 Bn vs. corporate sukuk maturities at USD 83.4 Bn.

At the country level, Saudi Arabia continues to see the biggest fixed income maturities during 2026-2030. The Kingdom is expected to see maturities of USD 167.4 Bn until 2030 followed by UAE and Qatari issuers at USD 157.4 Bn and USD 89.0 Bn, respectively. However, bulk of the maturities in Saudi Arabia are for bonds/sukuk issued by the government at USD 99.3 Bn while in the case of UAE, the lion's share of maturities are for instruments issued by corporates at USD 125.6 Bn. Oman is expected to see the smallest fixed income maturities over the next five years at USD 22.3 Bn while the number for Kuwait and Bahrain stood at around USD 31.5 Bn and USD 23.7 Bn, respectively. In terms of sector maturities, Banks and other Financial Services sector have USD 187.4 Bn in maturities in the next five years, accounting for around 73.5% of the total corporate maturities and 38.1% of the total maturities in the GCC until 2030. The Energy sector was next with maturities of USD 23.4 Bn or 9.2% of GCC corporate maturities until 2030 followed by Real Estate and Utilities at USD 15.6 Bn and USD 13.1 Bn, respectively. Banks in UAE have the biggest maturities over the next five years at USD 88.9 Bn followed by Qatari banks with maturities of USD 32.9 Bn until 2030.

Banks in UAE and Qatar accounted for 47.8% of total corporate maturities in the GCC and 24.8% of total bonds/sukuk maturities over the next five years in the GCC. Other Financial Services and Real Estate sectors were next with maturities of UD 41.3 Bn and USD 15.6 Bn until 2030. Meanwhile, Real Estate maturities are concentrated mainly in the UAE and Saudi Arabia at USD 11.4 Bn and USD 3.2 Bn, respectively, until 2030.

Expect another record year for GCC FI issuances led by geopolitical issues

Aggregate issuances of bonds and sukuks in the GCC stood at USD 116.8 Bn during 1H-2026

as compared to USD 102.2 Bn during 1H-2025, resulting in a y-o-y growth of USD 14.7 Bn or 14.3%. The growth was mainly led by double-digit growth in bond issuances by both corporates and sovereigns in the region that more than offset a broad-based fall in sukuk issuances from the region. Government issuances reached USD 42.0 Bn in 1H-2026 vs. UDS 37.4 Bn in 1H-2025 while corporate issuances stood at USD 74.8 Bn this year vs. USD 64.8 Bn during the first half of last year. Full year issuances during 2025 were at a record high level of USD 212.2 Bn.

In terms of type of issuances, sukuk issuances witnessed a sharp decline during 1H-2026 whereas bond issuances surged. Aggregate GCC bond issues stood at USD 86.4 Bn during 1H-2026 vs. USD 61.2 Bn during 1H-2025 whereas sukuk issuances declined by almost a quarter to reach USD 30.5 Bn in 1H-2026 as compared to issuances of USD 41.0 Bn during the first six months of last year.

At the country level, there was a broad-based y-o-y growth in issuances during the year, barring marginal decline in issuances from Bahrain. Aggregate issuances from the Saudi Arabia, the leader in issuances this year, stood at USD 52.3 Bn in 1H-2026 as compared to USD 50.7 Bn in 1H-2025, registering a growth of 3.2%. In terms of absolute growth, Kuwait was leading with issuances of USD 8.7 Bn in 1H-2026 vs. USD 1.8 Bn in issuances during 1H-2025. UAE, Qatar and Oman witnessed much smaller increase in issuances this year. The structure of maturities saw issuances of perpetual instruments remaining elevated this year after seeing record issuances in 2025. According to data from Bloomberg, aggregate issuances of perpetual instruments reached USD 13.2 Bn this year as compared to full year issuances of USD 18.2 Bn in 2025. Saudi based issuers were the biggest in this space with issuances of USD 7.4 Bn in perpetual instruments followed by UAE with issuances of USD 3.7 Bn.

The issuance of green instruments witnessed a sharp decline during 1H-2026 in the GCC as compared to full year 2025 issuances. Total issuances of green instruments reached USD 4.8 Bn during 1H-2026 as compared to USD 15.0 Bn in full year 2025. And, all the green instrument issuances were made by UAE-based entities during this year. This was contrary to the trend seen in global green instrument issuances that registered a record-breaking Q2-2026, with green bond issuances increasing by 16% y-o-y to an all-time high of USD 307.9 Bn in 1H-2026.

Outlook - Fed vs. GCC rate moves

The interest rate outlook for the remainder of 2026 across major global central banks remains complex, largely shaped by the inflationary fallout of the geopolitical issues in the Middle East as well as between Russia and Ukraine coupled with the ongoing de-liberation on US tariffs. The conversation across most major central banks has swiftly shifted from "how many cuts" at the start of the year and before the Middle East war to when will be the first rate hike by the US Fed after the EU making its first rate hike move last month. The futures are pricing nearly 80% cumulative probability of at least one hike by September-2026, as tariff pass-through and Middle East-driven energy costs keep inflation elevated. A hawkish-leaning dot plot means the balance of risk has tilted toward higher for longer or even further tightening. The ECB, meanwhile, is split between a further hike as soon as September-2026 and an eventual return to cutting once the energy shock from the conflict fades with its own updated projections showing inflation running at 3.0% for 2026, well above target. The Bank of England is expected to continue easing but at a more cautious, narrowly-contested pace given UK inflation running near 2.6%-3.7% and expected to climb further on energy costs, while the Bank of Japan remains the outlier, continuing its gradual hiking path as it works to bring inflation back toward target after nearly four years above it. Overall, rather than the broad, synchronized easing cycle anticipated at the start of the year, the second half of 2026 looks set to deliver renewed policy divergence and genuine two-way rate risk in the US and euro area, with the ultimate path hinging on how persistent tariff- and conflict-driven inflation proves to be.

GCC central banks, with most currencies pegged to the USD, will continue to track the Fed meaning a Fed hike or extended pause would likely be mirrored across Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman, keeping regional borrowing costs elevated even as oil prices retreat from their conflict-driven highs.

In terms of issuances, the year 2026 is shaping up as a record year for conventional bond issuance globally, with sukuk also growing steadily (~5-6% projected growth to USD 270 - 280 Bn), though the mix within the GCC has tilted toward conventional bonds this year even as sukuk keeps setting records at the global level and in the ESG segments like Malaysia's ringgit-denominated sukuk market. The GCC region is expected to see elevated levels of issuances for the remainder of the year led by supported by sizeable maturities and continued financing needs. Maturity refinancing is expected to come in at USD 30.7 Bn during the remainder of the year while government deficit financing led by lower oil revenues would also contribute to the overall trend during the rest of the year. In addition, a slew of reforms aimed at diversifying the logistics and transportation infrastructure for crude oil trade is expected to see additional issuances via both bonds and sukuk as well as private placements. Sukuk issuances are expected to gain traction during 2H-2025 backed by demand from specific investors and funding diversification. The main downside risk for the region is a re-escalation of regional conflict that could delay foreign-currency issuances and widen spreads.

Trump’s ‘rocket fuel’ rate-cut bet falls flat

Mortgage and debt costs rise despite White House pressure

WASHINGTON, Aug 1, (AP): President Donald Trump has been losing his own battle to cut interest rates.

The president likes to vilify high rates as an affront to the size and strength of the U.S. economy, saying that America deserves the cheapest borrowing costs in the world. Trump for months publicly pressured the Federal Reserve to slash its benchmark rates, claiming it would be “Rocket Fuel!” for growth and make housing more affordable.

But since the war in Iran began at the end of February, borrowing money has become more expensive, meaning fewer families can afford mortgages or auto loans. The government is getting squeezed, too - as it has spent \$827 billion so far this fiscal year to service the national debt, more than it has devoted to national defense.

The scope of the problem became clear this past week when Kevin Warsh, the Fed’s new chair picked by Trump, said in his second press conference on the job that inflation continues to run hot but offered no clear guidance on how to fix the problem.

Rates on 30-year U.S. Treasury bonds hit their highest levels in nearly two decades, the exact opposite of what Trump had pledged to voters. The 10-year U.S. Treasury note saw its interest rate shoot up above 4.7% on Friday, surpassing what the president inherited when he returned to the White House last year.

But Trump has largely ignored the jump in interest rates and has portrayed the economy as booming, even though the government recently reported that the annual growth rate for the prior three months was a sluggish 1.5%.

“We have the most successful environment that we’ve ever had,” Trump told his Cabinet on Friday. “There’s never been anything like it from the standpoint of investment into our country.”

Neither Trump nor his Treasury Secretary, Scott Bessent, discussed interest rates during the public portion of the meeting. But White House spokesman Kush Desai said the end of the Iran war would ultimately reduce energy costs and allow the Fed to reduce rates. “Oil prices - and thus overall inflation - will plummet again when President Trump forces a successful resolution with Iran, further paving the way for additional interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve,” Desai said.

The prospect of higher borrowing costs has become troublesome for Republicans in the November elections, as Trump’s own policies helped drive the increase.

His tariffs that began last year caused rates to jump so quickly that he backed off and reformulated them. Trump has championed the construction of data centers for artificial intelligence, but the bonds financing those projects appear to have helped push up interest rates. And the war in Iran has fueled rising oil prices.

Republicans had hoped to show clear progress on affordability to voters ahead of the midterms. Trump can point to a low unemployment rate



President Donald Trump speaks during a cabinet meeting, Friday, July 31, 2026, at Camp David, the presidential retreat, near Thurmont, Md., Friday, July 31, 2026. (AP)

and solid consumer spending as proof that the economy remains stable, yet there are few signs that these arguments have connected with the public.

One possible reason why Trump’s economic messaging has struggled is that voters care more about whether their incomes are outpacing inflation, according to research released in June by Georgetown University’s Juan Felipe Riaño and the University of California, Berkeley’s Francesco Trebbi.

Trump and Republicans not only promised lower interest rates in the 2024 elections, but they indicated that prices could fall outright if their policies were in place. But over the last 12 months, inflation has nearly kept pace with hourly wage gains - and that understates the extent of the problem because debt service costs are not included in the consumer price index.

“It cut against Democrats in 2024, and if prices and borrowing costs keep outrunning wages into the fall, the same logic points at Republicans now,” Riaño, the Georgetown University economist, told the AP.

Earlier this year, the Trump administration directed Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, the two mortgage firms under government conservatorship, to buy at least \$200 billion in home loans to bring down mortgage rates.

Earlier this year, Republicans had hoped to campaign on falling rates and a bipartisan bill to increase home construction to help defend their House and Senate majorities. One GOP lawmaker, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss strategy, said the hope was that Trump would sign

the bill as mortgage rates fell below 6%, which could improve housing affordability and public sentiment toward the overall economy.

However, Trump called the bill a “big yawn” and allowed it to become law without his signature. And the mortgage company Freddie Mac said Thursday that 30-year rates were averaging 6.66%, essentially unchanged from a year ago.

Warsh, the Fed chair since May, has said he has been content to let the financial markets do more to set the rates, rather than the central bank. Even though the Fed has held its benchmark rate steady this year, the markets on their own have chosen to charge a premium for holding U.S. government debt.

“Markets reflect the higher inflation, policy uncertainty,” said John Silvia, the CEO of Dynamic Economic Strategy. “They are the product of events.”

Warsh on Wednesday portrayed that as a positive, even if the result goes against what Trump expected from his new Fed chair.

“Market participants are learning to play the ball, not the referee - and market prices will continue to respond in the direction and magnitude they see fit,” Warsh said. “This is, in my view, a change for the better - and we are just getting started.”

But time might not be on Trump’s side for fixing high interest rates. The next Fed meeting on rates will conclude on Sept. 16. Markets currently expect Fed officials to vote to raise rates in order to reduce inflationary pressures, according to CME FedWatch.

New York sues prediction market platform Kalshi alleging ‘illegal gambling operation’

NEW YORK, Aug 1, (AP): New York officials sued prediction market platform Kalshi for potentially billions of dollars on Friday, calling it an “illegal, unlicensed gambling operation” that includes sports wagering as the state seeks to halt its operations and force the company to forfeit its profits.

New York joins a growing number of states filing lawsuits against Kalshi and other companies in a dispute with President Donald Trump’s administration over who regulates the fast-growing prediction market. Kalshi and other platforms argue they are federally licensed and regulated, and states have no authority to govern them.

