



HH Amir condolences Saudi King over royal passing



Amir receives Saudi Crown Prince's invitation to Riyadh forum



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Law against Commercial Concealment ... Brilliant

THE Law against Commercial Concealment came at the right time, as it enhances transparency, supports the economic environment, and helps to utilize national talent in the proper place.

Before the issuance of this law, the citizen holding the license was under the control of the expatriate who acted with absolute freedom over assets and banking transactions, while the citizen was content with receiving a small amount of money monthly or annually and bore all the legal risks through the 'tadmin'.

This situation was linked to procedures that burdened the citizen, especially when the license beneficiaries were granted a general power of attorney to act as they pleased. Many of them smuggled money abroad and engaged in money laundering, which damaged the reputation of Kuwait in international forums. With the issuance of such law, these actions or crimes have become a thing of the past.

Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Boodai was right when he affirmed that the decree-law protects the national economy and ensures that the benefits provided by the state reach those who deserve them, given its importance in strengthening national capabilities to manage projects without relying on others and exposing oneself to enormous risks.

In many cases, citizens ended up behind bars, simply because they granted full authority to expatriates who exploited it to commit major financial crimes and then fled from Kuwait.

This law, along with other legislation, fosters a healthier economic environment and alleviates the burden of Kuwait regarding the observations of international institutions. This, in itself, expands the freedom of financial businesses.

Yes, there are numerous observations regarding the overall performance of ministers about decisions that hinder the revitalization of the national economy. Nevertheless, this law offers many benefits for both the citizens and the state, because it grants more flexibility in dealings between citizens and those benefiting from the usufruct rights.

In this regard, the courts issued several rulings on debt instruments issued through deception, fraud or exploitation of one's need. Consequently, these debt tools were invalidated, because they were not genuine debts.

The issuance of such court rulings and the enactment of the Law against Commercial Concealment are considered the cornerstone for modernizing the law that regulates debt obligations, such as bounced checks, imposed on debtors who are unable to pay.

The improvement of the business environment, enhancement of transparency in transactions, prevention of fraud and deception, and closure of avenues for exploitation are crucial, especially since the relevant court rulings strengthened the 1980 Law, which necessitated updating.

Thus, citizens have no excuse to refrain from running their businesses directly and will be solely responsible for their actions.

As a result, there will be no opportunity for citizens to be involved in illegal acts committed without their knowledge.

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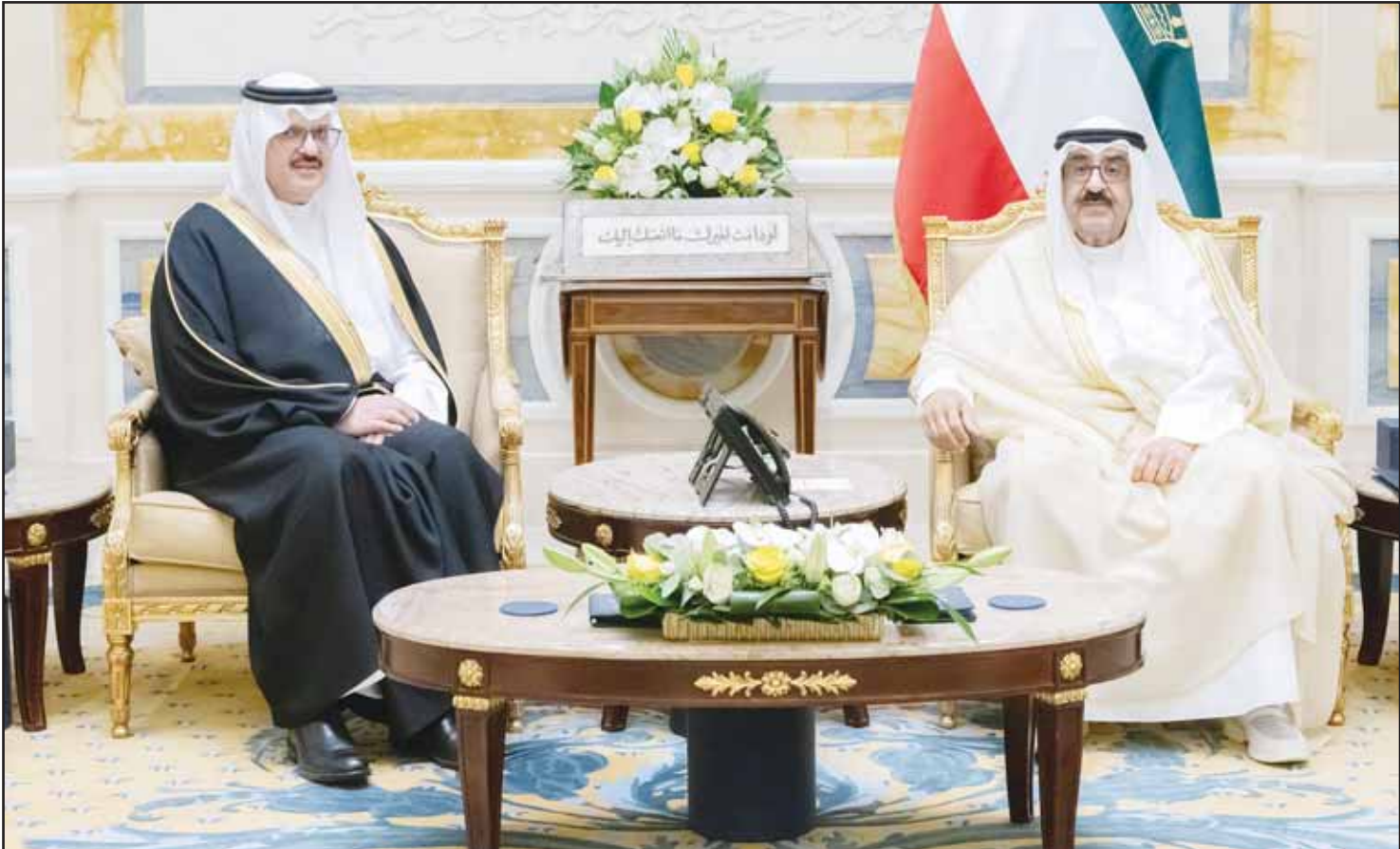
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HH the Amir receives Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, received a written message from Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud inviting him to attend the 10th Future Investment Initiative Forum in Riyadh from October 26 to 29, 2026.

The message was delivered to His Highness by Saudi Ambassador to Ku-

wait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud during a reception at Bayan Palace, reflecting the close ties and longstanding cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Director of His Highness the Amir's Office Jamal Al-Thayab, and Amiri Diwan Undersecretary Sheikh Abdulaziz Mishal Al-Sabah.

Over-70 workers face exit from Kuwait co-op sector

Employees assured full benefits

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Ministry of Social Affairs issued a circular to all cooperative societies and unions regarding the regulation of the status of employees who are above 70 years old.

Sources from the ministry stated that the circular instructs cooperative societies to quickly compile a list of employees over 70 years of age and to take the necessary measures to terminate their services in

accordance with the relevant laws, regulations and decisions, while ensuring the disbursement of their financial dues including their indemnity.

Sources said the ministry obligated the cooperative societies to submit a statement containing the names of the employees whose services will be terminated within a period not exceeding 30 days from the date of the issuance of the circular.

Sources pointed out that compliance with the circular is within the framework of supporting job localization plans, empowering national talent, and raising the efficiency and sustainability of work in cooperative societies in the interest of the public.

Cabinet reviews school readiness

36 years of resilience, one unshaken Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Kuwait's Cabinet on Tuesday reaffirmed that the 36th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion remains a defining chapter in the nation's history, honoring the sacrifices of the Kuwaiti people, paying tribute to the country's leaders and martyrs.

This came in the Cabinet's weekly meeting, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Following the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereedah Al-Maousherji said the Cabinet recalled with deep sorrow the

treacherous crime committed by the former Iraqi regime at dawn on August 2, 1990.

He said that the Cabinet stressed that the invasion will forever remain a testament to Kuwait's national unity and a landmark event through which successive generations remember the great sacrifices made by Kuwaitis in defense of their homeland and sovereignty.

It also praised the pivotal roles played by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the late Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the

Continued on Page 5



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

156 scam reports in July trigger Kuwait warning

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) announced that it handled 156 reports related to fraud and scams carried out through suspicious messages, links, and calls during July 2026, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to statistics released by CITRA, websites ranked first in the number of reports with 54 cases, followed by phone calls with 52 reports, while social media accounts accounted for 24 reports. WhatsApp received approximately 26 reports during the same period.

CITRA emphasized the importance of immediately reporting any suspicious messages, links, or calls. It also urged users not to share personal or banking information with untrusted parties and to verify the identity of anyone requesting private information.



Kuwait's Minister of Oil receives Kyrgyzstan's Ambassador to Kuwait.

Kuwait eyes new energy 'frontiers'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Oil Tariq Al-Roumi said on Monday that the State of Kuwait, represented by its oil sector, boasts extensive expertise across various fields of the oil industry.

The minister, who doubles as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), made the statement while welcoming Kyrgyzstan's Ambassador to Kuwait Nurlan Tokobaev.

He underlined Kuwait's commitment to making use of this expertise to promote international cooperation and

Continued on Page 5

Day by Day

A WISE man once said, "If you wish to live a peaceful life, learn wisdom from the elderly, purity from the hearts of children, dignity from honorable people, and patience from the poor."

It seems this wise man experienced life with deep awareness and understood what to embrace and what to leave behind. He lived a calm and contented life, far from worry and sorrow.

Are there people like him among us today? Some know nothing but complaining, gossiping, stinginess, and envy, as if they were destined to live forever.

.... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Traffic campaign nets 24,180 violations, wanted individuals

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The General Traffic Department at the Interior Ministry continued its traffic and security campaigns in various governorates from July 27 to Aug 1.

These campaigns resulted in the issuance of 24,180 traffic violation citations, detention of 20 individuals at traffic police stations, referral of six juveniles to the Juvenile Prosecution, and impoundment of 237 vehicles and three motorcycles

for serious traffic violations.

The Operations Department handled 2,443 traffic reports, including 985 collisions and 171 accidents resulting in injuries.

Three individuals were arrested on suspicion of possessing narcotics and were referred to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD).

One person was apprehended for failure to present valid identification documents, along with 20 individuals who violated the Residency

Continued on Page 5



8

Gulf Bank holds its first half 2026 earnings webcast



8

Warba delegation meets Governor of Farwaniya to examine community development initiatives



10

KFH launches sixth training program in cooperation with KSH



Fajr	03:43	Asr	15:30
Sunrise ..	05:10	Maghrib ..	18:38
Zohr	11:54	Isha	20:05

KFF sheds light on safety measures as use of electrical vehicles grows



KUNA photos

Kuwait Fire Force organized a seminar in cooperation with the Kuwait Society for Protection from Fire Hazards, titled “Global Trends in Ensuring the Safety of Electric Vehicles,” to review the latest standards and best practices related to electric vehicle safety.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) organized a seminar on Tuesday, in cooperation with the Kuwait Society for Protection from Fire Hazards, titled “Global Trends in Ensuring the Safety of Electric Vehicles,” to review the latest standards and best practices related to electric vehicle safety.

The Fire Force said in a statement that the seminar featured presentations by the society’s honorary member and advisor, retired Lieutenant General Youssef Al-Ansari, and the society’s chairman, Engineer Adel

Al-Nassar.

The speakers stressed that promoting a culture of fire prevention, raising public awareness and providing training across various sectors are key pillars for enhancing safety.

They noted that the growing use of electric vehicles requires the implementation of specialized safety requirements covering charging operations, storage, and the handling of accidents and fires to ensure the highest levels of protection.

They added that the seminar aimed to keep pace with the rapid expansion of electric vehicle use by reviewing the latest international safety standards, raising awareness of potential risks and preventive measures, and highlighting safety requirements for charging stations.

The seminar also discussed ways to strengthen cooperation among government agencies, the private sector and academic institutions to support the transition to sustainable transportation while meeting safety requirements and protecting lives and property.