“It’s sad to see this type of political theater from the leadership in our own state,” Elisabeth Diana, a spokesperson for New York-based Kalshi, said in a statement. “States can’t just shut down a federally licensed exchange. This would also hurt New Yorkers, who would be driven offshore. We love New York, we love New Yorkers, and New Yorkers love our product.”

Prediction market platforms like Kalshi and Polymarket allow trading on the likelihood of a wide range of events such as sports, politics, news and even the weather.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and Attorney General Letitia James, both Democrats, an-

nounced the lawsuit filed in state Supreme Court in Manhattan.

“New York’s gambling laws protect children from underage betting and help combat gambling addiction,” James said in a statement. “No matter what they call themselves, prediction markets like Kalshi are gambling platforms, plain and simple. By ignoring our laws, Kalshi is running an illegal operation and harming New Yorkers in the process.”

James’ office is requesting that Kalshi be ordered to forfeit all illegal gains, pay restitution to consumers who were harmed and pay fines equal to three times the company’s gains. In a court filing, state officials provided a rough estimate of the damages and costs sought by the lawsuit - \$36 billion.

Kalshi had been in negotiations with New York officials in recent weeks over tax and consumer protection issues.

In April, New York filed a similar lawsuit against prediction market platforms Coinbase and Gemini on illegal gambling operation allegations.

State officials say the prediction markets meet the legal definition of gambling “because the outcomes of the events on which its users are betting are uncertain and outside the control of the bettor or hinge on a game of chance.”

New York claims Kalshi has failed to obtain a license from the state Gaming Commission and skirted its obligation to pay taxes like licensed casinos and mobile sports gambling platforms do. The lawsuit also says prediction markets allow users ages 18 to 20, while New York requires mobile sports betting users to be at least 21.

Last October, the Gaming Commission ordered Kalshi to stop what it called the “illegal operating” of an “unlicensed mobile sports wagering platform” in New York. Kalshi responded days later by filing a federal lawsuit against the commission and its members - legal action that remains pending.

Prediction market platforms say they operate differently than gambling operations, because consumers are trading against other consumers - much like how stock markets work. Prices are based on trading, and the platforms only take a fee from the trading, they say.

The platforms also argue federal law gives the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission exclusive jurisdiction to regulate transactions offered in the prediction market. In February, Trump’s appointee atop the federal commission declared that the agency “will no longer sit idly by” while states aim to regulate or ban prediction markets and “undermine the agency’s exclusive jurisdiction.”

PMI slips below 50

China factory activity unexpectedly contracts in July

HONG KONG, Aug 1, (AP): China’s factory activity unexpectedly slowed in July, the first such contraction in five months, weighing on the pace of broader growth for the world’s second-largest economy.

The official manufacturing purchasing managers index, or PMI, fell to 49.2 from 50.3 in June, China’s National Bureau of Statistics said Friday, worse than what economists had expected.

The sub-index on new orders fell to 48.5 in July - the lowest since 2023 - from 51.2 in June, while the sub-index for production fell to 49.9 from 51.4.

PMI readings, based on surveys of factory managers, are measured on a scale of 0 to 100. A reading above 50 indicates an expansion, and below 50 reflects a contraction.

“The latest (PMI) reading remains an unpromising start to the first wave of economic data for the second half of the year,” Lynn Song, a chief economist for Greater China at ING Bank, said in a commentary.

Weakness in domestic goods demand, including in building activity, contributed to the lower PMI figures, according to Capital Economics, while several typhoons that hit Chi-



Workers check aluminum panels produced at a factory of Kam Pin Industrial (HK) Ltd, in Dongguan city in southern China’s Guangdong province April 17, 2025. (AP)

na in July may have also disrupted manufacturing.

China’s economy has been under pressure from sluggishness in domestic spending and investment, as a yearslong weakness in its massive

property sector hits consumer confidence. Fierce competition for jobs has left workers worried over spending.

Robust exports, especially in technology-related products such as

semiconductors and electric vehicles, have helped boost its overall growth momentum. But those are capital intensive sectors.

The economy grew at its slowest annual pace in more than three years in the April-June quarter, at 4.3%. That fell short of China’s official full-year growth target of 4.5% to 5%.

Countries including the U.S. have also complained about excess industrial capacity in China from solar panels to autos and supported by heavy state subsidies. They said that’s resulting in China’s exports surge as its domestic demand slows, with its cheap goods posing a threat to many economies.

Beijing has hit back at those claims.

But China’s economic model still favors productivity through its policy preferences, said Gary Ng, a senior economist at French bank Natixis.

Economists expect China to continue to rely on exports to support its economic growth for the rest of the year.

Chinese leaders have also pledged to boost domestic consumption, including at a meeting of the ruling Communist Party’s decision-making Politburo on Thursday.

Trump proposes major CRA overhaul

Banks face lighter compliance under proposed CRA changes

NEW YORK, Aug 1, (AP): The Trump Administration has announced an overhaul to the rules governing a critical piece of Civil Rights-era legislation, most notably a reduction in the number of banks that will need to fully comply with the law.

The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation on Friday jointly announced the proposed changes to the Community Reinvestment Act, a law that requires regulators to document how well banks do in lending to low-to-middle income neighborhoods. It would be the first major revision of the law’s rules and regulations in nearly three decades.

Under the proposed revisions, bank examiners would put more weight on the lending banks do in certain communities and geographies, and less on how many branches they open or how much in deposits they take in from a local community.

The number of banks that would need to comply with the law would be reduced as well. The definition of a small bank will increase from banks with under \$412 million in assets to banks with \$1 billion in assets. Banks between \$1 billion and \$10 billion in assets will now be classified as an intermediate bank.

This would reduce the number of banks who need to comply with parts of the CRA by 800 banks. Only 86 banks, or roughly 3% of all institutions, would be subject to the full extent of CRA under the new regulations.

Another change that is likely to be fought over relates to how banks give money to community development groups. Under the CRA, banks can donate money to local organizations that do poverty or low-income housing work in their communities to show they are providing resources to a local community. The new regulations could narrow the groups and programs that banks could donate to in order to meet those obligations.

In a summary of the changes, the bank regulators said these changes would ensure community development grants “are not diverted to activist causes or consumed by excessive operating costs.” Banks would also need to collect more detailed information on who gets their community grants, including addresses, which would give more transparency to who is receiving grants from banks.

That change could negatively impact groups like the National Community Reinvestment Coali-

tion, an umbrella group for community development groups that often receive money from banks under the CRA. The new rules discourage banks making grants to national organizations and instead focus their grants on local groups.

Jesse Van Tol, the CEO of NCRC, said that it was “unfortunate” that the bank regulators were politicizing grant making under the CRA.

“CRA was created to work for low-to-middle income people. A lot of these changes are going to discourage banks from making grants, particularly in rural areas, where I expect there will be significant drops in activity,” Van Tol said.

The proposal announced Friday by the OCC and FDIC did not include the other major bank regulator, the Federal Reserve. Banking groups had been pushing for a joint proposal from all three regulators, to make sure all three were aligned on the same requirements under the CRA.

The CRA was passed in 1977 to combat redlining, a practice whereby banks would discriminate against the poor and minorities by choosing not to lend or open branches in minority-majority neighborhoods or in poor neighborhoods.

The law is complex, requiring banks to document how they do business in the cities and areas they operate in. Banks must sit for regular examinations to see whether they are complying with the law. A bad CRA examination could restrict a bank’s ability to open new branches or merge with another bank or have other consequences. The data collected through CRA is also used by the Department of Justice in redlining cases.

The last major revision of the CRA’s regulations happened in 1995, and there have been repeated attempts by administrations of both parties to update the rules to reflect how banking and financial services have changed in the past 30 years. But those revisions have repeatedly failed, either due to opposition from other regulators, the banks, or community groups, or have been blocked by courts. The Biden administration tried its own revisions of the CRA rules but those changes were blocked by courts in Texas.

The proposed rules will now go out for a 60-day comment period where they will be finalized after banks, community groups and other parties have a chance to weigh in on the changes.

11 nations flag North Korea

US warns companies on DPRK fake tech workers

WASHINGTON, Aug 1, (KUNA): The US State Department on Friday, along with 10 allies, issued an alert to countries, companies, and other entities regarding North Korean IT workers.

This alert, according to Department statement, is jointly issued by Japan, South Korea, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the UK.

North Korea relies upon a network of skilled Information Technology (IT) workers, deployed within and outside of North Korea, to obtain false identities and remotely earn income to fund North Korea’s unlawful nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, the statement pointed out.

North Korean IT workers impersonate nationals of other countries to obtain work and income through online platforms operated by private companies for employment, procurement, and contracting of services. These workers seek out contracts with the intent of remitting their salaries to their parent North Korean agencies. They also pose an insider threat to companies and are involved in data exfiltration, cryptocurrency theft, and theft of sensitive information. North Korean IT workers employ increasingly sophisticated methods, including the integration of AI, to obfuscate their identities and expand their activities globally, it explained.

“Our countries have repeatedly issued information to warn the international community and private sector of the threat posed by North Korean IT workers, Japan, the United States, and the Republic of Korea issued a ‘Joint Statement on North Korean IT Workers’ in August 2025, and the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT) released its second report on North Korea’s violation and evasion of UN sanctions through cyber and IT worker activities in October 2025.

“The United States, Japan, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada have all issued advisories regarding the risk North Korean IT workers pose to private companies, governments, and indi-

vidual citizens. We continue to actively monitor and counter the North Korean IT worker threat.”

According to UN Security Council Resolution 2397, all UN Member States must repatriate to North Korea all North Korean nationals earning income in that Member State’s jurisdiction, subject to limited exceptions. Additionally, contracting with North Korean IT workers and paying them for services rendered may also violate the domestic laws of many countries, including Japan, the United States, and the Republic of Korea, and may result in legal consequences or financial penalties.

The statement carried on saying that the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) identifies North Korea as a high-risk jurisdiction subject to a call for action (blacklist). The FATF continuously reiterates the need to implement robust targeted financial sanctions consistent with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and calls on all jurisdictions to apply countermeasures to protect their financial systems from North Korean money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing risks.

Yet, it added, North Korea has increased connectivity with the international financial system through diversified revenue generation activities, including IT worker schemes. As spotlighted in the FATF’s Complex Proliferation Financing (PF) and Sanctions Evasion typologies report, North Korea frequently uses IT worker schemes to generate revenue that supports its weapons of mass destruction program.

“We urge all countries, companies, and other entities to deepen their understanding of North Korean IT worker schemes and implement measures to counter the tactics listed below. Companies operating online platforms should continue to strengthen their countermeasures, such as enhancing identity verification procedures (strict review of identification documents, requirement of in-person interviews, etc.) and detecting suspicious accounts (introduction of systems that notify anomalous information entries, etc”).

Screen worlds collide in a mix of soccer, song and sun

Lasso returns, Billie Eilish headlines busy streaming week

The return of “Ted Lasso” and Billie Eilish’s immersive concert film are some of the new television, films, music and games headed to a device near you.

Also among the streaming offerings worth your time this week, as selected by The Associated Press’ entertainment journalists: the rom-com “You, Me & Tuscany,” a new mini-album from Stray Kids and the new series based on Bret Easton Ellis’ “The Shards.”

A family is trapped inside their home for years in the new science-fiction thriller “The Last House,” streaming Friday, Aug. 7, on Netflix. Greta Lee and Wagner Moura play parents to two children who find themselves in the mysterious predicament in the Louis Leterrier-directed movie.

James Cameron and Billie Eilish share the directing credit on the concert film “Billie Eilish Hit Me Hard and Soft: The Tour (Live),” which hits Paramount+ on Aug. 6. In her review, AP Music Writer Maria Sherman wrote that “While no movie can serve as the perfect replica of a transformative live music experience ... (this) works an immersive magic. Every seat is the best seat in the house in these shots.”

Halle Bailey plays a professional house sitter who impulsively takes up residence in an Italian villa in the romantic comedy “You, Me & Tuscany,” streaming on Peacock starting Friday, Aug. 7. Equal parts picturesque and improbable, the movie involves a case of mistaken identity and a lie about an engagement that gets in the way of a potentially real romance with Regé-Jean Page. Jocelyn Noveck, in her review for The Associated Press, wrote that it is “a movie as frothy and insubstantial as the foam on a nice cappuccino.”