KUNA photo

Kuwait Ambassador to the Republic of Kenya Anas Maarefi presented his credentials as Kuwait’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Zainab Hawa Bangura.

Kuwait pledges support for UNEP, UN-Habitat programs

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Kuwait Ambassador to the Republic of Kenya Anas Maarefi presented on Tuesday his credentials as Kuwait’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Zainab Hawa Bangura.

The Kuwaiti Embassy in Nairobi said in a statement that Ambassador Maarefi conveyed to the UN official the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, along with their wishes of good health and well-being.

Ambassador Maarefi praised the distinguished relations between the State of Kuwait and the United Nations over the past six decades, recalling the historic and pivotal role played by the organization in the liberation of Kuwait from the brutal Iraqi invasion.

He affirmed Kuwait’s commitment to cooperation with the United Nations to enhance areas of collaboration that contribute to strengthening bilateral relations with the UN Environment Programme and the UN Human Settlements Programme, as well as the partnership and support provided by Kuwait to both programs.

For her part, the UN official conveyed her sincere greetings to Kuwait’s leadership and people, expressing her keenness to further strengthen bilateral relations across various fields and wishing Ambassador Maarefi success in carrying out his duties.

Custody pulled from mom advertising kids on media

Move negatively affects their studies, life: judge

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Dr. Khaled Al-Mandeel, revoked the custody of two children from their mother and granted custody to their father.

The decision was issued after the court determined that the mother neglected her duties to take care of her children, and even used the children in advertisements on social media platforms, which negatively affected their academic performance.

Attorney Houra Al-Habib, Director of the Child Center at the Kuwaiti Lawyers Association,



Hawra Al-Habib

stated that the ruling is based on the principle of considering the best interest of the children and affirms that custody is a legal responsibility.

She asserted that using children in advertisements or commercial content, if it affects their



Dr. Al-Mandeel

education or healthy development, warrants judicial intervention to protect them and their rights.

In its reasoning, the court affirmed that custody neither terminates parental authority nor negates the educational role of the father, stressing that good upbringing is made possible through cooperation between the custodian and the guardian to achieve the best interests of the children.

It added that Child Rights Law No. 21/2015 guarantees the protection of the child from neglect and exploitation, and that the mere appearance of the child in an advertisement is not considered commercial exploitation in itself, but the intensity of advertising activity, along with a clear decline in academic performance and the absence of family supervision, are evidence of breach of custody duties.

Total violations in July exceed 1,397

212 shops get citations for not using Arabic lingo

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The periodic statistics issued by the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry revealed that 1,397 violations were recorded in July.

Violations uncovered during routine inspection tours conducted by the control teams constituted the largest number with 1,266 or 90.6 percent of the total violations, while the number of consumer complaint reports reached 131

or 9.4 percent.

The statistics showed that the violations are distributed to 31 categories, with violations of regulations governing advertising data, contracts and invoices topping the list.

A total of 212 violations were recorded for failure to use the Arabic language, 145 violations related to pricing and commercial fraud and failure to display prices, and 90 violations related to deception and fraud about the type, origin, composition and expiration date of goods.

The violations include non-compliance

with regulations for exchanging and returning goods, in addition to violations related to commercial licenses and mandatory goods and services data.

The ministry recorded 71 violations for the lack of a visible announcement in Arabic explaining the way to exchange and return sold items, 64 violations for practicing commercial activities without obtaining a license, and 57 violations related to the failure of suppliers to display mandatory data in Arabic on the packaging of goods or their containers or in their display areas.

MEW seeks improvement, addition to water networks

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) approved the request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to float a tender for improvements and additions to the water networks throughout the country.

CAPT set Aug 30 as the closing date for receiving bids, and then the bids submitted by interested companies will be opened and referred to the ministry for review and

the preparation of a technical recommendation.

The project aims to deliver water to customers who applied for a connection or to create connections between water lines to improve the efficiency of the water networks. It includes excavation work and the installation of water pipes and their fittings along water lines and their associated infrastructure.

Moreover, the ministry intends to issue two tenders for the supply, installation and

operation of fault detection devices, specifically for overhead lines in the northern and southern areas. It included these two tenders in its plan for the current fiscal year to achieve several objectives, particularly the modernization and development of the electricity network in terms of fault management. It explained that installing the devices will help pinpoint fault locations and reduce time and effort, thus, assisting emergency teams in taking the necessary technical action as quickly as possible.

PACA, MoIA deliberate on proposals to cut Hajj costs

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Chairman of the Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) Sheikh Eng. Hamoud Al-Mubarak recently held a coordination meeting with acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs Dr. Sulaiman Al-Suwailem and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways Captain Abdulmohsen Al-Fuqaan, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the meeting, they discussed early preparations and arrangements for the upcoming Hajj season, mechanisms for organizing the departure and arrival of pilgrims through Kuwait International Airport, and strengthening coordination among the relevant authorities to



Al-Sabah



Dr Al-Suwailem

ensure smooth procedures and provide the necessary facilities for the pilgrims.

They also deliberated on several proposals to reduce Hajj travel costs, which will improve the quality of services provided to pilgrims and ease their travel procedures.

Man acquitted of robbing his stepmother, damaging cams

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Third Circuit of the Criminal Court acquitted a defendant of stealing a safe containing gold jewelry, other valuables and official documents, as well as breaking into the house of his stepmother at night and damaging security cameras and doors, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendant with the aforementioned

offenses and requested the court to impose punishment according to the Penal Code.

Attorney Ayed Al-Rashidi, lawyer of the accused, argued in court about the absence of the elements of the crime in the acts attributed to him and that the evidence was insufficient for conviction, thereby, leading to the acquittal of his client.

Other Voices

Historical accuracy in major, influential films

By Ahmad alsarraf

Historical films are not always recognized for their historical accuracy. Many, particularly big-budget productions, contain various noticeable errors, ranging from minor details to significant inaccuracies. Among the most famous examples are Braveheart, Titanic, 300, U-571, and Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, as well as well-known historical mistakes in popular films such as Pretty Woman and The Graduate.

In the widely acclaimed film Braveheart, the characters were depicted wearing costumes that did not belong to the historical period portrayed. The film also contained inaccuracies regarding both the characters and events. Titanic, which is based on a true story, also included several inaccuracies, including the portrayal of some crew members in ways that differed from historical accounts. A dialogue also referred to an artificial lake in Chicago, despite the fact that it was created after the ship had sunk.

U-571 was criticized for attributing a pivotal role in breaking the Enigma code during World War II to the Americans, while his-

torical accounts point to the British officer Alan Noring as the key figure. I previously wrote about his tragic fate, despite the fact that his work helped save the lives of tens of thousands of Allied soldiers.



alsarraf

One of the notable errors in Once Upon a Time in Hollywood is the mention of the Boeing 747 during a period that does not align with its entry into commercial service.

One of the most famous errors in Pretty Woman is the transformation of the croissant into a pancake between consecutive scenes. Sometimes drama requires these kinds of errors. Filmmakers may prioritize emotional impact or the strength of a scene over complete historical accuracy. In some cases, the reason is production pressure or reliance on historical stereotypes rather than detailed research. In historical films specifically, artis-

tic freedom may be used to simplify facts or intensify events, but this can result in a clear distortion of the historical picture.

There are also technical and chronological errors, such as the appearance of an airplane, car, or tool that did not yet exist during the period in which the film’s events take place. In some cases, even small details are overlooked, such as a heroine’s hand changing position on her friend’s shoulder or on a table from one shot to the next.

These errors often become widely known after the films are viewed by millions of people. The most criticized type of mistake occurs when a film moves from “drawing inspiration from history” to rewriting historical events.

Among the Arab films considered to contain historical inaccuracies are Wa Islamah, Saladin, Antar ibn Shaddad, and The Message. Omar Mukhtar also contained some inaccuracies and dramatic details that differed from historical accounts, although it was a good film in general.



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Need to study pros and cons of Iran aggression

"THE Iranian aggression against Kuwait and the Gulf states requires a careful study of the lessons learned, along with an analysis of the positions and opinions that have emerged, raising many legitimate questions and objective discussions," columnist **Khaled Ahmed Al-Tarrah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Some analysts and former Arab officials, including former Secretary-General of the Arab League Amr Moussa, have linked the events in the region to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, placing greater emphasis on the Palestinian issue than on the Iranian aggression that targeted civilian and vital infrastructure, including power plants, water facilities, and air and land ports in the Gulf states.



Dr. Khaled Al-Tarrah

"Undoubtedly, the Arab-Israeli conflict is a long-standing historical and political struggle. The tragic practices carried out by the occupying authorities against the Palestinian people cannot be denied. However, this should not overshadow another reality - the Iranian aggression against the Gulf states represents a serious crime and a direct attack on the region's countries, their people, and their interests.

"There is a connection between these rigid positions, their influence over a segment of the Arab political mindset, and the recurring tendency to invoke the "Zionist" project and link it to the fate of the Gulf region, even during these difficult times when the region is witnessing Iranian aggression targeting its countries and peoples.

"This emotional attachment to the Palestinian cause has extended to some Kuwaiti voices and figures. Instead of focusing on condemning and denouncing the Iranian aggression, Israel has been brought into discussions about the catastrophic circumstances facing the Gulf states, with attention directed toward the extent to which the occupation authorities may benefit from the current situation. This has become, intentionally or unintentionally, an attempt to justify or support the Iranian position in its conflict with the United States.

"These shameful stances and the ambiguous circumstances surrounding them are not new to the Kuwaiti scene; rather, they have been repeated on previous occasions, even before the Iranian aggression. A Kuwaiti daily newspaper previously distorted the text of a speech delivered on behalf of the late Amir, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad (May God have mercy on him), by His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (May God protect him), who was then Crown Prince, during the Cairo Summit in October 2023. An editor of Palestinian origin, who was known for his affiliation with Hamas, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, in cooperation with another Arab editor, deliberately altered the speech by replacing the phrase "occupation authorities" with the word "Zionism."

"The matter did not end there. This political zeal and bias reached the level of professional misconduct, as evidenced by the publication of two different headlines for the same story - one on the front page and another, printed in red on an inside page, containing a deliberate alteration that served personal agendas and political and ideological affiliations.

"It is unfortunate that the Ministry of Information is not fully carrying out its oversight role, which requires reviewing published material, analyzing its content, and comparing it with official texts. As a result, such violations go unchecked and without accountability. Given the Iranian aggression we are witnessing, I do not rule out the possibility that some news and media content may continue to be presented in this manner.

"We are living under the circumstances of a war imposed by Iranian aggression against the Gulf Arab states. Those who fail to recognize this reality must act responsibly and refrain from irresponsible commentary on social media or from reviving historical conflicts that have no relevance to the current situation. This reality must be addressed with awareness and responsibility, far removed from slogans and emotional reactions."

Also:

"Many domestic workers come from backgrounds with limited access to education and food safety awareness. As a result, some may not pay sufficient attention to the expiration dates of food and medicines. This highlights the need for regular inspection campaigns targeting food storage areas to remove expired or soon-to-expire products," Kuwaiti writer **Zaid Al-Jalawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Some preserved foods do not have expiration dates, while others are simply repackaged, making it difficult to determine when they may spoil. Workers continue to use these expired products, especially in the preparation of sweets, which have increasingly become more focused on decoration than serving as a meal. The problem is that people consume these foods, some of which may be spoiled, placing an additional burden on the Ministry of Health's budget.

"In the past, it was uncommon for patients to be transferred from clinics to major hospitals because illnesses were much less prevalent. This was because people at that time relied less on domestic workers, and restaurants were not as widespread as they are today. One

person recounted that his child suffered from a mild fever that continued even after taking antibiotics. He said he monitored his child's hygiene and discovered the presence of bacteria and fungi in the bottle and feeding cup, while the mother was not concerned.

"While the wife is responsible for managing household affairs, the husband also carries responsibility for the home and family. This article is intended to encourage parents to pay closer attention to their children's health and take greater care in protecting themselves and their families.