Colombian filmmaker Simón



This combination of images show promotional art for the comedy “You, Me & Tuscany,” left, the concert film “Billie Eilish - Hit Me Hard and Soft: The Tour (Live),” center, and science fiction thriller “The Last House.” (AP)

Mesa Soto won a prize from last year’s Cannes Film Festival in the Un Certain Regard section for “A Poet,” about a failed writer named Oscar, that will be streaming on Mubi on Friday, Aug. 7. AP Film Writer Jake Coyle, in his review, wrote that “while ‘A Poet’ might remind you of some other films one would be Cord Jefferson’s ‘American Fiction’ it is, like Oscar, steadfastly its own thing. Filmed on grainy 16mm, it’s even rough and dirty around the edges. ... But if Soto’s film is loose and gritty, its satire is remarkably precise. This is a farce of creative life where the only pure artistic intention is a joke.”

AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr

The British girl-group greats FLO have found “Therapy at the Club.” At least, that is the promise and title of their sophomore album. Expect 16 tracks of R&B-

pop bliss. If there’s any wisdom to be learned on the dance floor here, it is because their silky-smooth, three-part vocal harmonies delivered the message.

It’s hard to underscore just how massive Ravyn Lenae’s 2024 single “Love Me Not” was in 2025. The swoony song went mega-viral on TikTok and became the centerpiece of a lot of online conversation, much of which positioned Lenae as contemporary R&B’s saving grace. But a one-hit wonder with only a dance trend to her name she is not. “Blue Island,” her forthcoming third album, pushes boundaries of genre, of expectation, of public perception. Start with the pop-y “Handle,” with its throwback synths, or the dreamy duet “Reputation” with Dominic Fike.

The JYP Entertainment K-pop group Stray Kids return with a new mini-album on Friday,

“This & That.” The seven-track release kicks off with the full-throttle “Run It,” an alt-hip-hop-pop anthem of epic proportions.

AP Music Writer Maria Sherman

Hard to believe, but it’s been three years since “Ted Lasso” concluded its third season on Apple TV. The lovably folksy soccer coach (played by Jason Sudeikis) led AFC Richmond to become No. 2 in the Premier League, behind Manchester City. He then resigned to return home to Kansas to spend more time with his son Henry. Now, the Emmy-winning series resumes Wednesday, Aug. 5, with Lasso returning to the U.K. to coach AFC Richmond’s new women’s team. Hannah Waddingham, Brett Goldstein, Juno Temple, Jeremy Swift and Brendan Hunt return with Sudeikis for this con-

tinuation of the Lasso universe.

Ryan Murphy has teamed up with “American Psycho” and “Less Than Zero” author Bret Easton Ellis to adapt Ellis’ autofiction novel “The Shards” for FX. Set in 1981 in Los Angeles, it stars Igby Rigney as a privileged high school senior named Bret, who finds himself both suspicious of and obsessed with a new student (played by Homer James Jigme Gere). At the same time, a serial killer is targeting teens in the area and the kids are becoming increasingly paranoid. The show has a roster of rising talent including Kaia Gerber, Hayes Warner and Graham Campbell. It also debuts Wednesday, Aug. 5, on FX on Hulu.

It’s gonna be a minute until Prime Video is ready to release “The Summer I Turned Pretty” movie or Season 2 of “Off Campus,” so it’s churning out the YA

shows to keep viewers swooning in the meantime. “Sterling Point” is the latest offering from Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage (“The OC,” “Gossip Girl”), who are co-showrunners alongside buzzy up-and-coming director and actor Megan Park (“My Old Ass”). It’s about a teen named Annie who inherits her grandfather’s island after his death. The drama begins Wednesday, Aug. 5.

AP Writer Alicia Rancilio

Dogs have been part of video games since 1984’s “Duck Hunt,” but you don’t often get to control them. Koo, the co-star of “Beast of Reincarnation,” wants to change that. The feisty mutt and his human pal Emma are fighting bloodthirsty mutants and killer robots in a postapocalyptic Japan in the year 4026. Emma swings a mean katana, but she can call upon Koo to leap in and take a bite out of an enemy or just sniff out treasure. This adventure comes from Tokyo’s Game Freak, best known for the “Pokémon” series, and it’s the studio’s first major project outside that franchise. You can fetch it Tuesday, Aug. 4, on PlayStation 5, Xbox X/S or PC.

In “Big Walk,” you and up to 11 friends are dropped on a mysterious island, where your goal ... well, I’m not sure what your goal is. You can team up to solve puzzles. You can go for walks. You can sit and watch the sunset. Sometimes you’ll lose the ability to chat with your buddies, so you’ll need to figure out other ways to communicate. Australian developer House House is best known for 2019’s preposterous “Untitled Goose Game,” and its new release aims to transfer that cult hit’s sense of whimsical chaos to a co-op package. The hike begins Tuesday, Aug. 4, on PlayStation 5, Switch 2 and PC.

Lou Kesten (AP)

Variety

LOS ANGELES: The next Met Gala fashion exhibit will be devoted to a designer famed for both his singular talent and the scandal that lost him one of the top posts in all of fashion: John Galliano.

The British designer was creative director at Christian Dior for nearly 15 years, the very pinnacle of the fashion world, before he made a series of comments in 2010 and 2011 that went viral, leading to his conviction. Dropped by Dior, he spent several years involved in public and private efforts to rehabilitate.

He made a comeback in 2014 when he was hired by Paris fashion house Maison Margiela, where he remained for a decade.

Now, he’ll become only the third living designer to be the subject of a solo show at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Long a red carpet favorite for his flamboyant, even fantastical style, Galliano and his creations should make for an intensely watched carpet at next May’s Met Gala - which every year launches the spring exhibit at the Costume Institute.

Not surprisingly, the museum is taking pains to emphasize that the exhibit will not shy away from the problematic aspects of Galliano’s history.

“Alongside Galliano’s extraordinary creative accomplishments, the exhibition will address the derogatory conduct that fundamentally altered his career and public reception,” said a statement issued by the museum on Friday. “In doing so, the exhibition will consider how artistic achievement should be understood alongside ethical accountability.”

The show’s main curator, Andrew Bolton, who curates nearly all the Met’s big fashion exhibits, noted that the exhibit “considers both how Galliano has remapped the world through fashion and how his conduct, its consequences, and changing cultural values have reshaped our understanding of his work.” (AP)



Fashion designer John Galliano poses at the end of the presentation of the Dior Haute Couture spring/summer 2010 fashion collection on Jan. 25, 2010, in Paris. (AP)

The Conversation

‘The Odyssey’ is a striking portrait of psychological wounds that can emerge when people violate their deepest values

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



Amy S. Badura-Brack
Creighton University

Christopher Nolan’s “The Odyssey,” a new adaptation of Homer’s epic tale of Odysseus’ perilous journey home after the Trojan War, is already being described as a case study in post-traumatic stress disorder.

But even more so, actor Matt Damon’s tortured and broken portrayal of Odysseus offers a look into what psychologists call moral injury.

According to The Moral Injury Project at Syracuse University, moral injury is “the damage done to one’s conscience or moral compass when a person perpetrates, witnesses or fails to prevent acts that transgress one’s own moral beliefs, values, or ethical codes of conduct.” Three clusters of experiences mark moral injury: spiritual or existential collapse; guilt and shame; and alienation from other people.

Homer’s works have long been heralded for highlighting the physical and psychological wounds of war. Yet director Christopher Nolan, far more than Homer, goes on to plumb Odysseus’ existential collapse, shame and guilt.

I’m a PTSD researcher and clinician who has worked at four Veterans Affairs hospitals, and I’ve long taught my students that Homer’s epics contain some of the oldest written examples of PTSD symptoms, even though the formal diagnosis of PTSD did not exist until 1980.

Moral injury is not simply another name for PTSD, although the two often travel together.

PTSD is a fear-based disorder characterized by reexperiencing past trauma, avoidance of anything that triggers memories of that trauma, negative changes in mood and thought, and being constantly on guard.

Not everyone with PTSD experiences moral injury, and not all types of moral injury induce PTSD. But the two can overlap,



Left: The 70 mm Imax copy of Christopher Nolan’s “The Odyssey” is screened to spectators in Prague, Czech Republic, Monday, July 27, 2026. Right: Spectators view the 70 mm Imax copy of Christopher Nolan’s “The Odyssey” in Prague, Czech Republic, Monday, July 27, 2026. (AP)

particularly when someone violates their deeply held moral beliefs in a way that’s connected to a profound sense of guilt or shame.

In his books “Achilles in Vietnam” and “Odysseus in America,” psychiatrist Jonathan Shay explored moral injury in the context of the Vietnam War.

Shay focused on the American military institutions and leaders who undermined the trust and ideals of their soldiers through unclear goals and unjust orders. His exploration of moral injury is important. But it emphasizes the psychological consequences for soldiers when they’re betrayed in high-stakes situations. A more expansive view of moral injury, advanced by psychologist Brett Litz, shows it can also result from an individual’s own actions - what’s known as perpetration-based moral injury.

Released in 1989, the critically acclaimed movie “Born on the Fourth of July,” which is based on Ron Kovic’s 1976 autobiography, centers on this type of moral injury.

Kovic, played by Tom Cruise, is haunted by acts he committed while fighting in Vietnam. In a friendly fire incident, he accidentally kills a fellow Marine during a chaotic firefight. Later, he witnesses and participates in an attack in which his unit kills Vietnamese civilians, including women and children.

Kovic’s actions and ensuing

trauma reflect the same kind of moral injury seen in Damon’s Odysseus.

After 10 long years of fighting the Trojan War, Odysseus devises a plan to end the conflict: He and his troops infiltrate Troy by hiding inside a massive wooden horse. They build it as an apparent peace offering, climb inside and wait until their enemies pull “the gift” inside the city walls. Then they attack.

The military maneuver is brilliant and effective. But it also requires Odysseus to break Zeus’ law of xenia: the sacred obligation of hospitality between host and guest. He crosses another moral boundary by using deception. During the ensuing massacre, he violates the principle - even between enemies - of treating others how you would want to be treated.

Odysseus’ self-imposed exile - evocative of the social alienation that’s so prevalent among sufferers of moral injury - keeps him away from home for 10 long years after the war ends. Yet even time and space fail to heal him, and Odysseus remains haunted by guilt and shame: “We left them a gift, an offer of peace, that they took into their home,” Damon’s Odysseus says. “We violated all that’s sacred between people.”

Nolan’s characterization of Odysseus reminds me of the veterans I have treated.

In addition to moral injury,



Damon’s Odysseus almost certainly has PTSD. He has recurrent nightmares; he tries to suppress his shame by consuming memory-erasing lotus flowers; and he feels overwhelming guilt and rage. Yet he appears most distraught by the thought that a part of himself has died and is irrevocably broken. While disguised as a beggar, he utters to his wife, Penelope, “What if the Odysseus you knew lost his way?”

It’s a version of what many of the veterans I’ve treated have told me: “If you really knew me, you wouldn’t love me.”

Many of them go on to admit that they feel they are unworthy of love. Actually, it’s more than just a feeling. It’s a moral conclusion that they reach after replaying and relitigating their actions at war.

Many of my clients describe their most significant trauma as something they did or failed to do, such as shooting a civilian or hiding instead of fighting during an attack.

Trauma taking place via personal acts of commission or omission usually does not come to mind when you think of PTSD. But you can, in fact, be a war hero - as Odysseus was - and you can also become haunted by your own actions, which linger long after the war ends.

Effective strategies for mitigating the fear reactions that PTSD can elicit, including treatments I’ve developed, exist.

But moral injury is a different beast from PTSD, and it can be especially challenging to help someone suffering from moral injury who believes they are unlovable.

A number of therapies centered on resolving moral injury have emerged in recent years. One of those, developed by psychologist Shira Maguen, is called the “impact of killing,” and it centers on the moral and emotional aftermath of killing someone during war.

It’s seen as an especially promising tool for improving veterans’ quality of life. She finds that among veterans who had already completed traditional trauma therapy, her intervention can further bolster veterans’ willingness to take part in community events and confide in loved ones.

Some people assume “The Odyssey” has survived over the years because it is a classic story of war, resilience and homecoming. But plenty of war stories were lost to history during the illiterate centuries after the collapse of the Bronze Age. “The Odyssey” endures, I think, because it centers on a tortured hero whom the audience admires but cannot fully absolve. His cunning is entwined with his crime.

Odysseus isn’t easily redeemed, excused or pitied. As fresh waves of troops continue to be exposed to the horrors of war, Odysseus’ trauma also continues to hit home. (AP)

Obituary

Trailblazer for female vocal groups

Smith, founder of the Chantels and co-writer of ‘Maybe,’ dies

NEW YORK, Aug. 1, (AP): **Arlene Smith**, one of the first “girl group” stars who as a teenager and a founder of the Chantels co-wrote and sang lead on the 1950s doo-wop classic “Maybe,” has died at 84.