"We ask God to bless us with continued good health, but we must also do our part to preserve it. I recommend installing security cameras in kitchens, regularly checking bottled water and the expiration dates of stored food, and maintaining proper hygiene practices. You are responsible for the condition of your kitchens, not municipal inspectors. It is essential to sanitize refrigerators regularly before restocking them with food. I hope the Kuwait Municipality will organize awareness campaigns and pilot programs to promote proper food handling and encourage the reporting of health violations in restaurants."

□ □ □

"Kuwait has recently witnessed significant government efforts to restore order to public life through the firm enforcement of laws and campaigns to remove encroachments on state property," Kuwaiti writer **Sultan Musaad Al-Jazzaf** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"These are important reform measures that deserve recognition and support, given their direct role in strengthening the rule of law, maintaining public order, and improving the urban environment in residential areas.

"The campaign to remove encroachments represents a bold and necessary reform initiative. Any meaningful development process must begin with organizing public spaces, and restoring order to public facilities and properties. Alongside these efforts, the government should implement major development projects, including upgrading infrastructure in residential areas, improving road networks, expanding fiber optic networks, and implementing other projects that enhance public services and improve the quality of life for citizens.

"The success of these development projects requires an organized environment that respects the law and protects public property. In recent years, some residential areas have witnessed various forms of disorder and encroachment on state property, including practices that inconvenience neighbors and users of public facilities, such as erecting tents beyond property boundaries and the unauthorized occupation of public spaces.

"Public areas surrounding residences have also been affected by the blocking of service corridors with barriers, neglected gardens, and other unauthorized structures. In addition, untrimmed trees and haphazard developments have diminished the appearance of residential neighborhoods and negatively affected the overall urban landscape. The campaign to remove encroachments was launched to put an end to the violations and disorder that have spread in some areas, with the aim of preserving the appearance of residential neighborhoods and restoring public order.

"However, this campaign should not be temporary, as some previous campaigns have been. It should continue on a permanent and systematic basis through consistent enforcement, regular inspections, and the application of penalties to all violators without exception. Any relaxation in enforcing the law risks the return of violations and disorder. Sustained oversight reinforces respect for the law and helps prevent future encroachments.



Sultan Al-Jazzaf

"I also urge Kuwait Municipality to continue strengthening its efforts to improve public cleanliness, with greater attention to the organization of waste collection, including the placement of garbage containers and the efficiency of waste management in residential and commercial areas. The daily sight of garbage bags scattered around waste containers creates an environment that attracts stray cats, rodents, and insects, while also detracting from the overall appearance of residential and commercial areas.

"Some investment areas experience the daily accumulation of large quantities of waste, a situation that is inconsistent with the urban and developmental progress the country seeks to achieve. Many countries have successfully addressed this issue by establishing designated times for waste disposal and imposing fines on violators. Maintaining public order and cleanliness is a shared responsibility between the state and its citizens. While the government has taken serious and decisive steps to restore order, the success and sustainability of these efforts depend on the cooperation of everyone and their commitment to complying with the law.

"A clean and organized nation is not the responsibility of a single institution, but the result of a society that values respect for the law and recognizes that civic responsibility is reflected in everyday conduct."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal inspects the ministry's new headquarters in the Kaifan area.



KUNA photos

MoE to modernize, boost performance

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal on Monday inspected the ministry's new headquarters in the Kaifan area, checking facility readiness and tracking progress on the phased relocation of ministry departments.

Speaking to KUNA, Al-Jalal called the move a key step toward modernizing the ministry's work environment, boosting performance, and improving services for students and visitors. He praised the teams

tasked with equipping the building and completing its technical, administrative, and organizational setup.

The relocation will roll out in stages under an organized plan that began with the Scholarships' Affairs Follow-up Department, with other departments to follow in sequence to avoid disrupting services. Al-Jalal stressed the need for a modern, integrated workplace that supports staff, speeds up transactions, and raises service quality.

During the visit, he reviewed operations at the Scholarships' Affairs Follow-up Department, which has already begun work from the new site. The department currently handles student affairs and coordinates directly with Kuwait's cultural offices abroad; in the next phase, it will become a consolidated hub for tracking scholarship students—aimed at improving follow-up efficiency, accelerating case resolution, and strengthening support for beneficiaries.

2 Asian expats caught selling revenue stamps at half price

CID busts vice den manufacturing fake stamps

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The General Department of Criminal Investigation apprehended two Asian expatriates on Tuesday for producing counterfeit stamps in a room in Hawally, reports Al-Anba daily.

A raid on the room resulted in the seizure of quantities of counterfeit stamps ready for distribution, along with printing materials and equipment used in their production.

According to security sources, investigations are underway to identify the suspects' accomplices who were involved in

distributing the counterfeit stamps to patients who requested cleaning workers to place stamps on their official documents.

Detectives are expected to refer the two main suspects, who were involved in manufacturing the counterfeit stamps, to the Public Prosecution, while the cleaning workers involved in distributing them will be subject to deportation procedures.

A security source explained that detectives received information about the circulation of counterfeit stamps within government health facilities. Based on this information, they apprehended a worker who had taken advantage of a patient in a wheelchair by affixing a counterfeit stamp

to his official documents.

During questioning, the worker revealed that two expatriates were supplying him with the counterfeit stamps at half their original value. A KD 10 stamp, for example, was sold to the worker for KD 5, while a KD 5 stamp was sold for KD 2.

Detectives were able to locate the expatriates' residence, leading to a raid on the room where the two Asian men were arrested along with the tools and materials used in producing the counterfeit stamps. The suspects confessed to counterfeiting the stamps and selling them to several cleaning workers.

Young woman suspected of hiding truth

Mol probes as foul play suspected in fall, coma

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Ministry of Interior launched an investigation into a young woman's claim that her father's fall from a bed resulted in him suffering critical injuries, falling into a coma, and being admitted to the intensive care unit of a hospital, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, the circumstances surrounding the incident were considered unconvincing by authorities, particu-

larly after examining the scene, which raised doubts about the credibility of her account. They suspect possible foul play and believe the young woman may be attempting to conceal the circumstances that led to the expatriate's condition.

The administration of a government hospital notified the Ministry of Interior's Operations Room of the arrival of a Syrian expatriate in his fifties who was suffering

from a coma after an alleged fall from a height.

Security personnel went to the hospital, where the expatriate's daughter reported that her father had fallen from the bed and that she was alerted by his cries for help, prompting her to take him to the hospital.

The sources confirmed that the investigation is ongoing to determine the actual cause of the father's injuries.

23 suspects nabbed in 12 separate drug raids

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Interior announced on Tuesday that the General Department for Drug Control had arrested 23 suspects in 12 separate drug-related cases involving narcotics and psychotropic substances intended for trafficking and personal use.

The ministry said in a press statement that the arrests followed intensive surveillance and investigation operations, which led to the seizure of various quantities of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, in addition to precision scales, live ammunition, cash believed to be proceeds from drug trafficking, and bags used to package narcotics.

It added that the operation was part of the ministry's ongoing security efforts and intensified campaigns to combat drug trafficking.

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

The ministry reaffirmed its commitment to continuing intensive security operations to pursue drug traffickers and protect society from the dangers of narcotics, stressing that it will firmly enforce the law against anyone involved in trafficking, promoting, possessing, consuming or engaging in any activity related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

PAFN raids home found handling, cooking food

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) has intensified its inspection of food establishments in different parts of the country.

The Farwaniya Governorate Inspection Department at PAFN, in cooperation with the Farwaniya Criminal Investigation Department, raided a residence being used as an illegal food processing and distribution center, in response to a report in this regard.

The raid resulted in the issuance of a violation report detailing several infractions like operating a food establishment without a health license, hiring a worker without a health certificate to handle food, and non-compliance with technical and health regulations.

PAFN warned that using private residences as venues for trading or manufacturing food is a violation of Law No. 112/2013 on food and its executive regulations.

In addition, PAFN conducted intensive inspection tours in meat shops at Mubarakiya Market to guarantee the safety of the meat for sale and the establishments' adherence to health regulations and standards. PAFN confirmed that all slaughtered animals are inspected at official slaughterhouses under the supervision of veterinarians.

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PAAET nods pay transfers

Vacate homes by Sept 1, East Taima citizens told

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) notified beneficiaries of government-owned housing in East Taima that they must vacate their homes by September 1, reports Al-Jarida daily.

PAHW sent notifications to 509 vacant plot owners through the Sahel app. The message informed the concerned individuals that PAHW had issued a decision to terminate their lease contracts.

PAHW's decision comes as part of the implementation of Decree Law No. 83/2025, which repealed Article 29-bis of the Housing Welfare Law, also known as the "those who sold their houses" law. The article was canceled in July 2025 and published in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-youm".

PAAET nods pay transfers: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), represented by the Deanship of Student Affairs, announced the start of accepting salary transfer forms for eligible college students for the 2025/2026 summer semester who have not previously registered their bank account details with the Deanship, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Applications will be accepted starting Monday , August 3 and will continue until August 31.

The Deanship emphasized that the merit-based award will not be paid retroactively to any student who fails to submit the salary transfer form within the specified deadline.

It stressed that submitting the salary transfer form is a requirement to complete the award disbursement procedures for eligible students who have not previously provided their bank details.

Registration opens: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs (MoIA) announced the opening of registration for citizens interested in taking the written examination for religious positions, including imam and preacher, as well as imam and muezzin (caller to prayer), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Applications will be received at the Imam and Mu-ezzin Training Center in Riggae during official working hours, from 8:30am to 12:30pm. Registration will remain open until September 30, 2026.

The ministry urged those interested in these positions to submit their applications within the specified registration period.

Meanwhile, the acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dr. Eng. Sulaiman Al-Suwailem, apologized for not receiving visitors this week.

Kuwait Shooting Club, Police Union ink cooperation protocol



Kuwait Shooting Club Chairman Eng. Duaij Al-Otaibi and Police Sports Union Chairman Brig. Gen. Mubarak Al-Yousef Al-Sabah signing the protocol and officials after the protocol signing.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Kuwait Shooting Club Chairman Eng. Duaij Al-Otaibi said Tuesday that signing a cooperation protocol with the Police Sports Union marked an important step to support shooting sport and strengthen the development of national shooters.

Al-Otaibi said the protocol aims to expand cooperation by providing training facilities for Interior Ministry personnel, raising shooters' technical standards, and selecting outstanding athletes to join Kuwait's national teams for regional and international competitions.

He noted that a similar partnership with the Na-

tional Guard, launched in 2011, had produced several national team shooters who achieved regional and international success, expressing hope for similar results from Interior Ministry personnel.

He also thanked First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah and Ministry officials for supporting sports activities.

Police Sports Union Chairman Brig. Gen. Mubarak Al-Yousef Al-Sabah praised the Shooting Club's efforts, saying the protocol reflects the Interior Ministry leadership's commitment to supporting Kuwait's shooting sport.

He said the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex ranks among the world's leading shooting facilities, offering advanced ranges, modern equipment, and experienced coaches that provide an ideal training environment.

He added that the protocol would support the establishment and development of police shooting ranges, enhance infrastructure, and improve the skills of Interior Ministry personnel in line with the highest technical standards.

The Kuwait Shooting Club hosted the signing ceremony on Monday in the presence of officials from both sides.

Kuwait slams Israel's Gaza atrocities & Pakistan blast

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned the continued violations committed by Israeli occupation forces in the Gaza Strip, particularly attacks targeting civilians and healthcare facilities, causing casualties including women and children, in breach of international and humanitarian law.

The ministry said Tuesday the continued violations constitute a breach of the ceasefire agreement, undermine efforts by mediating countries and concerned parties to implement its subsequent phases, and further deepen the suffering endured by civil-

ians across Gaza.

Kuwait called on the international community to uphold its responsibilities by protecting civilians, humanitarian workers and medical facilities, ensuring unimpeded humanitarian aid access, and working toward a permanent ceasefire to end the humanitarian suffering in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Kuwait condemned on Tuesday the bombing targeting a police station in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, resulting in the death and injury of a number of police personnel and civilians.



Kuwait's Ambassador to the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah presents his credentials to OPCW Director-General Sabrina Dallafor at the organization's headquarters in The Hague.

Kuwait reaffirms commitment to strengthen ties with OPCW

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah presented his credentials on Tuesday to OPCW Director-General Sabrina Dallafor at the organization's headquarters in The Hague.

The Kuwaiti Embassy said in a press statement that Ambassador Al-Jarallah conveyed Kuwait's congratulations to the Director-General on assuming her new duties, reaffirming Kuwait's commitment

to strengthening cooperation with the organization and supporting its efforts to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention in a manner that contributes to enhancing international peace and security.

The two sides also reviewed ways to further develop bilateral cooperation.

For her part, Dallafor expressed appreciation for Kuwait's constructive role within the organization and voiced her aspiration to continue cooperation and coordination with Kuwait during the coming period.

Criteria set for bonus aptness

2 years job mandatory: MoE

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Minister of Education, Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, issued a decision outlining the regulations for granting the excellent performance bonus to employees in institutes, schools, and kindergartens for the academic year 2025/2026, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Ministry of Education explained that the decision specifies the conditions for granting the excellent performance allowance to employees covered by Civil Service Commission (CSC) Resolution No. 5/1980 regarding periodic leave for the academic year 2025/2026.

The eligibility criteria include the requirement that the employee must have completed two years of service with the Ministry of Education or any other government entity. This applies to employees transferred to the ministry, seconded to other entities, or appointed on or before September 18, 2024.

The employee must also have received an "Excellent" performance evaluation for the relevant year (2025/2026) and must not have been subject to any disciplinary penalties during that year, unless those penalties have been removed in accordance with the



Al-Tabtabaei

provisions of the Civil Service Law and Regulations or canceled by a final court ruling.

The employee's actual working days during the eligibility year must not be less than the percentage specified in Civil Service Council Resolution No. 43/2016, which is set at 70 percent. This is equivalent to 128 days for kindergarten employees, 131 days for primary and intermediate school employees, 141 days for secondary school employees, and 144 days for technical supervisors.

The decision further stipulated the exclusion of periods of absence from work, suspension, secondment, full-time leave of all types and designations, official missions, and all types and durations of leave. Official holidays, Fridays, and rest days are also excluded, with the exception of sick leave taken during hospitalization within the eligibility year.

The decision included several additional regulations, including treating employees who are reappointed or hired under contracts as new employees when calculating the two-year period required for eligibility.

The eligibility of employees referred to the Legal Affairs Department for the excellent performance bonus will be determined immediately after the completion of the investigation and the issuance of its findings.

The General Directorate of Financial Affairs will retain bonus funds in trust accounts for two months to allow for appeals and for six months for employees referred for investigation. The decision also grants employees who are deemed ineligible for the bonus the right to submit an appeal electronically within 60 days through the Ministry of Education's website.

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Continued from Page 1

36 years

late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in leading efforts that culminated in the liberation of Kuwait from the occupation.

The Cabinet also expressed pride in the resilience of the Kuwaiti people and their heroic sacrifices in confronting the Iraqi aggression.

It also renewed Kuwait's profound appreciation and gratitude to all brotherly and friendly countries that contributed to the liberation of Kuwait and the restoration of its legitimate sovereignty.

On the other hand, the Cabinet strongly condemned the continued Iranian attacks targeting Kuwait, describing the drone strikes on vital facilities, including a government installation in northern Kuwait and civilian vehicles on Bubiyan Island, as a flagrant violation of the country's sovereignty, a direct threat to its security and stability, and a serious breach of international law, the UN Charter, principles of good neighborliness and UN Security Council Resolution 2817.

The Cabinet affirmed that the continued attacks represent a dangerous escalation reflecting a hostile approach that cannot be justified or accepted, warning that such actions undermine regional security and stability while further heightening tensions. It reiterated Kuwait's inherent and legitimate right to take all necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty, security, national interests, resources and the safety of citizens and residents.

The Cabinet also condemned attacks carried out by Iran-backed militias in Iraq against Saudi Arabia, including the attempted drone strike on oil facilities in the Kingdom's Eastern Province last week, describing the assault as a blatant violation of Saudi sovereignty and a threat to its security and territorial integrity.

It renewed Kuwait's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and support for all measures taken to protect its security, sovereignty, interests and resources, including its legitimate right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, stressing that Saudi Arabia's security is an integral part of the security of Kuwait and the GCC states.

The Cabinet further renewed its condemnation of the recent Iranian missile attack targeting Jordan, describing it as a flagrant violation of the Kingdom's sovereignty and territorial integrity and a threat to regional security and stability.

It reaffirmed Kuwait's full support for Jordan and all measures it takes to preserve its security and sovereignty while calling for an end to such attacks and respect for international law and principles of good neighborliness.

The Cabinet also strongly condemned the attack on Egypt involving a drone strike that ignited fires aboard two vessels at Damietta Port last week, reaffirming Kuwait's full solidarity with Egypt and support for all measures taken to

safeguard its sovereignty, security and national interests.

During the meeting, Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet on the latest regional military developments following the recent Iranian attacks against Kuwait, affirming the armed forces' continued readiness to carry out their duties efficiently.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also briefed the Cabinet on the Foreign Ministry's diplomatic efforts and Kuwait's missions abroad to address regional and international developments.

He informed ministers of the outcomes of his official visit to Islamabad last Wednesday, where he met Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, senior ministers and top officials.

During the meetings, Sheikh Jarrah conveyed greetings from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, 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 to Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The discussions reviewed the long-standing relations between Kuwait and Pakistan, explored ways to strengthen cooperation across various fields and addressed regional developments and efforts aimed at reducing tensions and promoting security and stability.

Sheikh Jarrah expressed Kuwait's appreciation for Pakistan's active diplomatic role in supporting regional security and discussed bilateral cooperation and regional issues with Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir.

The Cabinet also reviewed a presentation by Education Minister Sayed Jalal Sayed Abdulmohsen Al-Tabtabaei on preparations for the 2026/2027 academic year.

The Cabinet also reviewed the report of the Ministerial Committee for Public Services, including the Public Authority for Housing Welfare's progress report on government agencies' implementation of infrastructure and public services for housing projects during the periods June-December 2025 and January-June 2026.

The Cabinet tasked the authority with continuing coordination to overcome obstacles affecting housing services and submitting a semiannual report detailing implementation progress and each entity's level of commitment.

It also decided that "To Whom It May Concern" certificates for building permits would not be issued to the Kuwait Municipality and the Credit Bank until infrastructure and essential services in residential areas are fully completed.

The Cabinet further reviewed the government's Environmental Sustainability Reporting Initiative, which aims to estab-

lish a unified framework requiring government entities to issue annual environmental performance reports in line with Kuwait's international environmental and climate commitments.

It tasked Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs Dr. Reem Ghazi Al-Fulaij, who oversees the Environment Public Authority, with coordinating implementation of the initiative, following up on government entities' compliance and submitting an annual report to the Cabinet outlining progress, institutional performance and recommendations.

The Cabinet also approved several items on its agenda and referred others to the relevant ministerial committees for further study and recommendations.

Traffic campaign

and Labor laws and 51 individuals wanted by law, in addition to impounding 16 wanted vehicles.

All cases were referred to the relevant authorities to complete the legal procedures.

Furthermore, the emergency patrols conducted security campaigns in the governorates from July 26 to Aug 1, resulting in the arrest of 38 wanted individuals and 20 with expired residency permits.

The weekly statistics of the emergency patrols revealed that 1,969 security operations were carried out, 27 wanted vehicles were seized, 13 individuals without valid identification documents were arrested, three individuals were found to be in an abnormal condition, and three suspects were arrested and referred to the DCGD.

On the other hand, 934 traffic violations were issued, 15 vehicles were impounded as the drivers violated traffic regulations, 164 traffic accident reports were handled, and 1,032 humanitarian aid requests of citizens and residents were addressed. The Traffic and Operations Sector affirmed its commitment to continue the security and traffic campaigns in all governorates to guarantee public security and safety.

Kuwait eyes

build strategic partnerships that yield mutual benefits, contribute to widening economic cooperation horizons and strengthening ties with friendly countries, said the Ministry of Oil in a press release.

During the meeting, they discussed bolstering bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and exploring prospects for joint cooperation in the oil and energy sectors.

The Kuwaiti minister noted deep economic relations between both countries, stressing Kuwait's commitment to promoting cooperation with various friendly countries, particularly in vital sectors, leading to bolstering sustainable development and sharing expertise and knowledge.



HH the Amir of Kuwait



Saudi King Salman

HH Amir condoles Saudi King over royal passing

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Tuesday sent a cable of condolences to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud over the passing of the mother of Prince Humoud bin Saud bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. In his message, the Amir offered sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathy, praying to Al-mighty Allah to grant the deceased His vast mercy.

His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, also sent a condolence cable to Saudi King Salman on Tuesday, expressing his deep sympathy and praying for the departed's soul to be enveloped in divine mercy.



JOINT OPERATIONS

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC) KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)



Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company) announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials. Kuwaiti and Saudi merchants, registered with either company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders should submit their bids electronically through "SMART BY GEP" <https://smart.gep.com>.

For first-time registration please contact TLQX@Chevron.com - BHSJ@Chevron.com for support and guidance. A non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender. Tender fees must be deposited and bidder must attach proof of payment copy as follows:

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		RIYADH BANK IBAN: SA2620000003100019949901 IN SAUDI RIYAL	

The start date for the following Tenders will be on **TUESDAY, 4 AUG 2026** and closing date will be on **TUESDAY, 8 SEP 2026 @ 09:00 A.M.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS CLOSING DATE	FEES (KD)	CLOSING DATE
1	BPT#292/26	Blanket Purchase Tender for Personal Protective Equipment	50	8 / 9 / 2026
2	059042	45L Cameron Wellhead Equip 32"-11" for SUGD-2 Deep Exploration Well, Wafra	25	8 / 9 / 2026
3	059043	11L OCTG Casing, Pup Joints, Crossovers & Nubbins 10-3/4" & 20" TENARIS Wafra SUGD2	100	8 / 9 / 2026
4	059044	9L OCTG Casing/Pup Joints/Lifts 7-5/8", 13-3/8", 16" VAM Vallourec Wafra SUGD2	100	8 / 9 / 2026
5	059045	2 Line Liner Hanger Systems 5" & 7-5/8" MFR SLB Smith Wafra	25	8 / 9 / 2026
6	059046	2Ln 26" & 32" OCTG Casing, VETCO RL-4/RL-4S, Wafra, SUGD-2	50	8 / 9 / 2026
7	059047	2Ln 10x4 & 12x6 Product Manifolds, Approved MFR, Wafra	35	8 / 9 / 2026
8	059048	Pressure Transmitters, 0-300 PSIG, Rosemount/Yokogawa, Wafra	5	8 / 9 / 2026
9	059049	3L Wooden Utility Poles 12-18.3m, Any Reputed MFR, Wafra, PS&D Network	25	8 / 9 / 2026
10	059050	8L VFD Power Units, Boards, Breakers, Contactors & Fans - WOLONG PS&D Wafra	5	8 / 9 / 2026
11	059059	6 Line ZEECO Flare System Spares & Control Components for MGC Fields, Wafra	35	8 / 9 / 2026
12	059056	1 Line Pickup & Setting Tool 2-3/16" OD, HF/Browning/Lufkin, Wafra	5	8 / 9 / 2026
13	059058	9LI OMNI 7000 Flow Computer & PLC Modules/Boards Spares for ACT Unit, Wafra	5	8 / 9 / 2026
14	059053	4-Line Ball & Check Valves 2", 3", 6" MFR Approved List Wafra Stock	5	8 / 9 / 2026
15	059054	17L CS Pipe Fittings 1/2-24in MFR Approved List for Wafra Stock	5	8 / 9 / 2026



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Maryland Democrats begin advancing redistricting constitutional amendment

WASHINGTON, Aug 4, (AP): Democrats who control the Maryland Legislature began advancing legislation Monday intended to clear the way for a partisan redistricting process that could help their party pick up an additional US House seat by 2028.