Smith’s manager and close friend, Paul Errante, told The Associated Press that she died of a heart attack Wednesday at a New York City hospital.



Male harmony groups from the Drifters to Dion and the Belmonts were common in the early years of rock ‘n’ roll. But female acts - especially Black female acts - were rare until the late 1950s, when performers such as the Chantels and the Bobbettes broke through and helped make possible a wave of girl groups in the next decade, including the Shirelles, the Ronettes and the Crystals.

“My thing was, ‘The guys are not the only ones that can do this,’” Smith told the authors of the 2023 oral history “But Will You Love Me Tomorrow?”

“Maybe,” recorded in a makeshift studio in a Manhattan church, was a spare, pleading ballad that Smith sang with weary force, in part because the group had to run through it more than 50 times. The 1958 release was a Top 20 hit that eventually sold more than 1 million copies and was covered by Janis Joplin and the Three Degrees, among others. Smith and the Chantels were voted into the Vocal Group Hall of Fame in 2002, a year before Rolling Stone ranked “Maybe” at No. 199 on the magazine’s list of the 500 best songs.

“The Chantels forced listeners to reconsider doo-wop as something more than a man’s domain, and the reality of a girl group holding forth on guys’ turf laid out cultural possibilities in an entirely new way,” NPR music critic Tim Riley wrote in his book “Fever,” published in 2004. “With ‘Maybe,’ Arlene Smith infused her vocal with so much determined naiveté that she transformed all the anxiety of a doomed relationship into a fervent wish for its revival.”

The Chantels had a handful of other hits, including “Every Night (I Pray)” and “Look In My Eyes,” but never matched the success of “Maybe.” Smith left the group in 1959, around the time their record label went bankrupt, and

she worked briefly with producer Phil Spector, recording the single “Love, Love, Love.” But her career soon faded and, by the 1970s, estranged from the other original Chantels, she was touring with a new lineup of backing singers.

Smith eventually received a master’s degree in education and taught music to elementary school students in New York City before retiring in the 2000s. She never married or had children, Errante said.

The Chantels were pioneers sometimes trapped in the conventions of the era. Smith’s name was initially left out of the credits to “Maybe,” a theft of copyright common in the music industry in the ‘50s. The cover of their first album, “We Are the Chantels,” originally featured a group photograph, but was changed to show an image of two young white people leaning over a jukebox.

“Things were going on in the country,” Smith told The New York Times in 1995. “There was a lot to transcend.”

In “But Will You Love Me Tomorrow?” Smith said she never wanted to sing “girl songs” and instead was drawn to male groups whose “harmonies were so rich and full.” She was in high school when “Maybe” came out, but had been performing for years, influenced by Etta James, among others. As a girl, Smith attended the St. Anthony of Padua School in New York’s Bronx borough and began singing with fellow choir members Sonia Goring, Renée Minus, Jackie Landry and Lois Harris in the early 1950s, when all were in their early teens or younger. They named themselves after a nearby school and basketball rival, St. Frances de Chantal, and honed an intricate singing style in part by mastering Gregorian chants.

“We navigated toward each other. We used to sit in choir practice and make up parts,” Smith told the publication Catholic New York in 2019, around the time they were honored with a Bronx street sign that read, “The Chantels - Hit Record ‘Maybe’ 1958.”

The Chantels sang at various local talent shows and broke through professionally in 1957, when Richard Barrett, producer and leader of the male harmony group the Valentines, recommended them to End Records owner George Goldner. Their debut single, “He’s Gone,” came out that summer. “Maybe” - widely believed to have been written by Barrett and Smith - was released months later and helped lead to the group’s touring with everyone from Chuck Berry to Ike and Tina Turner.

Mission doesn’t end with one campus

Oprah’s SA school closes chapter



Oprah Winfrey talks to students at her Leadership Academy for Girls at Henley-On-Klip South Africa, Friday, Jan. 13, 2012 on the eve of the first graduation at her school. (AP)

JOHANNESBURG, Aug. 1, (AP): Oprah Winfrey says she will close the school for underprivileged girls she set up in South Africa two decades ago at the end of next year.

Winfrey opened the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in 2007 after being inspired by conversations with former South African President Nelson Mandela about the transformative power of educating girls. He was among the guests at the school’s opening ceremony.

Winfrey’s charitable foundation ran and funded the school, but it was always part of the agreement that the academy campus near Johannesburg be ultimately handed over to the provincial education department, the academy said.

“The dream was never simply to build a school,” Winfrey said in a statement issued by the academy on Wednesday. “It was to invest in the limitless potential of young women. That mission doesn’t end with one campus. It continues in every girl whose future can be transformed through education.”

The academy said Winfrey’s commitment to educating South African girls would continue through an expanded national scholarship program supporting academically talented girls at leading schools across the country.

More than 500 girls have graduated from the academy and some have attended top universities in South Africa, the United States and Europe, according to the Oprah Winfrey Charitable Foundation.

The Gauteng provincial government will take over the 52-acre academy campus, which has 21 classrooms, six science and computer laboratories, a 10,000-volume library and a 600-seat theater. It did not immediately say what the plans for the property were.

Gauteng Provincial Minister for Education Lebogang Maile said those currently enrolled in the school will be able to complete their education with uninterrupted financial support.

The academy drew international attention shortly after opening in 2007 when several students accused a dormitory matron of physically and sexually abusing them.

Winfrey traveled to South Africa to meet with students and parents, publicly apologized, and commissioned an independent investigation.

The matron was acquitted of criminal charges in 2010.

Music

Pop star swaps vocal fireworks for subtle emotion

‘Petal’ captures Grande’s most restrained side

NEW YORK, Aug. 1, (AP): Gone is the big-belter Ariana Grande. On “Petal,” her eighth studio album and first full-length release since both the end of her “Wicked” run and 2024’s “Eternal Sunshine,” the pop powerhouse looks inward across 12 tracks of real restraint.

Lead single “Hate That I Made You Love Me,” with its muted reception and slinky hook, offered a direct taste of the vibe shift to come. The track, which became Grande’s 10th No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100, is marked by subdued vocal delivery that comes alive with its bubbling, arpeggiated synths and soft-pop chorus courtesy of Grande and her producers - Ilya Salmanzadeh, whom she has worked with since 2018’s “Sweetener,” and the Swedish enigma Max Martin. Upon first listen, it felt like a bit of a test: Could the artist known for outsiniging her competition pull off an understated vocal performance? “I hate that I made you love me,” she sings - to whom is up for interpretation. “Cause I barely tried.”

There is an ease and effortlessness to the stickiest moments, and that’s true of the bulk of the 12 songs that make up “Petal.” Peppy production returns on “Oh Well,” distracting from its clear kiss-off in the lyrics. “Good things can replace dysfunction, obsession,” she sings. “Thanks, but I’ll see you right out / Good luck on your way to hell / Oh well!”

There is a variety of textures here, and they are



This album cover image released by Republic Records shows “Petal” by Ariana Grande. (AP)

cooler than ever before - nearing lackadaisical, but still retaining a lot of charm.

“Petal” possesses a kind of somber R&B swagger indebted to SZA’s smoothness; “Freak” plays out like a waking dream, or maybe a nightmare - a breezy confessional with hazy vocal overdubs. There are none of her signature runs, no larger-than-life vocal moment. Grande has moved on,

as she is entitled to do. But is her “Big Feelings” subtly enough to keep loyalists engaged?

A raunchier, dynamic Grande reappears on the album’s final and best third, particularly atop the blown-out bass on “Like I Do,” or on the line “The grass is way greener / Since I been beneath ya” on the slow burn “Never Get Over Me.” It floats in and out, allowing album standout “Bad Thing (Bunny Hop)” to hit with the rush of a crush - its intended purpose, with the song’s blast of dream-pop guitars, The Weeknd -esque propulsion and butterflies-in-the-stomach lyricism with her characteristically creative enunciation. (An example: “Feeling like a teenager / I guess I really needed ya.”) It leads to the closer “Nowhere, Nobody,” with its retro vocal melody and vocoder effects.

In the press materials for “Petal,” Grande described the album as “Something that is full of life and growing through the cracks of something cold and hard and challenging.” There is some truth to it: Across these dozen songs are small joys, buried beneath atmospheric production and listless melodies. But there is also a freedom to pop’s most elastic vocalist choosing to rein it in.

“Petal” by Ariana Grande
Three stars out of five.
On repeat: “Bad Thing (Bunny Hop)”
Skip it: “Freak”
For fans of: Florals, getting the last laugh, ballet flats

‘I’m a normal girl trying to figure it out’

New music reveals Reid’s true self

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 1, (AP): Storm Reid knows how the world sees her: an accomplished, polished actor who always seems to have it all together. Through new music, the Emmy-winner hopes listeners discover another side of her.

Having released her new single “Shotty” on Friday, Reid wants people to meet the less pristine version of herself: a 23-year-old from Atlanta who falls in love, deals with boy problems and is still finding her way.

“I think people might think I have it all together when I really don’t,” said Reid, who is known for performances in “Euphoria,” “A Wrinkle in Time” and “The Last of Us,” which earned her an Emmy in 2024. She graduated from the University of Southern California last year.

“I’m a normal girl trying to figure it out,” she continued.

“Shotty” follows Reid’s debut single, “Clean Sweep,” continuing a music journey she has pursued over the past year. So far, she has recorded more than 25 songs.

Reid said she hopes to focus work on her first EP after wrapping production on Teyana Taylor’s feature directorial debut “Get Lite,” giving herself time to shape a project that tells a cohesive story. She’s releasing music independently through her label, 1720 Music, saying the approach gives her greater creative freedom while leaving the door open to partner with a major label in the future.

“The indie route, you have a little bit more autonomy of what you want to do and how you do things,” she said.

Reid said ownership also gives her an opportunity to create doors for other artists.

“It’s the most powerful thing,” she said. “I want to sign people. I want to sign songwriters and producers and artists, and give them opportunities.”

Music has quickly become as important to Reid as acting, a career she’ll continue with upcoming projects including Netflix’s “Roommates” and “Get Lite.” Preparing for Taylor’s film pushed Reid outside her comfort zone as a dancer, challenging her to become more comfortable as a performer.

It’s a skill Reid hopes will eventually translate to performing her own music.

“It’s as big and as important as acting is,” she said. “It’s something that I want to continue to do and want to continue to grow at.”

Reid said years in Hollywood prepared her for criticism.

“People didn’t feel like I deserved to win an Emmy, but it’s still sitting in my house,” she said. “It’s still in my mama’s house, so I don’t really care what people say.”

Since releasing “Clean Sweep,” Reid said she has largely stayed away from reading online comments.

“I don’t want to get distracted or discouraged,” she said. “Mostly I’ve been so thankful. The sentiments have been really nice and people have been sup-



Storm Reid poses for a portrait on Thursday, July 30, 2026, in Los Angeles. (AP)

portive. ... I’m excited and can’t wait for them to hear more.”

For Reid, music has become more about who she’s always been.

“Not everything is gonna be perfect. Not everything is gonna be prim, proper and pristine and eloquent,” Reid said. “Like yeah, that’s a part of me, and I can do that, and I can do it really well. But also ... this is me too.”

Rapper defies age limits with new music from Lil Jon

Too \$hort’s hip-hop journey continues at 60

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 1, (AP): At 60, Too \$hort is helping usher hip-hop into what he calls its senior citizen era. Just don’t expect him to rap like one.

The Oakland hip-hop pioneer is still recording, touring and talking slick more than four decades after he began selling homemade tapes on the streets of the Bay Area. While the genre has long treated aging like an unwritten career-ending offense, Too \$hort is breaking the rule and challenging the culture’s elder statesmen to keep going with him.

His latest proof is “Sir Too \$hort Vol. 2: Drink & Smoke,” his 23rd studio album, produced entirely by longtime collaborator Lil Jon. It arrives Friday, exactly 20 years after the release of his enduring hit “Blow the Whistle.”

Too \$hort, whose catalog also includes classics like “The Ghetto” and “Shake That Monkey,” says he isn’t interested in slowing down anytime soon. That was certainly evident when he and E-40 performed at the NFL Honors in February.

In an interview with The Associated Press this week, Too \$hort reflected on turning 60, challenging hip-hop’s age limits, preserving the legacy of Lil Jon’s late son, DJ Young Slade, the staying power of “Blow the Whistle” and why he has no plans to stop until “the wheels fall off.”

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

AP: You recently turned 60, but you’re still releasing albums, touring and influencing the culture. When you first started selling homemade tapes on the streets of Oakland, did you ever imagine you’d still be doing this more than four decades later?

TOO \$SHORT: At the age of 14 or 15, my mentality was, “Let people hear this music. We’re going to rock some house parties and high school



Too \$hort poses for a portrait on Tuesday, July 28, 2026, in Los Angeles. (AP)

dances and sell some tapes to fans in the streets.” When I got my foot in the door, I knew this was going to be my job. It was always “till the wheels fall off.” It was never, “Let’s do this for 30 or 40 years.”

I’ve always said the day hip-hop is no longer my job is probably the day I’ll stop. But the love I have for hip-hop won’t allow me to stop recording. I’ve never taken a long break. I’ve continuously been in the studio, continuously doing shows.

I just keep it going because it’s my job.

AP: Why do you think you’ve remained relevant when so many careers have come and gone?

TOO \$SHORT: I truly love making music. It’s never felt like work. I could have stopped after “Blow the Whistle” and been like, “Story told.” But somebody’s got to go out into these uncharted waters and blaze the trail. Look at E-40, Snoop Dogg, Fat Joe and the other guys who kept go-

ing after the kids were grown and the grandkids were on the way.

Who laid the rule down that in hip-hop you gotta stop at 40? Every milestone they said was old. First it was 30, then it was 40, then it was 50. Now we got senior citizen rappers, and this ... is real. Hip-hop is entering the place where jazz, blues and R&B have older artists who are still performing and recording. We should too.

AP: Twenty years after its release, “Blow the Whistle” is still played everywhere from NBA arenas to the Olympics. Why do you think that record has endured?

TOO \$SHORT: I don’t know if you could give me the ingredients and tell me how to do it again; I don’t think I could. It had to happen organically. I give Lil Jon a lot of credit because he’s made a lot of songs we’ve loved since the day they came out. We make good music together, and that’s why I’m excited for people to hear what we’re still doing 30 years after we first worked together.

AP: This album reunites you with Lil Jon, but it also features work from his late son, Slade, who died in February. What did that collaboration mean to you?

TOO \$SHORT: His son passed away after we finished recording. We had actually done about twice as many songs as ended up on this project. I saw how it affected Jon, and I had recently lost my brother, so I knew that feeling of loss. The whole time, Slade was producing or co-producing a lot of the tracks I was working on. The first thing that came to me was that I’d be more than proud to be part of his son’s legacy and give something to the world that would help him live forever. Jon keeps saying, “Slade’s legacy,” and I’m just trying to be a part of that and show the world we lost another good, talented person.



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifts off from pad 39A with a payload of a pair of lunar landers at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Jan. 15, 2025. (AP)

Discarded SpaceX rocket on high-speed collision course with the moon

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Aug. 1, (AP) — A drifting SpaceX rocket is on a collision course with the moon after launching a pair of lunar landers more than a year ago.

The rocket's upper stage will unintentionally slam into the moon on Wednesday, carving out a crater and sending up a plume of dust and rubble that scientists — and skygazers — are eager to observe.

Space tracking expert Bill Gray predicts an impact of 5,400 mph (8,700 kph) — seven times the speed of sound — near Einstein Crater on the moon's sunlit western limb. With the action unfolding in the wee hours, the eastern portions of the US and Canada, and much of South America should have the best views.

While scientists are not too concerned about this particular piece of space junk, it highlights the growing threat as more and more items cram into orbit.

"Things are getting crowded up there," said Gray, who plans to view the aftermath from New Brunswick, Canada.

It was never SpaceX's intent to hit the moon. But space experts said the crash could have been avoided if the

upper stage had been nudged into orbit around the sun.

It will be the second dead rocket known to crash into the moon accidentally. A Chinese rocket segment dug out a pair of craters on the lunar far side in 2022.

Lucky for astronomers, the upcoming smashup will occur on the moon's near side, packing the equivalent energy of three tons of TNT.

The impact flash, lasting less than a second, will probably be too dim to see, according to experts. But the stream of ejected material could stretch for several miles (kilometers) into space and remain visible to telescopes for tens of minutes.

"The gravity on the moon is low and there is no wind to blow the dust away," said Los Alamos National Laboratory's Benjamin Fernando, who's encouraging observations by professionals and amateurs alike.

"Part of the reason for our interest in this event is to figure out how much of a hazard debris impacts pose to future astronauts," he added in an email.

Fernando anticipates an impact crater nearly 90 feet across and 16 feet deep (27 meters across and 5 meters deep), too small to see from

Earth but visible to spacecraft.

NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter and South Korea's Danuri lunar orbiter will gather before-and-after shots of the crash scene. Danuri will stray within a mile or two (a few kilometers) of the SpaceX rocket just two minutes before impact, according to Fernando and his team.

The abandoned rocket segment — measuring some 40 feet (12 meters) and weighing around 10,000 pounds (4,500 kilograms) — hoisted two private lunar landers on Jan. 15, 2025.

One of them — Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost — became the first private spacecraft to pull off a fully successful lunar touchdown. The other, Japan-based ispace's lander, wrecked.

With meteoroids and other natural objects offering little if any warning before walloping the moon, scientists said there's much to learn by observing well-tracked strikes by human-made objects like the one coming up. NASA hurled rocket sections and lunar modules into the moon during the Apollo era for seismic measurements. Decades later, in 2009, NASA intentionally crashed its LCROSS spacecraft and upper stage in search of ice near the lunar south pole.

Streaking meteors could photobomb totality

August's total solar eclipse to sweep over Spain, Iceland and Greenland

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1, (AP) — For the first time in more than a century, a total solar eclipse is coming to mainland Spain with an even longer encore next summer.

Toss in a crescendoing meteor shower and a six-planet parade on the same day, and the heavens will be overflowing with awe.

Daytime darkness will descend Aug. 12 across the Iberian Peninsula close to sunset — plus slivers of Greenland and Iceland — as the sun, moon and Earth align perfectly in the sky.

Starting near the North Pole before tracking south, totality will last up to two minutes and 18 seconds, an appetizer for an even longer solar show next year — a 6 ½-minute extravaganza that will sweep from Spain to North Africa and the Middle East.

It will take 1 ½ hours for the umbra, or moon's sun-blocking shadow, to race along the 5,130-mile (8,260-kilometer) course, most of it over an empty Atlantic. Maximum totality will occur off Iceland's west coast. By the time it reaches a small patch of Portugal and then Spain with its massive crowds, totality will have dwindled to a minute or so. The spectacle will end in the Mediterranean.

Hundreds of millions more on the sidelines are in for a treat as well.

A partial eclipse will delight as far away as Alaska and Siberia, enveloping Canada, the northern US, and much of Europe and West Africa.

The closer to totality's course, the more the sun will vanish behind the moon — 94% coverage in Dublin and 83% in Oslo, Norway. Montreal will see an 18% bite out of the sun, tapering to 9% in New York and 2% in Norfolk, Virginia.

Special eclipse glasses are crucial, even if a morsel of sun is showing.

Adding to the cosmic wonder, the day begins with six of our neighboring planets forming an arc in the sky before dawn and end with the Perseid meteor shower peaking after nightfall under the new moon. Streaking meteors could photobomb totality, with some of the brighter planets and stars visible in the background.

Eclipse mapmaker Michael Zeiler is chasing an even more elusive interloper: the northern lights.

For his 13th total solar eclipse, Zeiler will be on a cruise ship in a Greenland fjord, sailing as a guest lecturer. He'll point a video camera toward the north to capture any aurora forming during totality. A massive outburst from the sun would be the icing on his eclipse cake.



This image provided by NASA and captured by the Artemis II crew from lunar orbit, April 6, 2026, shows the Moon eclipsing the Sun. (AP)

"What gets me excited is viewing rare phenomena," Zeiler said in an email. He's not the only one revved up.

The European Space Agency will host a live webcast from Spain's Astrophysical Observatory of Javalambre and a public celebration in Leon. NASA will provide its own coverage, as will the Italian-based Virtual Telescope Project and others.

"For me, it's not just a scientific moment. It's not just an incredible alignment of heavenly bodies. It's also a very human moment," said ESA's director of science Carole Mundell. "It's a real human connection between us with our feet planted on the Earth and the cosmos."

Two of ESA's space telescopes will observe the eclipsed sun and its corona, or outer atmosphere. Proba-3, the space agency's artificial eclipse-making satellite duo, will be in the wrong part of its orbit during totality as seen from

Earth, but will try to sneak in some before-and-after shots.

US college research teams are also pitching in, launching more than 60 high-altitude balloons from Spain and Iceland to study Earth's atmosphere and other changes during the eclipse when the temperature momentarily drops. They launched 10 times as many balloons during the 2024 total solar eclipse that captivated North America.

"A couple of minutes isn't a lot of time, but it's still plenty to affect the atmosphere and to make that cold, dark shadow of the moon on Earth," said Montana State University's Angela Des Jardins, who leads the NASA-funded balloon project.

Southwest Research Institute's Amir Caspi also expects a scientific bonanza from his study aboard a NASA high-altitude plane. Four cameras will record the corona in nine wavelengths as the jet chases the eclipse at 460 mph (740 kph), extending totality to nearly three minutes in the air. Caspi anticipates thousands of images gathered from each camera during those precious 180 seconds.

"It's true the eclipse is short, but it's still incredibly valuable," he said.

An exceptionally long total solar eclipse is in store for 2027, yielding nearly three times more observation time.

The southern tip of Spain will take center stage on Aug. 2, 2027, with up to six minutes and 23 seconds of totality extending into Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Somalia.

Then on Jan. 26, 2028, a ring-of-fire eclipse will round out Spain's celestial trifecta — "a lucky coincidence," according to ESA's Mundell.

It's all the more extraordinary considering Spain's last full solar eclipse — not counting the Canary Islands — occurred two days before the Titanic's sinking in 1912.

Because that rare hybrid eclipse toggled between a ring-of-fire and just a few seconds of totality for Spain, some consider 1905 for the country's last pull-out-all-the-stops solar eclipse.

The Royal Observatory of Belgium's Andrei Zhukov can't get enough of them regardless of their length or origin. His Proba-3 science mission has created more than 60 simulated total solar eclipses over the past two years, with the longest lasting five hours and 38 minutes from two satellites flying in formation.

"We're looking forward to more eclipses," Zhukov said, "natural or artificial."

Replacing gas stoves with electric stoves greatly reduces asthma symptoms

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

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By Ashwini Sehgal

Case Western Reserve University

More than one-third of American households rely on natural gas stoves to prepare their meals.

Burning natural gas generates carbon dioxide, which is the main driver of climate change. But cooking on gas stoves is also an under-recognized and important source of indoor air pollution. Combustion of natural gas creates nitrogen dioxide and other compounds that can irritate the lungs.

People with preexisting respiratory conditions, such as the 28 million Americans with asthma, may be especially susceptible. An analysis of more than 40 studies found a correlation between nitrogen dioxide levels and asthma symptoms.

I am a physician and medical researcher, and my colleagues and I recently completed the first study to examine whether replacing gas stoves with electric stoves can improve asthma symptoms.

Our study included 85 adults and children with poorly controlled asthma who lived in homes or apartments with gas stoves. Asthma control was determined from responses to a standard questionnaire that asked about specific asthma symptoms, activity limitations and use of rescue medication such as fast-acting inhalers.

Contractors removed the gas stoves, safely capped the gas lines, installed the necessary electrical outlets and replaced the stoves with electric induction models at no cost to participants. We chose electric induction stoves because they heat up and cool down rapidly, and they are safer and easier to clean than electric coil stoves.

Our research team assessed asthma control based on a questionnaire participants filled out before the stove replacement and again two to three months afterward. We used air quality monitors to measure indoor nitrogen dioxide levels for seven-day periods before and after stove replacement.

The results were striking: Improvements in asthma symptoms following stove change were similar to — or even greater than — those reported in clinical trials of commonly used asthma medications.

On average, participants went from having moderate asthma symptoms to having mild symptoms. Emergency room visits and hospitalizations for asthma fell by 70%. Missed days of work or school because of asthma dropped by about 80%. At the same time, indoor levels of nitrogen dioxide decreased by 70%.

These findings suggest that a relatively simple change in the home — switching from a gas stove to an electric stove — may lead to meaningful improvements in asthma control for people who are struggling with their symptoms.