The General Assembly heard hours of debate and testimony on a proposed constitutional amendment intended to give Democrats greater latitude to draw congressional maps favoring their party, which already represents seven of the state's eight House districts. The legislation was expected to reach a vote on final passage Tuesday, and the proposed changes to the state constitution would have to be approved by voters before lawmakers could begin considering new district lines.

Deep blue Maryland's move is the latest turn in the national battle over

redistricting, which kicked off a year ago and has reshaped the U.S. House map ahead of this year's midterms.

Leaders of the General Assembly - who have been vague about their future plans for redrawing districts but in recent years have attempted to craft 8-0 maps - have characterized their proposal as an attempt to make sure Maryland is well-positioned to respond to redistricting by red states and contribute to efforts to elect Democrats who could serve as a check on the Trump administration.

The state's Republicans called the proposed amendment a blatant power grab aimed at ousting Maryland's lone GOP representative in Congress, Rep. Andy Harris.

"Gerrymandering is wrong. Whether it's in a red state, a blue state - it's just wrong," said state Sen. Mary Beth Carozza.

Harris, chairman of the House

Freedom Caucus, represents Maryland's 1st District, which is centered on the mostly rural Eastern Shore, part of a scenic peninsula separated from the rest of the state by the Chesapeake Bay.

In 2021, lawmakers tried to remake the maps in a way that made Harris' district more competitive for a Democrat to win, drawing in communities across the bay. But a judge struck down those districts in 2022, calling them a "product of extreme partisan gerrymandering."

In light of that decision and in hopes of avoiding future adverse legal rulings, lawmakers began advancing legislation to amend the state constitution to make clear that the parameters the judge cited - including that districts be compact in form and have regard given to "natural boundaries" - apply only to General Assembly districts, not congressional ones.



The Maryland State House in Annapolis, Md. on June 13. (AP)

Harvard University teaches students how large language models work

At colleges, AI boom means everyone wants to dabble in computer science

LOS ANGELES, Aug 4, (AP): With no background in coding, Faith Maeba, a psychology major, was reluctant when her mother first suggested she enroll in classes on artificial intelligence.

But the senior at Virginia Commonwealth University began to see it differently as she looked into graduate psychology programs that explore human behavior in the workplace, which is quickly being upended by machine learning. Maeba, 21, is now pursuing a minor in AI.

"It's giving me an edge and standing out," she said.

Hiring has cooled for entry-level software developers - work increasingly done by AI agents - and college enrollment in computer and information science programs has been declining. Yet at campuses across the country, many professors are finding themselves busier than ever teaching students from a range of majors about artificial intelligence.

Colleges are responding to changes in student demand, but they also recognize that new graduates - regardless of their field - are facing questions about their AI skills from potential employers.

"We have to democratize it," said Peter Stone, the chair of computer science at the University of Texas at Austin, who recently developed an introductory course on AI essentials for noncomputer science majors.

"In the same way that everybody needs some degree of math, reading and writing, I think everybody needs a degree of AI literacy," he said.

Schools like VCU are standing up AI minors targeting students outside computer science. There's a new AI graduation requirement at Purdue University. In freshman writing classes, Harvard University is teaching students how large language models work, plus exploring AI topics such as copyright and disinformation. And Ohio State University has an AI fluency requirement that includes hands-on workshops.

Meanwhile, AI-focused undergraduate and even graduate degrees are proliferating.

At Northwestern University, non-computer science majors had interest in taking classes in the department even before ChatGPT launched in 2022, but sometimes there wasn't enough room, said Samir Khuller, the chair for computer science. That's because computer science, then seen as a golden ticket to a high-paying job, was exploding in popularity.

But recently, the number of incoming computer science majors has started to shrink. Now Northwestern's computer science staff, which had doubled in size to meet the demand, is teaching more students from other majors. The school, which already has a popular AI minor, is adding an AI major. It's also streamlining prerequisites to make it easier for nonmajors to take an AI or machine learning class.

"Overall, classes are going to be a lot more accessible moving forward," Khuller said. The department is so busy, he's trying to hire three



Faith Maeba, a student at Virginia Commonwealth University, shares an assignment she completed for her Practical AI Synthesis course at her home on July 20, in Stafford, Va. (AP)

more computer science professors.

Among other changes across the university, Northwestern's Bienen School of Music is offering a certificate in music and artificial intelligence.

Nationwide, enrollment in computer and information sciences continued falling this spring, down more than 8% at four-year institutions from the spring of 2025, according to the latest data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, a dip that came as job postings for software developers dropped.

Interest in attaining at least a barebones understanding in computer

science - and particularly AI-enhanced coding - has exploded across different majors. Music students, for instance, are discovering tools that can easily do tasks such as editing or generating drum tracks.

At Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, assistant music professor Benjamin Guerrero is co-teaching a class next year with a computer scientist. Musicians, artists, theater and digital media majors will learn alongside math, computer science and electrical engineering students. The goal, he said, is to create people who can work at the intersection of art and technology.

"In my mind, AI is no more disruptive than the record player, the radio, the metronome, the synthesizer or the computer," said Guerrero, who has helped organizations including the National Association for Music Education develop plans to incorporate AI.

Even before this latest surge in interest, STEM majors - like physicists and biologists - often took computer science classes to learn how to code for data-heavy research. But the learning curve was steep until new AI tools came along, said Murtaza Ali, a doctoral candidate at the University of Washington whose research focuses on computer science education.

Yet, he said, AI also is stirring anxiety. The concern, he said, is that even if the AI is just being used to write code, it's going to encroach so much that eventually some college graduates won't understand the basic concepts in their field.

"When you ask the AI to do it for you, on the surface it might just seem it is writing the code," he said. "But under the hood, it's actually also doing the understanding of the task for you."

Despite those concerns, the pace of change is remarkable for a sector infamous for moving slowly, said Paul LeBlanc, a visiting scholar at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, who studies AI's impact on higher education.

"It's impossible to keep up with the technology, but that's true for every organization in the world right

now," said LeBlanc, formerly president of Southern New Hampshire University, a prominent player in online degrees.

Community colleges that want to offer non-credit classes are able to move especially fast, because the approval process is less cumbersome. One in suburban Kansas City recently offered a non-credit "vibe-coding" class to teach nontechnies to create working software.

"What AI does is shrink that distance between a complete novice and an expert," said Grant Carlson, program coordinator for workforce development and continuing education at Johnson County Community College. The Kansas City-area college also offers an AI certificate and is making plans to tailor AI classes to specific occupations, such as human resources and medical careers.

At VCU, it used to take a year and a half to design a course and get it approved for students to take, said Andrew Arroyo, senior vice provost of academic affairs.

"Now we're doing things really in a matter of months and in some cases weeks," Arroyo said. An online graduate certificate program in applied AI is being added this year, he said.

More than simply creating programs, professors must try to prepare students for widely differing goals for using AI in their careers. In courses for VCU's AI minor, Althea Pappas said she's exploring AI not to use in her career, but to help her answer philosophical questions.



Migrants return to Morocco from the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on July 31. (AP)

Spanish PM Sanchez fends off blistering criticism within EU over Ceuta crisis

BRUSSELS, Aug 4, (AP): Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's migration policies have come under withering criticism as leaders from across the European Union meet Tuesday following last week's rush of migrants to the Spanish territory of Ceuta in North Africa.

The sudden arrival of 50,000 to 60,000 migrants on Thursday and Friday sparked a humanitarian crisis in Ceuta and reignited the immigration debate in the 27-nation bloc, though most of the migrants soon went back. More than 80 migrants died, including some who drowned or were trampled in a stampede to cross a breakwater barrier, according to Spanish and Moroccan authorities.

Open letters from 22 EU leaders, and a quick retort from Sanchez, have exposed a roiling debate inside the EU pitting migration hawks against the progressive Spanish leader who has challenged consensus within the bloc on migration as well as NATO spending, Gaza and Israel.

Sanchez's government has dismissed the attacks as politically motivated,

saying most of the migrants were pushed back from Ceuta within hours in "close coordination with the Moroccan authorities and with very little support from other European states."

Regardless of the Tuesday meeting's outcome, Europe is displaying a deeply damaging disunity as it faces security threats from Moscow, instability with Washington and economic tension with Beijing, said Alicia Garcia-Herrero, chief economist for Asia Pacific and Middle East for the financial firm Natixis.

"Europe has shown weakness again," she said. "Massive weakness."

EU leaders quickly pounced on Sanchez once videos from Ceuta went viral. Many blamed the incident on his government's progressive policies and publicly rallied for new border checks at sea, air and land ports of entry.

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni issued the most blunt criticism of Sanchez, as well as announcing that Italy would enforce air and sea border controls with Spain.

Yet Cueta's remote geographical

position meant "there was almost zero risk that people (would) really arrive in Spain and then move on to Italy," said analyst Matteo Villa at the Italian Institute for Political Studies in Milan. He said that just 2% of migrants arriving in Europe make it to Italy.

Nando Sigona, a professor at the University of Birmingham, said that Meloni detested a move Sanchez presided over in July to grant legal status to about 1 million longtime residents, and is eager to portray his approach as a failure.

Sanchez fired back in an online post that called Meloni's position on Ceuta "contrary to European law, humanitarian law, and the principles of solidarity that bind us together." He said that Italy has allowed in twice the number of migrants as Spain since 2021, with Spain receiving 234,000 to Italy's 478,000.

But the criticism was EU-wide, with Meloni signing a joint letter with 21 other leaders from Finland to Malta that pointed to a July Spanish court ruling as the "trigger" for "this attack on our migration and asylum system."

Russian, Ukrainian drone strikes kill at least five in each country

MOSCOW, Aug 4, (AP): Ukrainian drone attacks in the region around Moscow killed five people, local officials said Tuesday, while authorities in Ukraine said Russian aerial strikes there also caused at least five civilian deaths.

Since Russia's invasion more than four years ago, Ukraine has developed long-range drones that can hit targets deep inside Russia. In the past year, they have battered oil facilities, major storage depots and other key infrastructure.

Russia's relentless aerial attacks on Ukraine have killed more than 16,000 civilians, with casualties rising steadily each year, according to the United Nations.

Meanwhile, escalating attacks by both sides on shipping in the Black Sea has reawakened fears that global food security could be put at risk.

The death toll from a drone strike Monday in the Russian Black Sea resort of Arkhipo-Osipovka rose to seven, including three children, regional authorities said.

On Tuesday morning, Krasnodar regional authorities updated the number of wounded to 58, with 21 of them hospitalized.

Footage circulating online showed a drone slamming into a crowded beach, with what sounded like rapid gunfire ringing in the background. Ukraine has not commented on the strike.

A Ukrainian drone attack in the



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, private houses destroyed following a night Russian missile attack are seen in Odesa region, Ukraine on Aug 4. (AP)

Moscow region, which surrounds but doesn't include the Russian capital, killed five people and wounded 10 others wounded on Tuesday morning, the region's governor Andrei Vorobyov said.

Most damage from the attack occurred in the Chekhov municipal district, where several fires erupted at the Novoselki industrial zone, Vorobyov said.

In the latest in a string of attacks

attack on Russia's biggest online retailer, Wildberries said Tuesday that its warehouse in the Leningrad region, which lies adjacent to St. Petersburg, was on fire.

In the Tver region, located between Moscow and St. Petersburg, drone debris inflicted "partial" damage on a wall of a Wildberries warehouse in the village of Emmaus, the region's governor Vitaly Korolyov said.

America

Arson suspect arrested in Spokane fires: A man from Spokane, Washington, was arrested and charged with setting one of the three devastating wildfires that are burning through the region.

The Spokane County Sheriff's Office said Aaron F. Farnacci, 37, was arrested Monday and booked on suspicion of first-degree arson in connection with the Old Trails Fire, the largest of the three blazes around Spokane. His bond was set at \$1 million.