And though the natural gas industry advertises gas stoves as being better for cooking, participants in our study preferred their electric stoves. Nearly all — 98% — said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their electric induction stove, compared with only 41% who felt that way about their gas stove.

That said, it is worth noting that our study included a relatively small number of participants and followed them for only a few months. The findings may not apply to people with milder asthma symptoms. We also did not include a comparison group that kept their gas stoves.

The cost of replacing gas stoves with electric stoves is likely to be a barrier for low-income communities, both in the U.S. and abroad.

In newer American homes, an electric stove and its installation typically costs about US\$1,500. Most of our study participants lived in homes that were built before 1960, and we spent an average of \$7,000 per household to upgrade their electrical systems as part of the study.

But given the potential cost savings from reduced emergency room visits and hospitalizations, it might make sense for governments or health insurers to subsidize the costs of replacing gas stoves with electric ones for patients with poorly controlled asthma.

In developing countries, the high initial cost of new stoves can be a real impediment to switching. Inadequate home wiring and unreliable electrical grids present additional challenges in many places.

But countries with severe air pollution and a high prevalence of lung conditions may find it's worth the cost.

In Ecuador, one program demonstrated that providing subsidies could help the population transition from gas to electric stoves. From 2015 to 2021, the Ecuadorian government subsidized 750,000 households — one-tenth of all households in the country — to replace their gas stoves with electric induction stoves. Program uptake correlated with declines in hospitalizations for respiratory illnesses.

Switching stoves is not a cure for asthma and may not help everyone. People with asthma should continue working with their physicians, taking prescribed medications and reducing exposure to other asthma triggers, such as cigarette smoke, dust mites, pollen and viral respiratory infections.

But about 80% of our study participants experienced meaningful improvements. So people with poorly controlled asthma may consider transitioning away from gas stoves, depending on their resources and circumstances, to ease their symptoms.

Physicians may also want to ask asthma patients about the use of gas stoves and educate them about potential harms. And builders, landlords and restaurant owners may want to think about the types of stoves they install, as that may be a consideration for the future buyers, renters and employees who will cook in their kitchens. (AP)



Polar bears cool down on a pile of ice that was brought to their enclosure on a hot and sunny day at the zoo in Prague, Czech Republic on July 30. (AP)

Prague zoo keeps polar bears cool with ice cubes

PRAGUE, Aug. 1, (AP) — Keepers at Prague Zoo used tons of ice on Thursday to give its animals some much-needed relief as yet another heat wave hit Europe. Polar bears Aleut and Gregor wasted no time and were rolling in the beds of ice cubes after entering their outside enclosure.

The twins looked to have fun with the ice treat that was meant to keep them cool amid the extreme temperatures forecast to soar to 38 degrees Celsius (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) later in the day. "The bears cool off with it and at the same time it's an enrichment of their life in the zoo," said zoo spokesperson Filip Mašek.

The zoo began providing ice to some of the animals two years ago in response to climate change and the increasing number of days with extreme temperatures.

The polar bears, who were born in Nuremberg, Germany, 16 years ago and have adapted to the European climate, were the ones who enjoyed it the most.

This year, the plan was to order ice for the animals in July and August, which are traditionally the hottest months. But the first heat wave struck early and the Czech Republic experienced its hottest day ever with 41.9 C (107.4 F) on June 28.

Federal survey shows promising trends for youth mental health and drug use

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1, (AP) — A key US government report on mental health, substance use and addiction showed continued improvements in several metrics, especially among young people.

There was some uncertainty about the future of the National Survey on Drug Use and Health last year, when the entire 17-member team responsible for it was laid off by the Trump administration. But the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration released the latest report Monday, with data that lets researchers look at trends from 2021 to 2025.

Fewer adolescents aged 12 to 17 reported using tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and binge drinking in the previous month, the survey found.

And in the past year, fewer in that age group reported:

- illicit drug and marijuana use
- starting drinking alcohol, vaping or marijuana
- substance, alcohol or drug use disorders

Adolescents also saw declining trends for major depressive episodes and fewer reported serious thoughts of suicide, making a suicide plan and attempting suicide.

Young adults aged 18 to 25 saw



The US Department of Health and Human Services is seen in Washington on April 16, 2025. (AP)

similarly favorable trends.

Still, many young people face mental health challenges. Nearly 20% of adolescents surveyed had moderate or severe anxiety symptoms in the previous two weeks, compared with about 7% of adults over the age of 18.

Overall, the survey found more than half of people over 12 used an illicit drug, drank alcohol, used tobacco or

vaped nicotine in the previous month. That includes 44% who drank alcohol, 16% who used a tobacco product, 10% who vaped nicotine and 16% who used an illicit drug.

The trends among young people are promising, but "there's still a lot of work to be done," said Robyn Oster, policy director for the Partnership to End Addiction.

Clark’s triple-double seals Fever win

Mystics beat Wings for first 4-game win streak since 2020

PORTLAND, Ore., Aug 1, (AP): Caitlin Clark had 26 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for her fourth career triple-double, and the Indiana Fever won their fifth straight with a 112-98 victory over the Portland Fire.

Kelsey Mitchell also had 26 points for the Fever (19-10), who have won nine of their last 11 and had five straight games with 100 points. Bridget Carleton had 26 points for the Fire (11-18), who have lost four straight.

The Fever pulled away in the third quarter, going up by 18 points to lead 90-72 heading into the fourth quarter. Makayla Timpson hit a layup that pushed the lead to 10 points to open the fourth.

Portland closed the gap, pulling to 98-88 on Carleton’s 3-pointer with 4:08 left. She had a layup that made it 100-93 to get the Fire even closer. Clark hit free throws to make it 110-96 with just a minute to go and the Fire ran out of time.

There was a pregame rally outside of the Moda Center in support of Sophie Cunningham and her recent comments about barring transgender athletes from women’s and girls’ sports. A similar rally was held before the Fever’s 105-94 victory at the Seattle Storm on Tuesday.

Cunningham was booed by the Moda Center crowd when she came into the game midway though the first quarter. Shortly thereafter, she hit a 3-pointer that put the Fever up 14-8. Cunningham finished with 13 points.

Megan DiLeo 3-pointer put the Fire up 36-30 but the Fever clawed back a 56-47 lead at the half. Clark led the Fever with 17 first-half points.

The game was a sellout with a Fire-record 19,959 in attendance.

Mystics 81, Wings 75

In Washington, Shakira Austin scored a season-high 28 points and had 10 rebounds, Kiki Iriafen added 22 points and nine rebounds and the Washington Mystics beat the Dallas Wings. Washington (16-12) has won four straight for the first time since September 2020.

Cotie McMahon made Washington’s final field goal with 2:50 remaining in the fourth quarter for a 71-68 lead. Then, the Mystics closed it out by going 10 of 10 at the free-throw line.

Sonia Citron finished with 16 points for Washington despite going 3 of 18 from the field. Citron went 10 of 10 at the free-throw line, while Dallas only attempted 13.

Paige Bueckers led Dallas (18-11) with 23 points. Arike Ogunbowale scored 14 of her 20 points in the first half. The Wings have lost three of their last four games.

Ogunbowale made a 3-pointer with 5:12 left in the fourth to give Dallas its first lead, 64-63, since the opening two minutes of the game. It was her first made field goal of the second half.

Dream 98 , Storm 89

In College Park, Angel Reese had 21 points and 13 rebounds for her 19th double-double of the season and the Atlanta Dream beat the Seattle Storm for their fifth straight victory.

Reese grabbed six offensive rebounds to pass Brionna Jones (136) for the



Seattle Storm guard Flau'jae Johnson, back, reaches for the ball against Indiana Fever guard Caitlin Clark, front, during the second half of a WNBA basketball game in Seattle. (AP)

most in a season by a Dream player - doing so in just 27 games.

Naz Hillmon added 18 points for Atlanta (18-10) and Allisha Gray had 16 points. Jones scored 14 points off the bench and Jordin Canada had 10 points and nine assists. Rhyné Howard, averaging 17.2 points per game, was held to nine points on 3-of-13 shooting.

Natasha Hiedeman led Seattle (6-25) with 23 points. Dominique Malonga

had 16 points and 13 rebounds, and Ezi Magbegor scored 12 off the bench. Flau'jae Johnson went 2 of 11 from the field.

Atlanta led 87-74 with 3:53 left in the fourth quarter before Seattle went on a 10-2 run. The Storm trimmed their deficit to 92-88 with 43.4 seconds left, but Gray made two free throws at the other end to seal it.

Seattle has lost eight straight.

Program offers Kuwaiti talents elite European training

Kuwait Basketball Association launches talent development project in Serbia

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

BELGRADE, Aug 1: The Kuwait Basketball Association (KBA) has unveiled a long-term talent development initiative by sending 10 promising young players to Serbia for a 30-day training program beginning on September 9.

The program, launched in partnership with a specialized basketball development company, is designed to expose Kuwait’s rising talents to the European training system and provide them with high-level coaching and competitive experience. It marks the first phase of a broader project that aims to nurture a larger group of gifted players through a structured development pathway overseen by the KBA’s Training and National Teams Committee.

Participants will follow an intensive schedule featuring morning and evening training sessions focused on improving their technical abilities, physical conditioning and overall basketball fundamentals under the guidance of internationally accredited skills coaches.

The committee selected play-



Mohammad Al-Hassawi, Acting Assistant Secretary-General of the KBA and Chairman of the Training and National Teams Committee.

ers born in 2011 and 2012 as the first intake, believing they are at the ideal stage of development to maximize the program’s benefits. The squad, chosen by Kuwait na-

tional team head coach Marko Peslietić, includes Omar Al-Asaq, Suleiman Al-Mulla, Ali Al-Salahi, Khaled Al-Nashi, Abdulrahman Al-Marzouq, Fahad Al-Jumaa, Ha-

mad Ahmed, Ibrahim Al-Hendal, Omar Al-Hathal and Saqr Abdul-lah. Team administrator Khaled Al-Matroud will accompany the delegation.

The initiative is intended to build a technically accomplished and physically prepared generation capable of representing Kuwait’s senior national team and competing successfully at Gulf, Arab and Asian levels.

Mohammad Al-Hassawi, Acting Assistant Secretary-General of the KBA and Chairman of the Training and National Teams Committee, said the Board of Directors approved the committee’s proposal to establish the scholarship-based development program in cooperation with one of Serbia’s leading basketball training companies.

He described the project as a strategic investment in the future of Kuwaiti basketball, stressing that it goes beyond a traditional overseas training camp.

“Our objective is not simply to organize a camp, but to produce more skilled and confident players,” Al-Hassawi said. “Building successful national teams begins with developing and refining individual talent.”

Mudryk cleared to play

Chelsea hit with \$13M fine, avoids points deduction

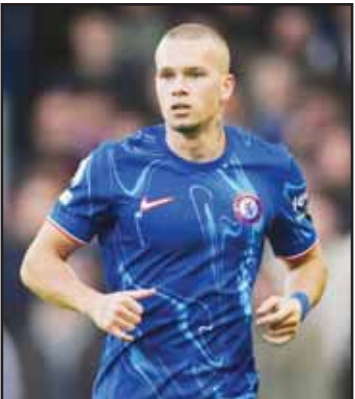
LONDON, Aug 1, (AP): Chelsea hit with \$13M fine but no suspended points deduction after agent breaches.

Meanwhile, Chelsea winger Mykhailo Mudryk has been cleared to play after the English Football Association and the World Anti-Doping Agency resolved his doping case.

Mudryk, one of the most expensive players in world soccer, hasn’t played since late 2024. He failed a drug test while on international duty for Ukraine. The test revealed an “adverse finding” of the prohibited substance meldonium.

He was suspended for four years by the FA in January and appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in April. Changes to WADA procedures in the interim meant that if he was tested now and produced the same result, doping charges would not be brought.

“Changes have been made ... which, while not retroactive, mean that if Mr Mudryk’s sample was collected today, the concentration of meldonium in the sample would not have been reported and no anti-doping rule violations would have resulted,” the FA said on Friday.



In this file photo, Chelsea’s Mykhailo Mudryk looks on during the English Premier League soccer match between Chelsea and Newcastle at Stamford Bridge in London. (AP)

“Further to that development and to other circumstances of the case, the FA and Mr Mudryk have now - with the agreement of WADA - resolved the appeal proceedings.”

The FA added Mudryk admitted to the doping offense and agreed to a suspension that was time already served. He “may return to competition with immediate effect.”

Mudryk signed with Chelsea for 100 million euros (\$115 million) for 8 1/2 years to 2031.