A tip from a community member who saw a nervous-looking man bent by the side of the road near some grass initially led authorities to Farnacci, though they released him after initial questioning,



Nowels

Sheriff John Nowels said Monday night. (AP)

Authorities seek motive in Ohio shooting: A driver charging his electric taxi and a former law enforcement officer who tried to intervene were among the seven people wounded in a mass shooting at an Idaho fast food restaurant that also left three people dead, according to friends and relatives of the two men.

The attack Saturday at a new In-N-Out Burger in Twin Falls ended when the gunman, identified by police as 24-year-old Chad Williams, shot and killed himself. On Monday, police were still trying to determine why Williams carried out the attack, which happened early in the afternoon in a busy shopping plaza in the southern Idaho city.

Many details about Williams' life were still unknown Monday, but an initial search of court records in Idaho and Arizona, where he used to live, didn't show any criminal cases matching his name and birth date. (AP)

‘Threshold of fear has been broken’

How India’s Gen Z movement of ‘Cockroaches’ dented Modi’s political image

NEW DELHI, Aug 4, (AP): For weeks, India’s young protesters waved signs mocking Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government and rallied under an unlikely name: the Cockroach Janta Party. They secured a concession few have extracted from Modi during his more than 12 years in power: a cabinet minister’s resignation.

Modi has been one of India’s most dominant prime ministers in decades, winning elections while cultivating an image of decisive leadership. His government has rarely been seen to yield to public pressure.

The resignation of education minister Dharmendra Pradhan last month, however, was a notable exception, experts say. Pressured by the “Cockroach” movement, the concession underscored the rising political influence of India’s population younger than 25, who make up nearly half the country, and a shift toward digital-first organizing.

“This particular round has ended in a very important defeat for Mr. Modi,” said Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, a political analyst who wrote a Modi biography. Mukhopadhyay said the minister’s resignation has made people less fearful of protesting against a government that critics have long accused of suppressing dissent.

“The threshold of fear has been broken. People are no longer scared to go and step out and protest,” he said.

The protests began as a satirical movement in May with a single demand: the education minister’s resignation over leaks of exam papers that can determine a young person’s fate.

But as protests spread, driven by young, urban Indians who mobilized online and on the streets, they evolved into a broader call for accountability, tapping into frustration over youth unemployment, government transparency and the handling of public institutions.

Mukhopadhyay said it was the first time student-led protests had sustained enough momentum to force the government to concede their central demand without the backing of established political parties.

“Each one had their own little grievance about life not taking them anywhere,” he said.



Protesters celebrate after Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned following nationwide protests as part of the Cockroach Janta Party’s protest movement in Mumbai, India on July 26. (AP)

It is uncertain whether that energy can be converted into votes against Modi’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

Saurav Das, a spokesperson for the Cockroach Janta Party, said the movement reaffirmed the power of public pressure in a democracy.

“An arrogant government which did not blink for 12 years was forced to blink when the youth united,” he said, reiterating that the group wants to remain a public watchdog rather than become a political party.

“We want to remain a pressure group,” he said.

The movement appears to have prompted adjustments inside Modi’s party.

In the weeks since the protests, Modi has increasingly appeared in short, vertical videos tailored for Instagram and other platforms popular with young voters.

His party has expanded its outreach to Gen Z through online campaigns, with some party lawmakers adopting youth slang in public appearances, including speeches in Parliament. Many of India’s cabinet members are 60 or older.

It marks a shift from the protests’ early days, when Modi and his government largely dismissed the movement as insignificant. But as demonstrations attracted larger crowds, the government was forced to acknowledge them and respond to their growing influence.

Since the education minister’s resignation, Modi has also spoken of forgiving those who had mocked the prime minister, an apparent effort to reconnect with younger audiences.

Mukhopadhyay said the movement’s biggest impact was challenging the perception of Modi as a leader largely insulated from public pressure.

“That image of Mr. Modi is heavily tarnished,” he said.

Some Modi supporters have doubled down, however, with online activists aligned to Modi’s party seeking to identify protesters and share their personal details online to intimidate them.

Solidarity protests were held in several other cities, while supporters sent food and supplies to demonstrators camped in New Delhi and engaged in hunger strikes.

Opposition leaders, rights activists and some Bollywood celebrities publicly backed the movement, helping amplify its message beyond the protest sites.

For Neha Bora, a student leader who took part in a hunger strike in New Delhi, the movement showed that ordinary citizens could still hold those in power to account.

“If they (ministers) do not serve the people of this country, no matter what cabinet minister they are, they will be brought down from their seats,” she said.

Africa

Swiss geologist, local miner killed in CAR: A Swiss geologist and a local miner were killed on Thursday in the Central African Republic, north of the capital, Bangui, according to a statement from the local public prosecutor’s office on Monday.



Luca Maggini and the miner were kidnapped by unidentified men in the evening and later killed, according to Frédéric Pounou, a geologist who was working alongside Maggini when he was kidnapped.

“It was as he was leaving that he fell into the hands of the attackers,” said Pounou.

The attack occurred near the village of Gbango-Carriere, 55 kilometers (34 miles) north of Bangui, and also resulted in the kidnapping of a staff sergeant in the Central African Army, according to the public prosecutor’s statement.

Maggini worked with ADMOG Gold, an Emirati company with contracts in the African country, according to Pounou.

The Central African Republic has faced years of instability, and it is one of the countries where Wagner, a Russian mercenary group, was first active in Africa.

Conflict began in the country in 2013 after mostly Muslim rebels seized power and forced then President **François Bozizé** to quit. The conflict was de-escalated by a 2019 peace deal between the government and 14 armed groups, but six of the groups later withdrew from the agreement. (AP)

Ethiopia landslide kills 14: A landslide Monday triggered by heavy rainfall in Ethiopia’s Amhara region killed 14 people and injured seven others, while an unknown number of people remain unaccounted for as search and rescue efforts continue.

The landslide occurred at Tsadqane Debre Mitmaq St. Mary Monastery, where hundreds of worshippers had gathered for a holy water cleansing ritual that is popular among people seeking spiritual healing for chronic illnesses.

“The disaster occurred at approximately 7 a.m., and many of those who died had gathered to receive the holy water,” Megabe Hadis Neka Tibebe Ababu, the diocese’s general manager, told The Associated Press.

He said an unknown number of people are still believed to be trapped beneath the debris. (AP)

14 dead in Uganda vehicle collision: A collision between a passenger van operating as a commuter taxi and a truck carrying sand killed at least 14 people in Uganda, police said.

The crash happened Monday night on a highway in Kamunga Trading Center, an area in Kalungu district. All of those killed were passengers in the van, while four others were injured, police said in a statement.

Authorities in the East African nation said they were searching for the truck driver, who fled the scene.

Road accidents a problem across Africa and common in Uganda. The accidents often are blamed on poorly maintained vehicles, excess speed and poor road conditions.

An elementary school bus returning from an educational trip to a scenic waterfall in July veered off a road and overturned, killing at least 20 children and one adult in eastern Uganda. (AP)



People walk across a mud covered road following heavy rain in Nawalapitiya, Sri Lanka on Aug 4. (AP)

Sri Lanka closes schools as heavy rains trigger floods, killing 5

Sri Lanka closed schools in its tea-growing mountainous regions Tuesday as heavy rains triggered floods and mudslides that left five people dead and three wounded, officials said.

Heavy downpours over the last two days have wreaked

havoc in many parts of the country, flooding homes, fields and roads. The mountainous areas in the country’s central region are the worst affected by the severe weather, according to the government’s Disaster Management Center.

So far, five people have died after being buried in mudslides that overran two houses in the central region, while three others were wounded and two people have gone missing, said Pradeep Kodippili, the center’s spokesperson. (AP)

Pakistan teams search on foot for remains of climbers as weather grounds helicopters

ISLAMABAD, Aug 4, (AP): Teams in Pakistan searched on foot for the remains of 10 climbers killed in an avalanche on the world’s 12th-highest mountain as poor weather kept helicopters out of the air Tuesday, authorities said.

Helicopters were on standby but unable to fly by noon for the ongoing search and recovery operation on Broad Peak, the regional government said in a statement Tuesday.

The climbers from Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, China, Britain and the United States were swept away by the avalanche Thursday in the Gilgit-Baltistan region, which the Alpine Club of Pakistan called one of the country’s deadliest mountaineering disasters.

Ground teams located the remains of eight climbers and at least three bodies were brought down the mountain on Saturday, officials said.

Nirmal Purja, a Nepal-born former British Army

soldier widely known as Nims Dai, was among the climbers killed in the avalanche while attempting to scale the peak. His expedition company said Saturday that the world had lost one of mountaineering’s greats.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday expressed condolences to the families of those killed, saying he was deeply saddened by the tragedy.

“My heartfelt condolences go to the bereaved families and to the governments and people of China, Nepal, Oman, the United Kingdom and the United States,” Dar said in a post on X.

Dar also offered condolences to the family of Pakistani mountaineer Sohail Sakhi, saying his courage and passion for the mountains would be remembered with pride.

“The determination and pursuit of excellence shown by all those who perished embodied the

true spirit of mountaineering and will continue to inspire generations,” Dar said.

Dar praised the “tireless efforts of our rescue and recovery teams” and said Pakistan remained committed to the ongoing search and recovery operation in close coordination with the Nepal, Oman, UK and US embassies.

Mountaineering accidents are common in northern Pakistan because of avalanches, falling ice and rock, extreme altitude and rapidly changing weather. A Chinese mountaineer died last year after being struck by falling rocks while descending K2, the world’s second-highest mountain, in northern Pakistan.

Bodies of foreign climbers who die attempting to summit mountains in Pakistan are typically recovered at the request of their families and governments. If the family declines a rescue, the remains are left at the spot where the climber died.



In this photo released by the Alpine Club of Pakistan on July 31, members of a mountaineers rescue team pose for photo with honorary general secretary of Alpine Club of Pakistan Ayaz Ahmed Shigri, center, before departing 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)



Lava flows out of the crater of the Fuego Volcano, as seen from San Juan Alotenango, Guatemala on Aug 4. (AP)

Guatemala evacuates villages due to Fuego volcano eruption

Authorities in Guatemala have ordered evacuations in some southern communities around the Fuego volcano, which is erupting.

Claudinne Ogaldes, executive secretary of the Guatemalan disaster managing agency, CONRED, confirmed on Monday evening to The Associated Press that the eruption started on Monday morning and increased during the day, which

led to evacuation orders for two villages around the mountain.

Live images of the situation showed big clouds of gas and ash over the volcano as lava and pyroclastic flows rolled down the slopes at great speed.

“The eruption increases its explosiveness level. A fountain of lava of between 200 and 300 meters (650 to 1,000 feet) has developed over the crater,”

according to a report from the Guatemalan Seismology, Vulcanology, Weather and Water Institute.

CONRED said in a press statement that authorities were evacuating El Porvenir and the hamlet of Las Lajitas as a preventive measure. That would be around 50 families or 250 people. The agency declared an orange alert and warned of ashes spreading to nearby towns. (AP)

Honduran judge grants former president Hernández’s release

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Aug 4, (AP): A judge in Honduras ruled Monday that former President Juan Orlando Hernández, who recently returned to the Central American country after a Trump pardon for drug trafficking charges in the US, will not be jailed during his trial for fraud and money laundering.

The case is being closely watched as a litmus test for the country’s justice system after critics say the former leader ruled with impunity for years.

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

He was extradited to the United States for his drug trafficking trial shortly after leaving office and was sentenced to 45 years in prison. US President Donald Trump unexpectedly pardoned him last year and backed his party’s candidate for president, Nasry Asfura, who took office in January.

Hernández, 57, faces charges related to a case known as Pandora I, which alleges that a network of former high-ranking officials from 2010 to 2013 participated in the expansion and approval of public funds disbursements totaling more than



Former Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernández waves after his arrival to Toncontin airport in Tegucigalpa, Honduras on July 26. (AP)

\$10.8 million, or around 288 million lempiras, to various foundations, according to an investigation by the country’s Specialized Prosecutor’s Unit Against Corruption Networks, or UFERCO.

According to UFERCO, Hernández benefited from these disbursements, receiving at least \$2.3 million, around 62 million lempiras, for his political campaign through various schemes, including the creation of shell companies, the use of straw men and fictitious contracts.

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

The former president remained in the US until his arrest warrant in Honduras was suspended by a judge in June.

Prosecutors requested that he remain in custody while his case is ongoing, but the judge denied the request Monday. However, the court placed some restrictions on Hernández.

Oil price down \$12.04 to \$73.24 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil dropped by USD 12.04 to reach USD 73.24 per barrel (pb) in Monday's trading compared with USD 85.28 per barrel in Friday's trading, according to the price

announced by the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation(KPC). Globally, Brent crude went down by USD 6.35 to settle at USD 83.77 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate decreased by USD 4.33 reaching USD 80.34 pb.

Business

Gulf Bank holds its first half 2026 earnings webcast

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Gulf Bank held its first half 2026 earnings webcast on Monday 3rd August 2026, to present and discuss the Bank's financial performance. The webcast was organized by EFG Hermes and presented by Sami Mahfouz, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Bank, and Mr. David Challinor, Chief Financial Officer of Gulf Bank. The discussion was moderated by Ms. Dalal AlDousari, Deputy General Manager of Investor Relations at Gulf Bank.

Operating Environment

Mr. Sami Mahfouz, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Bank, commenced the webcast with key updates regarding the operating environment and Gulf Bank's overall position during the first half of 2026. Mr. Mahfouz stated: "The first half of 2026 was marked by elevated geopolitical tensions and heightened regional uncertainty. While these developments have weighed on sentiment across parts of the region, Kuwait has continued to demonstrate resilience, supported by strong sovereign fundamentals, and the stability of its financial sector. The country's credit profile remains robust, while continued access to both domestic and international funding markets reinforces confidence in Kuwait's financial position and funding flexibility."

Mr. Mahfouz added "From a banking sector perspective, conditions remained broadly favorable during the first half of the year. The unchanged benchmark interest rates provided greater stability for businesses and better visibility for borrowers. Moreover, the sector continued to benefit from strong capitalization, healthy liquidity levels, and sound regulatory oversight."

He added: "Against this backdrop, Gulf Bank delivered a strong performance during the first half of the year. We achieved growth in profitability, expanded our lending portfolio, and maintained robust asset quality. These results underscore the resilience of our business model, the strength of our risk management framework, and the disciplined execution of our strategic priorities. We continued advancing our planned transition to Islamic banking and made progress across multiple workstreams, including governance, products, systems, policies and processes, further strengthening our operational readiness for the transition as we move through the necessary regulatory and shareholder approval process."

Loan Growth

Commenting on loan growth, Mr. David Challinor, Chief Financial Officer of Gulf Bank stated: "We had another strong quarter of net



Sami Mahfouz



David Challinor



Dalal AlDousari

■ Mahfouz:

- Kuwait continues to demonstrate resilience, supported by strong economic and financial sector fundamentals.
- Favorable banking sector conditions contributed to a stable and supportive operating environment.
- Gulf Bank delivered strong financial performance while maintaining robust asset quality and prudent risk management.
- The Bank continued to advance its transition to Islamic banking through progress across multiple strategic workstreams.

■ Challinor:

- First-half loan growth reached 7.6%, driven by strong corporate banking activity.
- Operating expenses reflected continued investment in strategic initiatives and the long-term growth of the business.
- Lower funding costs contributed to stronger margins during the second quarter and supported earnings growth.
- Cost of risk declined to 16 basis points for the quarter, marking one of the lowest levels reported in several years.

loan growth in Q2 of 118 million or 1.9%, which has brought growth in the first half to 7.6%. And once again the corporate banking business was the growth engine with a mix of high quality local and international transactions. However, the market growth in the retail segment was only 1.6%, which reflects the continuation of a subdued environment leading to highly competitive pricing. But our strategy remains, which is to continue a disciplined approach in our credit appetite and to prioritise credit quality over volume, which has resulted in a better performing loan book. Looking forward, we anticipate that loan growth in the second half will develop at a more moderate pace."

Operating Expense

On operating expense Mr. Challinor mentioned: "Operating expense growth for the first half was 8%, which represented an absolute increase of 3.8 million. Now, three quarters of that increase related to the "other expense" category. And the growth was mainly due to the advancement of our strategic projects, the Islamic conversion and the merger, coupled with an operational risk provision. Now, in terms of guidance, I'd previously mentioned that the cost growth for FY26 would be around the mid-to-high single digit range, but I think the latter is now more likely."

Margins

In regard to net interest margin, Mr. Challinor noted: "We saw the margin expand in Q2 by 8 basis points from the Q1 level. And this expansion was driven by a decrease in the cost of funds combined with an increase in income yields. The cost of

specific provision and a higher level of recoveries than we'd usually seen in previous quarters, which is a very encouraging development. Now on the corporate side, we had several provision releases coupled with recoveries which together helped to lower the Bank's credit costs even further. If we look at the percentage of loans classified as stage 2, it's now only at 2.3% which is likely the lowest in the Kuwaiti banking system. So, our balance sheet is in a relatively strong position versus competitors to handle any future shocks arising due to the current geopolitical situation. In terms of guidance. At the start of the year, we expected the cost of risk to land in the 50-to-60-point range for FY26, but we're now lowering this to under 50 basis points."

Conversion to Sharia compliance

About the updates on the Islamic banking conversion and the potential merger with Warba Bank, Mr. Sami Mahfouz, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Bank noted: "As mentioned earlier on the Sharia-compliant conversion, the Bank continues to make measured progress in line with the regulatory framework following the Central Bank of Kuwait's preliminary approval. Implementation efforts are advancing across core work streams, with dedicated teams overseeing the transition across business, operation, and technical areas. Focus remains on ensuring readiness in a structured manner, while maintaining consistency in service delivery. As for the potential merger with Warba Bank, process is progressing in an orderly manner, and any material updates will be communicated in line with disclosure requirements."

AAW backs Kuwait emergency fund with \$1 mln contribution

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW) announced its contribution of USD 1 million to the Kuwait Emergency Response Fund, reaffirming its longstanding commitment to supporting national initiatives that strengthen Kuwait's preparedness and resilience in responding to emergencies and exceptional circumstances.

AAW emphasized that the contribution reflects its commitment to corporate and national social responsibility, as well as its belief in the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors in supporting initiatives that strengthen national resilience and contribute to safeguarding communities.

The company reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the Kuwait Emergency Response Fund, reflecting its ongoing dedication to initiatives that create a lasting national im-



AAW LOGO 2025

pact and strengthen Kuwait's preparedness to address future challenges.

Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Company is one of the largest retail and distribution companies in Kuwait, operating across multiple sectors and representing more than 100 global brands in the wholesale and retail markets.

As part of its continued investment in Kuwait, AAW has maintained the expansion of its retail presence, supporting economic activity while remaining committed to national initiatives.

Al-Ghanem: Strengthening public-private partnerships

Warba delegation meets Governor of Farwaniya to examine community development initiatives

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Governor of Farwaniya, H.E. Sheikh Athbi Naser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, met with a delegation from Warba Bank led by Chief Executive Officer Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem at the Governorate Headquarters. The meeting centered on strengthening cooperation across community and sustainable development initiatives within Farwaniya Governorate.

The discussions addressed ways to align efforts between government authorities and private-sector financial institutions to implement community programs that contribute to local development and social well-being.

Key Discussion Topics:

The meeting addressed several joint areas of interest, including:

- Community Development Initiatives: Exploring joint initiatives designed to support different segments of the local community and advance sustainable development goals.
- Public-Private Collaboration: Strengthening coordination between Warba Bank and Farwaniya Governorate to execute targeted social responsibility projects.
- Socio-Economic Role: Reaffirming the banking sector's role



H.E. Sheikh Athbi Naser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, and CEO, Shaheen Al-Ghanem.

in supporting social development alongside its financial activities.

Executive Commentary: Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem,

Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank, stated:

"This visit reflects the strong relationship between Warba Bank and Farwaniya Governorate and highlights the value of collaboration with government entities to achieve sustainable social impact. Corporate social responsibility remains a core pillar of Warba Bank's strategy as we continue to support national development goals and advance community initiatives across Kuwait."

Al-Ghanem added that the bank will continue to expand its coordination with official institutions to reinforce its role as a partner in sustainable socio-economic development.

About Warba Bank:

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

Main 50 Index rises

Boursa Kuwait turns lower in Tues. trade

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Tuesday lower, with the general index falling 66.76 points, or 0.75 percent, to 8,847.09 points.

Trading volume reached 243.1 million shares through 18,342 cash transactions, with a total value of KD 69.5 million, or about USD 226.6 million.

The main market index declined 318.13 points, or 3.45 percent, to 8,898.35 points. A total of 120.5 million shares were traded through 8,970 cash transactions, worth KD 24.1 million, or ap-

proximately USD 78.5 million.

The premier market index also edged down, shedding 16.70 points, or 0.18 percent, to close at 9,295.38 points. Trading on the index totaled 122.5 million shares across 9,372 cash transactions, with a value of KD 45.4 million, equivalent to about USD 148.3 million.

In contrast, the Main 50 Index rose 17.57 points, or 0.17 percent, to 10,191.16 points. It saw 82.2 million shares traded through 5,591 cash transactions, valued at KD 17.3 million, or around USD 56.4 million.



A group photo of the Warba Bank delegation, headed by the CEO, with His Excellency the Governor of Farwaniya.



Unifying banking benefits

KIB introduces ‘Premium Segment’ banking service

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the launch of its new Premium Segment, designed to offer customers an elevated banking experience that reflects their evolving lifestyle needs and supports their ambitions. This new segment comes as part of the Bank’s efforts to consolidate its exclusive benefits and premium banking services into a dedicated offering, aimed at meeting customer needs while providing greater financial flexibility and personalized services.

Commenting on the launch, Othman Tawfeq, General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB stated: “We are pleased to introduce KIB’s new Premium Segment, which reflects our ongoing commitment to delivering a more rewarding and personalized banking experience for our customers. Designed for convenience and value-added solutions, the Premium Segment consolidates the Bank’s premium offerings into a seamless experience, bringing together priority banking, distinctive card privileges, travel benefits, concierge services, rewards, cashback, and digital banking access.”

Tawfeq explained that the Premium Segment is available to eligible new and existing retail banking customers who meet specific financial criteria, including a monthly salary between KD 1,500 and KD 2,999, or total deposits between KD 30,000 and KD 99,999. Eligible customers will have access to a range of existing banking benefits, including a complimentary Visa debit card with a distinctive design, priority transaction handling through KIB’s 24/7 Call Center, priority service across all KIB branches, and a free annual standing order.

Premium Segment customers will also receive a free Visa Signature credit card for the first year, with its existing suite of premium travel, lifestyle, and protection privileges. These include access to more than 1,200 airport lounges worldwide through Visa Airport Companion, complimentary multi-trip travel insurance for the cardholder and their family for trips of up to 90 days, protection against fraud and misuse, and exclusive hotel offers and discounts on selected booking and car rental services. The card is also accepted at more than 1.9 million ATMs worldwide, offering customers enhanced convenience wherever they travel.

In addition, Visa Signature cardholders have access to Visa Concierge services, offering 24/7 local and international assistance through a dedicated and highly professional team, including digital concierge support, phone and email assistance, and live chat with a lifestyle manager. These services include flight, hotel, and car rental bookings, fine dining reservations, access to tickets and hospitality packages for exclusive events, and a wide range of lifestyle benefits.

Customers within the Premium Segment will also enjoy access to the recently revamped KIB Rewards Program, which delivers an integrated digital rewards experience through the KIB MobileApp. Reward points are calculated based on the customer segment and approved credit limit, allowing Premium Segment customers to earn up to KD 300 worth of points per month. These points can be re-



Othman Tawfeq

deemed through multiple options, including cashback to credit or prepaid cards, cashback to current or savings accounts, e-vouchers, digital shopping, and gifting or transferring points.

Further consolidated benefits under the Premium Segment include a 50% discount on safe deposit boxes, as well as exclusive offers and discounts from KIB and Visa. These benefits are designed to provide customers with greater convenience, added value, and peace of mind across their banking and personal needs.