The Conversation

What video review controversies in sports reveal about AI and human decision-making

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

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By Pooya Tabesh

California State University, Los Angeles

If you watched the 2026 FIFA World Cup, you probably saw the now-familiar ritual: a goal, a celebration, then a referee touching an earpiece while fans and players wait for the verdict from the video assistant referee, or VAR.

That ritual is not unique to soccer. Baseball has a replay center in New York, and other sports have also moved once-human calls into review systems.

The hope is simple: Use better technology to yield better calls.

Soccer authorities expected more cameras, replay angles and tracking data to mitigate referee error, limit subjectivity and strengthen perceptions of fairness. But VAR has created new arguments among players, coaches, fans and commentators: Should VAR have intervened? Was the same standard for when to intervene applied consistently? Did the process itself feel fair?

Watching the World Cup as a decision-making researcher, I could

not help but see VAR as more than a refereeing tool. It looked like a case study in technology-assisted decision-making, with parallels to the growing use of AI in organizational decision-making.

VAR produced a set of mismatches between what the technology promised and how people experienced it. It left fans disappointed and created new disputes about judgment, process and trust. These tensions offer a useful lens for understanding AI adoption more broadly.

Some decisions are measurement problems: Was the player offside? Did the ball cross the line? Did contact occur? Technology is excellent at these questions because cameras, sensors and data reduce mistakes that come from people not seeing clearly.

But many decisions are judgment problems: Was the contact enough for a penalty? Was the tackle reckless? Was the referee’s original call clearly wrong? Those questions involve interpretation, context and standards. A camera can show that contact occurred. It cannot decide how that contact should be judged.

The same issue appears when organizations use AI to support decisions. AI can process data, predict patterns and classify cases. But a doctor, manager, judge or teacher still needs to decide what the output means, how much



Major League Baseball uses a video replay system that requires ‘indisputable video evidence’ to overturn a call, leaving the determination of ‘indisputable’ to the judgment of the replay official. (AP)

weight to give it and what values are at stake. Research on human-AI collaboration makes a similar point: AI is often strongest when paired with human judgment rather than treated as a full replacement for it.

Before VAR, arguments focused on what the referee saw. After VAR, arguments often focus on how the process works. When does VAR intervene? How far back can officials review the play? What counts as

“clear and obvious” video evidence?

Subjectivity is still there. It has moved from the referee’s eyes to the rules, thresholds and governance of the review system. Baseball shows a similar pattern: Replay did not remove judgment from the game.

It changed which plays could be reviewed, how challenges worked and where judgment entered the process.

AI systems create the same shift.

Organizations often imagine AI as a way to remove human discretion. In practice, discretion reappears in new places: deciding which model to use, what data to train on, what error rate is acceptable and who is accountable when the system fails.

People often assume that greater precision creates greater trust. Sometimes it does. But it can raise expectations faster than it reduces ambiguity. If technology can measure an offside decision by centimeters, fans may expect every decision to feel equally certain. When penalty calls or red cards remain debatable, people can become frustrated.

Research on why people avoid using algorithms finds something similar: People can lose confidence in algorithms after seeing them make mistakes, even when they perform well overall. Accuracy alone does not guarantee legitimacy.

That finding matters for AI decision systems. A company may use AI to make hiring or performance evaluation more objective. But if applicants or employees see the system as inconsistent, biased or unfair, trust can fall instead of rise. When organizations frame AI as a silver bullet, they raise expectations the technology cannot always meet. The result can be deeper frustration and faster loss of trust.

Management research suggests that AI adoption today is not a simple choice between humans and machines. The better question is whether a decision should be automated, augmented or left to human judgment.

Measurement problems are the strongest candidates for automation: AI can scan documents, detect patterns, classify cases or flag anomalies faster and more consistently than people can. Interpretation problems call for human-AI collaboration: AI can provide information, options or recommendations, but people still need to think about the context of the decision, how much uncertainty is involved and the consequences the decision may have. And some decisions remain deeply human. Questions involving fairness, accountability, values or meaning cannot be handed over to technology without changing the nature of the decision itself - from one of human judgment to algorithmic assessment.

VAR makes this boundary visible in sport. AI is now forcing organizations to confront the same boundary across high-stakes decisions. The key question in AI adoption is not simply, “Can AI make this decision?” It is, “Which parts of the decision should AI make, and which parts should remain a matter of human judgment?” (AP)

Emotional Azizulhasni claims keirin gold at 38 for Malaysia



Silver medalist Leigh Hoffman of Australia, left, gold medalist Mohd Azizulhasni Awang of Malaysia, centre, and bronze medalist Harry Ledingham-Horn of England, right, during the medal ceremony of the Men's Keirin Final at the track cycling at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland . (AP)

Boxer earns Tuvalu's first Commonwealth Games medal despite losing her only bout

GLASGOW, Scotland, Aug 1, (AP): The tears came in a flood for Azizulhasni Awang as soon as he won.

He made his move in the keirin on the second-to-last bend, moved in front on the back straight, and crossed the finish line as the Commonwealth Games champion with his trademark mini wheelie.

Then the emotional Azizulhasni shed tears of joy while circling the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome, when he got off his bike and raised the Malaysia flag, and during an emotional medal ceremony.

Malaysia's anthem rang out for only the second time in the history of Commonwealth Games cycling. It could have been Azizulhasni again but in 2010 in New Delhi he lost the keirin gold medal by disqualification for dangerously sprinting between rivals. Teammate Josiah Ng was promoted to first place.

The 38-year-old Azizulhasni has indicated he will retire after the world track championships in China in October. But his results this year have convinced Malaysian officials that he should keep racing to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Azizulhasni won the World Cup keirins in Perth, Australia, in March and in front of family and compatriots in Nilai, Malaysia, in April and claimed the annual series title.

The Pocket Rocketman - he's 5-foot-6 (1.68 meters) - is one of the greatest keirin riders ever. He was the world champion in 2017 and won an Olympic bronze in 2016 and silver in 2021.

But along with the medals and accolades, he's had his fair share of setbacks. A year after the Delhi DQ, he crashed in a World Cup keirin and had his calf skewered by a 20-centimeter splinter of the wooden track. He still got up and finished third.

He missed the 2022 Commonwealth Games because he was recovering from open heart surgery to correct a coronary artery anomaly he had endured since birth. At the 2024 Paris Olympics he was DQ'ed for getting ahead of



Cyrille Tchatchet II of England competes in the Men's 110kg Weightlifting Final at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland. (AP)

the dorny motorized pacer.

"Azizul is brave, committed, intrinsically driven, fearless and possesses an unwavering belief in himself," coach John Beasley told The Star newspaper last week. "Yes, he will be 40 at the Los Angeles Olympics, but history has shown that athletes can still succeed at that age."

A boxer from Tuvalu earned her tiny South Pacific nation's first ever Commonwealth Games medal without winning a fight.

Tarona Taafaki lost her only bout in the women's 75-kilogram class to India's Lovlina Borgohain, losing every round on all three of the judges' cards.

Because there were only five entrants, Taafaki received a bye to the last four, meaning she was automatically guaranteed at least a bronze medal.

But her coach and father says the population of Tuvalu - an island southeast of Tonga - will celebrate the medal and use it to highlight a climate change emergency.

Badi Taafaki, whose son Pasoni competed earlier in the Games and lost his only bout at 70 kg, told the British Press Association: "For the people of Tuvalu, this medal means everything."

"We're one of the smallest nations in the world, so a medal like this is hugely significant. We have worked so hard to get here. For me as a coach, it's a stepping stone."

Tarona and Pasoni are the two oldest of eight children, all of whom are boxers. They are based in New Zealand in order to take advantage of better facilities.

"My children are very fortunate," Badi said. "They have opportunities and facilities that I never had. Boxing is our whole life. Strength is in our bloodline."

Athletes on the island famously train on its airport runway, the most stable land mass on an island increasingly threatened by rising sea levels. Climate experts predict half of the nation's capital, Funafuti, could be submerged by 2050.

"Yes, we train on the airport runway," Badi said. "When a plane comes in, everyone moves aside. As soon as it leaves, we go back on the tarmac, because there is nowhere else to train."

"If we can win medals, more people around the world will recognize Tuvalu and begin to understand the challenges we face because of climate change."

"It is very real for us. The coastal erosion is unbelievable, and the countdown is now measured in years, not decades. Some islands have lost half their land. At high tide the sea comes right through. People living on the coast can't sleep if there's a storm, because the waves can come straight through their homes."

Tarona is not the first boxer to win a Commonwealth Games medal without winning a fight. Australia's Taylah Robertson picked up a bronze in the women's flyweight category on the Gold Coast in 2018 despite losing her bout to England's Lisa Whiteside.

At his first Commonwealth Games, Cyrille Tchatchet defected.

At his second, he won a silver medal.

"I'm very shocked and very happy," Tchatchet said after the weightlifting medal ceremony. "Being here now with a medal around my neck is magical."

The first time he came to Glasgow for the 2014 Games, he fled from the Cameroon team. He spent two months homeless at the other end of Britain in Brighton on England's south coast.

Five candidates remain in race for SAFF presidency

RIYADH, Aug 1: The race to become the next president of the Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF) has been narrowed down, with five candidates now competing for the position following a series of withdrawals.

The election comes after former SAFF president Yasser Al-Misheal stepped down from his role following Saudi Arabia's group-stage exit from the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The federation opened the nomination process for those seeking to contest the presidency, with the initial list featuring six candidates. According to Saudi newspaper Al Riyadiah, the nominees included former Al Ahli president Khalid Al-Ghamdi, along with Hatem Khamis, Badr Al-Ruzaiza, Yahya Al-Sharif, Dawoud Al-Muqrin and Ahmed Al-Wadie.

However, Dawoud Al-Muqrin later withdrew from the election race, while Muaid Al-Shahri, a Saudi Football Federation board member, had already pulled out earlier, leaving five candidates to compete for the top position.

The SAFF presidential elections will be held on August 30, with the successful candidate set to lead the federation until 2030.



Khalid Al-Ghamdi

Trabzonspor makes €17 million offer to sign Salah after Besiktas talks collapse

LONDON, Aug 1: Turkish club Trabzonspor has reportedly moved closer to securing the signing of Egyptian star Mohamed Salah, with negotiations said to have progressed after talks between the player and Besiktas failed to reach an agreement.

According to Turkish journalist Yagiz Sabuncuoglu and French outlet Foot Mercato, Trabzonspor has opened direct discussions with Salah's representative Ramy Abbas and submitted an official proposal for the former Liverpool forward.

The reported offer includes a two-year contract with an annual salary of €17 million, equivalent to around 994.5 million Egyptian pounds, which is higher than the package previously offered by Besiktas.

Besiktas was said to have proposed a one-year deal with an option for an additional season, while reports from the Daily Mail indicated that their offer was around €12 million per year, plus performance-related bonuses.

Trabzonspor's improved financial package has now placed it in a strong position as it looks to complete a potential move for one of football's biggest stars.



Mohamed Salah

Best of the Rest

Lopes gets red card in Shamrock game: Roberto "Pico" Lopes got a hero's welcome in Ireland after the World Cup - and a red card.

The Dublin-born Shamrock Rovers defender who helped Cape Verde reach the knockout round was sent off for a challenge on a Drogheda United opponent in stoppage time of a 0-0 draw in Ireland's top league.

"I've seen it back, I'm not sure it's a red card. I think the referee is very, very quick to do it," Rovers coach Stephen Bradley told club media.

But RTE, Ireland's national public media, noted that "his challenge on Shane Farrell was late and high." (AP)

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Denia named coach of the Czech Republic: Spanish coach Santi Denia took over the Czech Republic national team to become the first foreigner in the post.

The Czech soccer association said the 52-year-old signed a two-year contract with an option to be extended by another two years.

Czech football association head David Trunda introduced Denia at a news conference in Prague.

"We greatly appreciate that an expert with such a credit and immense experience at the international level is joining the Czech national team," Trunda said. (AP)

Vozinha wins special jersey approval in Chile

Toronto's winless streak reaches 11 after draw with NYCFC

NEW YORK, Aug 1, (AP): Djordje Mihailovic scored in the final minute of first-half stoppage time and Toronto FC earned a 1-1 draw with New York City FC at Yankee Stadium, but saw its winless streak reach 11 matches.

Nicolás Fernández scored on a penalty kick in the 9th minute to give NYCFC (7-6-5) an early lead.

The kick was awarded when Toronto (3-7-8) defender Richie Laryea picked up a yellow card for a foul on Agustín Ojeda.

It was the 13th goal for Fernández, tying him with Petar Musa of FC Dallas for the league lead. Hugo Cuypers also had 13 goals before transferring from the Chicago Fire to Club de Fútbol Monterrey.

Toronto tied it at the half when Mihailovic scored off a deflection seven minutes into stoppage time. Mihailovic has two goals in eight appearances this season.

Toronto has gone 0-5-6 during a winless run that started after a 3-2 victory over the visiting Colorado Rapids on April 4.

Matt Freese finished with four saves for NYCFC, which had 10 players out with leg injuries.

Luka Gavran saved four shots for Toronto to close out a four-match road trip.

Toronto hasn't beaten NYCFC in New York since September of

2020 and has never won at Yankee Stadium.

German midfielder Niklas Dorsch started in his debut, after signing with Toronto on Tuesday. The 28-year-old will hold down an international slot through 2030-31.

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Vozinha, the breakout Cape Verde goalkeeper who rose to global fame during the World



Toronto FC defender Richie Laryea battles for the ball with New York City FC forward Hannes Wolf during the half of an MLS soccer game against in New York. (AP)

Cup, will be allowed to display his nickname on his jersey when he joins Chilean football.

The exception was unanimously approved on Friday by the ANFP, which organizes Chile's Primera Division.

The decision required amending league regulations, which previously mandated that players wear only their surnames on their jerseys. Top executives across Chilean clubs backed the request

on behalf of the player, whose full name is Josimar José Évora Dias.

However, questions continue to mount over the goalkeeper's actual arrival. Announced a week ago as a marquee signing for Colo-Colo - Chile's most decorated club - the 40-year-old Vozinha was initially scheduled to land in Santiago on Tuesday. After visa issues delayed his travel to Thursday, he ultimately failed to board his flight, raising alarms among the club and its fanbase.

Amid growing concern, Colo-Colo director Jaime Pizarro insisted the deal was still on.

"We have been in contact with his agent as recently as a few minutes ago," Pizarro told reporters late Thursday, explaining that Vozinha requested an extension to "resolve some personal matters" that he did not elaborate on.

During the ANFP meeting, Colo-Colo president Aníbal Mosa reportedly acknowledged the contract has not yet been signed. According to details leaked to local media, being allowed to use his nickname on his shirt was one of Vozinha's conditions for accepting the deal.

Colo-Colo coach Fernando Ortiz backed Pizarro on Friday, confirming he spoke directly with the goalkeeper while remaining cautious about the transfer.

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Inter Milan's players raise the Asahi Super Dry Trophy after defeating Manchester City in a pre-season friendly match for the Hong Kong Football Festival in Hong Kong. (AP)

Sports

UEFA declares no confidence in Infantino, vows accountability for failed World Cup equity plan

FIFA president backs away from private equity deal

GENEVA, Aug 1, (AP): Successfully stopping Gianni Infantino's FIFA plan to sell World Cup profits to private investors was the first half of a high-stakes game in global soccer politics.

The second half kicked off Saturday with what seemed a clear aim of ending Infantino's decade-long presidency.

"No option should be off the table," said European soccer body UEFA, whose president Aleksander Ceferin has led the fight against Infantino in a seismic week for FIFA.

"The current FIFA leadership has not only lost UEFA's confidence but also that of many other members of the football family."

Infantino had proposed creating a \$20 billion company to run the World Cup with private investors but drew backlash that grew every day since Tuesday's announcement.

Infantino was forced to scrap the plan early Saturday after his senior adviser who sat on a White House panel resigned and Asia's soccer body joined Europe and North America in opposing it.

"Having listened carefully to all the views, it has become clear that the project has created divisions of a nature that, regardless of the level of support, are no longer in the interest of the objective set out in the first place," Infantino said in a statement on Friday. "Our purpose has always been - and will always be - to unite and improve. As a result, this proposal will not proceed."

UEFA, the governing body of European soccer, issued its blistering statement hours after FIFA announced it was withdrawing its private equity plan. "We cannot keep going on like this with secret schemes on fast-track timescales, cooked up by faceless individuals and of dubious benefit to the game," UEFA said. "We must identify those responsible and hold them to account."

"It is right that, in the coming days and weeks, UEFA will work with its associations and in close cooperation with other confederations to reflect on how this happened and devise a plan to make sure that it cannot occur again."

Norwegian soccer federation president Lise Klaveness, an elected member of the UEFA executive committee, said steps must be taken to protect the integrity of the sport.

"The entire framework of international football cooperation was unnecessarily put at risk in pursuit of individual interests rather than the best interests of the game," Klaveness said Saturday. "This has been visible to many for a long time, including those of us elected to positions intended to safeguard



In this file photo, FIFA President Gianni Infantino gestures as he meets the media at the FIFA World Cup closing press conference in Doha, Qatar. (AP)

checks and balances and provide ongoing oversight. We have to recognize that these mechanisms have not worked well enough."

The president of the Asian soccer confederation, Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, said "the future of global football must always be shaped through proper consultation, collective dialogue and respect for the established governance structures of our game."

Infantino's audacious bid fell apart after UEFA's 55-member nations agreed Thursday to boycott the World Cup and all other FIFA competitions. North America's CONCACAF and the Asian Football Confederation also said they opposed the plan.

There was also an internal revolt.

Infantino's senior adviser, Carlos Cordeiro, a former Goldman Sachs banker who represented the soccer body on the White House Task Force for the World Cup, resigned on Friday and urged other senior FIFA staff to speak out. Hours later, FIFA chief operating officer Kevin Lamour issued a statement

to The Associated Press, saying FIFA staff were deceived by Infantino's lack of openness in planning the sale over recent months and that the project must not continue.

"It is the project of one person," wrote Lamour, a longtime colleague of Infantino at both FIFA and UEFA. "Not only must this project not go ahead ... but the time has now come for football political leaders to ask themselves the right questions and make the right decisions."

Infantino had proposed spinning off FIFA's commercial businesses - including World Cups and Club World Cups for men and women - into a \$20 billion subsidiary with 20% owned by private investors.

The "anchor investor," described by FIFA, is a New York-based investment firm launched by Joshua Kushner, the younger brother of U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

A tumultuous week in international soccer is at least the third time Infantino has rocked it with an ambitious plan many in the sport saw as reckless.

But the fallout from FIFA's Kushner-backed plan is the first time UEFA has acted quickly to create momentum for removing the man who was its former long-time employee.

In 2018, Infantino pushed a secretive offer of \$25 billion from Japan's Soft-Bank to create new competitions, that posed a long-term risk to continental events for clubs and national teams.

In 2021, Infantino proposed playing World Cups every two years instead of four - an idea that also angered the International Olympic Committee where he is an elected member.

Both plans created big rifts in the sport and were eventually dropped by FIFA.

Despite the turmoil, Infantino was re-elected unopposed in 2019 and 2023. The third time shapes to be different.

Nov. 18 is the deadline for candidates to enter the next presidential contest, exactly four months ahead of the vote in Rabat, Morocco, where FIFA has its African headquarters.

FIFA statutes allow Infantino one more four-year term in office. The failed spinoff venture seemed like a way to create a commissioner-like role for Infantino beyond 2031, likely paying much more than his current annual salary and a bonus deal of more than \$6 million.

It would take 106 votes to ensure a majority in a contested election. Continents surely do not vote uniformly en bloc, but most of Europe's 55, plus Asia's 46 and CONCACAF's 35 FIFA members would be a solid base.

Al Arabi prepares for Pyramids friendly

Kuwait Club begins London camp with defeat

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

LONDON, Aug 1: Kuwait Club opened its friendly campaign during its training camp in London with a narrow 1-0 defeat against English side Milton Keynes.

Head coach Alexandre Santos rotated his squad throughout the match as he looked to evaluate players' fitness levels and readiness, while also experimenting with different tactical setups ahead of the new season.

The "White" team returned to training yesterday with double sessions in London as preparations continue for its upcoming friendlies. Kuwait Club will face Portsmouth next Wednesday before taking on Barnet the following Sunday.

The reigning league champion is preparing for the new Kuwait Premier League season, which kicks off on August 25, as it aims to defend the title it has won for five consecutive seasons. The club is also preparing for its campaign in the AFC Champions League Two.

Al Arabi will face Egyptian side Pyramids FC in a friendly match on Tuesday as part of their joint training camp in Turkey.

The game will mark Al Arabi's fourth friendly in Turkey, following a 4-0 win over Amed Spor, a 1-1 draw

with Van Spor, and a 3-1 loss to Erzurumspor.

The "Green" squad will remain in Turkey until the end of the week before traveling to India for its AFC Champions League Two playoff encounter against East Bengal in Kolkata on August 12. It will then return home to continue preparations for the Zain Premier League campaign.

The Asian Football Confederation has appointed a Tajikistan refereeing team for the match, led by referee Gulmurodi Sadullo, assisted by Hasan Karimov and Farhod Kuralov, with Nasrullo Kabirov as the fourth official.

Salmiya will begin its friendly schedule in Turkey today when it takes on Egyptian club ZED FC.

The "Sky Blues" have also confirmed further warm-up matches, facing Al Markhiya of Qatar on August 6 and Olympique Chlef of Algeria on August 10, while searching for a fourth friendly on August 14.

Kazma started its Turkey camp friendlies with a 2-2 draw against Qatari side Al Waab.

The team will next meet Saudi club Al Raed on Thursday, followed by a clash with Bahrain's Al Khaldiya on August 10, before wrapping up their friendly schedule against Olympique Chlef on August 13.



Players vie for the ball during the friendly match between Kuwait Club and Milton Keynes in London.

Best of the Rest

Fractured finger rules out Masood for 2nd test: Pakistan in-form batter Shan Masood was ruled out of the second cricket test against the West Indies due to a fractured left index finger.

Masood was the only bright batting spot in Pakistan's 90-run defeat in the first test at Trinidad when the left-hander scored a century in the first innings.

"Following a scan and clinical assessment, Shan is currently undergoing treatment from the Pakistan team medical panel," the Pakistan Cricket Board said in a statement late Thursday. (AP)

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Hezonja returns to NBA on 1-year deal with Cavs: Forward Mario Hezonja will return to the NBA for the first time in six years after signing a one-year contract with the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Hezonja has played the last four years for Real Madrid and was the Spanish League MVP after averaging 13.3 points, 4.0 rebounds and 2.4 assists this past season.

The 31-year-old from Croatia was the fifth overall pick by Orlando in the 2015 NBA draft and played five seasons for the Magic, New York Knicks and Portland Trail Blazers. He averaged 6.9 points, 3.1 rebounds and 1.3 assists. (AP)

Gulf Super Cup postponed

DOHA, Aug 1: The Gulf Football Federation has announced the postponement of the Gulf Super Cup 2026 match between Iraq's Duhok and Qatar's Al Rayyan due to the current regional circumstances.

The fixture was originally scheduled to take place on August 13, 2026, but has been delayed until a new date is confirmed.

In a statement, the federation said the match will still be held in Duhok Governorate, Iraq, as initially planned, with the rescheduled date and hosting arrangements to be revealed later in coordination with the relevant authorities.

The Gulf Super Cup, a newly launched regional competition, is part of efforts to enhance Gulf football competitions and strengthen their presence on the regional sporting calendar. The tournament is expected to generate significant interest among fans and media across the Gulf.

Kuwait Volleyball Association announces new National Teams Committee ahead of season

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: The Kuwait Volleyball Association has announced the formation of its Training and National Teams Committee for the 2026-2027 season as part of its preparations for the upcoming campaign and efforts to enhance the technical and administrative structure of the national teams.

The committee will be headed by board member Nayef Al-Fikawee, with Khaled Al-Mutairi appointed as vice-chairman and Fatima Al-Awadhi serving as secretary. The committee also includes members Nayef Al-Farhan and Faisal Al-Ajmi.

The newly formed committee will be responsible for overseeing the national teams' technical programs, organizing preparation plans and training camps, evaluating coaching staff, and developing player improvement strategies aimed at raising the standard of Kuwaiti volleyball.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's junior national volleyball team secured a convincing 3-0 victory over Qatar in a friendly match held in Cairo as part of their preparations for the second Arab Junior Volleyball Championship in Manama, Bah-



Officials talk to players during training session.

rain, from August 7-17.

The tournament will feature six teams — Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria and Jordan — with all teams competing in a

single round-robin format. The top four sides will qualify for the semi-finals.

The team began its preparations in July with local training ses-

sions before heading to Cairo for an overseas camp. Their strong display against Qatar provided the coaching staff with further confidence.