Through KIB’s digital banking ecosystem, Premium Segment customers can seamlessly manage their banking and financing needs across KIB Mobile App, online banking services, and KIB Post Pay. Among these channels, KIB Post Pay, Kuwait’s first banking shopping application, brings customers exclusive offers from more than 100 partners, along with access to Islamic financing solutions featuring flexible installments, instant initial approval, easy application tracking, and no salary transfer requirement. Financing through KIB Post Pay ranges from KD 300 up to KD 25,000, with installment periods from 3 to 60 months and real-time tracking of financing requests.

It is worth noting that the launch of the Premium Segment forms part of the Bank’s broader strategy to enhance customer experience, expand its digital banking capabilities, and deliver innovative offerings that reflect its “Bank for Life” slogan.

About KIB

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

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

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

As part of its strategy to foster an attractive & motivating work environment

NBK boosts employee well-being with exclusive summer campaign offering travel benefits & rewarding incentives

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: As part of its ongoing commitment to enhancing employee well-being and providing exclusive benefits that meet their needs and enrich their professional experience, National Bank of Kuwait announced launching a special summer credit card campaign for its staff, featuring exceptional rewards and exclusive offers designed to provide added value during the travel and holiday season.

This initiative aligns with NBK’s strategy to foster an attractive and motivating work environment by offering diverse programs and benefits that meet employees’ needs and support their quality of life, and it reflects the Bank’s belief that employees are key factors to achieving success and continued leadership in the banking sector.

The campaign enables NBK employees to benefit from 25% cashback on selected airlines when using eligible NBK Credit Cards, up to a maximum of KD 500 for the duration of the campaign, which gives them greater opportunities to make the most of their travel plans and achieve additional savings during the summer season.

The campaign extends beyond travel benefits to include an incentive program allowing employees to earn 20 KWT Points for every eligible customer successfully referred for an NBK Credit Card, which enables them to enjoy additional rewards while fostering greater engagement with the Bank’s products and services.

The campaign reflects NBK’s commitment to delivering high-quality initiatives for its employees that combine added value with rewarding incentives, offering them access to banking benefits tailored to their diverse needs and lifestyles.

On this occasion, Nadia Salmeen, Team Lead - Employee Banking at National Bank of Kuwait, said: “At NBK, we are keen to create a supportive and motivating work environment based on employee well-being and strong organizational engagement, further creating an atmosphere that enables them to thrive both professionally and personally”.

Salmeen added: “We are committed to consistently offering exclusive benefits and promotions to our employees that meet their diverse needs and enhance their banking ex-



Nadia Salmeen

Salmeen:

The well-being of our employees is a strategic priority and a cornerstone of the work environment we are committed to continuously enhancing.

We believe that recognizing employees and investing in their well-being enhances satisfaction and embeds a culture of excellence within the Bank.

We continuously develop initiatives that strengthen employee engagement with the organization and support their quality of life, both within and outside the workplace.



perience. We also encourage them to participate in the customer referral program, by referring eligible individuals to apply for NBK Credit Cards and to benefit from the related rewards”.

Salmeen also emphasized that this campaign is an extension of the Bank’s ongoing efforts to value its employees and launch initiatives that reflect its commitment to their professional and personal well-being, noting that providing value-added benefits contributes to boosting employee satisfaction and fostering a culture of appreciation and motivation within the Bank.

NBK continues to invest in its human capital by offering a comprehensive suite of programs and initiatives that support employee well-being and enrich their experience. This reflects the Bank’s commitment to providing an outstanding work environment that aligns with best practices and reinforces its position as a leading employer of choice in Kuwait.



Group photo during the campaign.

Kuwait: Regional conflict slows Q2 credit growth

By National Bank of Kuwait

Domestic credit growth moderated to a still-decent 1.2% q/q in Q2 2026 from 1.8% in Q1, reflecting the first full quarter of impact from the US-Iran conflict. The slowdown was primarily driven by weaker but still-solid business credit growth and a contraction in lending to banks and financial institutions. Meanwhile, household credit gained some momentum in Q2, providing offsetting support to overall credit expansion. Domestic credit rose YTD 2.9% in Q2, below the 4.6% recorded during the same period of 2025. On the liabilities side, resident deposit growth eased but remained robust, supported by a further increase in public sector deposits (government plus public institutions) and a modest rise in private sector deposits. Meanwhile, both credit to non-residents and non-resident deposits contracted in Q2 amid heightened regional uncertainty and weaker cross-border financial activity. The outlook for credit demand during the remainder of the year hinges on developments in the US-Iranian conflict as renewed hostilities could weigh on sentiment while a resolution could unlock lending that was delayed by the conflict.

ing that was delayed by the conflict.

Growth in business credit slowed significantly to 1.3% q/q in Q2 from 2.8% in Q1, bringing YTD growth to 4.2%, slightly above the 4.0% recorded during the same period of 2025. The moderation reflected slower lending across several major sectors including a contraction in the manufacturing sector (-1.6% q/q) and the softer growth in real estate (0.6%), oil & gas (1.8%), public services (1.8%), and other sectors (1.8%). Credit to banks and financial institutions contracted by -2.6% q/q, reversing the 5.0% gains recorded in Q1 and marking the first quarterly decline since Q3 2025, while credit for the purchase of securities grew by 1.2% q/q, unchanged from Q1, though considerably below the stronger gains recorded in the same period of 2025. In contrast, household credit accelerated sharply, expanding by 1.5% q/q compared with a subdued 0.1% in Q1, suggesting improved appetite for consumer borrowing which could be helpful for consumer spending. Meanwhile, credit to non-residents declined by -6.7% q/q, reversing the 3.4% q/q increase recorded in Q1, largely due to lower lending to foreign banks.

Resident deposit growth remained solid despite a slowdown in Q2

On the funding side, resident deposits rose by 2.4% q/q in Q2, down from 3.8% in Q1, pushing the YTD growth to 6.3% by end-Q2. Slower growth came mainly due to a contraction in public institutions’ deposits, which fell by -2.2% q/q after surging by 13.2% in Q1. Meanwhile, however, government deposits continued to provide strong support, jumping 23% q/q after a similar increase of 22% in Q1. Private sector deposits, which constitute 73% of resident deposits, showed signs of improvement, rising by 1.2% q/q following no growth in Q1; YTD growth of 1.2% remained below the 3.4% recorded a year earlier. Meanwhile, non-resident deposits fell by -4.6% q/q, reversing the 1.9% increase seen in Q1 and pushing YTD growth into negative territory (-2.8%). The weakness was driven primarily by a decline in foreign currency private sector non-resident deposits, reflecting more cautious cross-border financial flows amid the extension of the US-Iran conflict through the quarter.

Table 1: Credit						Table 2: Deposits					
Credit	Jun-2026	% growth				Deposits	Jun-2026	% growth			
	KD billions	q/q	YTD	y/y	2025		KD billions	q/q	YTD	y/y	2025
Business	26.7	1.3	4.2	6.2	6.0	Private sector	41.0	1.2	1.2	1.6	3.8
of which Real Estate	11.1	0.6	3.4	5.2	5.2	of which Time dep.	23.4	0.2	-1.1	1.1	5.6
Household	20.3	1.5	1.6	3.9	3.7	of which CASA dep.	15.4	0.5	3.3	-0.2	0.8
Securities	4.9	1.2	2.4	10.9	27.9	Public Institutions	9.5	-2.2	10.7	44.4	30.8
Banks & financial instit.	2.8	-2.6	2.3	9.9	25.3	Government	5.6	23.3	50.6	28.2	-23.5
Total domestic credit	54.8	1.2	2.9	5.9	7.6	Total resident dep.	56.2	2.4	6.3	9.4	4.7
Non-resident credit	10.2	-6.7	-3.6	25.6	36.1	Non-resident deposits	6.1	-4.6	-2.8	33.2	89.3
Total credit	64.9	-0.2	1.9	8.6	11.5	Total deposits	62.3	1.7	5.3	11.3	9.9
Source: Central Bank of Kuwait						Source: Central Bank of Kuwait					

Alhammad: KFH empowers individuals with special needs and drives workplace inclusion

KFH launches sixth training program in cooperation with KSH

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Kuwait Finance House (KFH), in partnership with the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped (KSH), has launched the sixth edition of its training program aimed at empowering individuals with special needs. Running from August through October 2026, the three-month program offers immersive skill-building designed to foster successful workforce integration.

Kuwait Finance House Acting Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Ahmad Alhammad, highlighted that the training program, currently supporting 11 trainees, underscores KFH's ongoing commitment to corporate social responsibility and sustainability.

Alhammad emphasized that the program's six-year momentum reflects KFH's commitment to empowering individuals with special needs and integrating them into the workforce. This strategic partnership also plays a vital role in deepening employee engagement, reflecting KFH's commitment to a workforce that is integral to the broader community.

Alhammad stressed that the program builds on previous versions by expanding its training scope and departmental reach. This gives participants real-world experience, enhancing



Ahmad Alhammad



A group of trainees and officials from Kuwait Finance House and Kuwait Society for the Handicapped.

their readiness for the job market, he added.

Furthermore, Alhammad stated that the trainees will be assigned to various departments across the bank. Notably, this year's training plan introduces new departments for the first time, underscoring KFH's ongoing commitment to enhancing and expanding the program's scope.

He praised the trainees' active engagement with department heads at the launch ceremony, where managers met the new cohort and personally handed over their official work IDs to mark the start of their training.

Alhammad noted that the program offers a comprehensive training journey tailored to offer meaningful real-life opportunities to de-

velop practical skills in a supportive, inclusive environment, allowing participants of special needs to interact and grow.

Alhammad stressed that KFH remains committed to developing this annual program in cooperation with KSH, as part of a strategic partnership aimed at empowering individuals with special needs and raising organizational awareness about the importance of integrating them into community development.

Meanwhile, Director General of the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped, Baraa Al-Jenae said: "We take pride at KSH in the extended partnership with KFH, now in its sixth consecutive year."

He added that the initiative is a strong example of effective cooperation between the financial sector and civil society institutions, contributing directly to empowering people with special needs and equipping them with practical experience and skills that improve their chances of integration and independence in the workplace.

Al-Jenae emphasized that this strategic partnership is an extension of a well-established relationship that has, over the years, proven its positive impact in developing the participants' capabilities and strengthening their self-confidence. "This is clearly reflected each year in the progress of the program's outcomes and its lasting impact on the trainees' future," he remarked.

To help customers avoid fraud risks & stay prepared for emergencies

ABK provides customers with travel safety tips

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: As part of its ongoing awareness initiatives under the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' campaign, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continued its efforts to promote financial literacy and protect customer rights.

On this occasion, the Bank shared a set of essential guidelines and recommendations for customers travelling during the holiday season, aimed at equipping them with the knowledge needed to manage their accounts and banking cards safely, while avoiding cyber risks and fraud attempts that may occur abroad.

ABK advised customers to ensure that SMS notifications or mobile app alerts are activated in order to monitor purchase transactions instantly, and stressed the importance of never sharing card PINs or OTP verification codes with any third party.

When making card payments overseas, customers are encouraged to choose the local



currency of the country they are visiting instead of Kuwaiti dinars, in order to avoid high exchange rates that may be imposed by foreign point-of-sale terminals.

The Bank also emphasised the importance of securing mobile phones with passwords or facial recognition features, avoiding the use of public Wi-Fi networks for banking transactions, and refraining from using ATMs located in dark streets or small shops. Customers are encouraged to use ATMs operated by reputable banks and located inside bank branches, while also checking the machines for any suspicious devices that may be installed to steal data.

ABK further urged customers to ensure that their contact information and personal details are updated to guarantee



uninterrupted receipt of security and verification messages.

The Bank noted that customer awareness remains the first line of defence against fraud, and reaffirmed its commitment to providing customers with the tools needed to protect their funds anywhere in the world. In cases of card loss or suspected unauthorised transactions, customers should immediately block their cards through the Bank's mobile application or by contacting the 24/7 callcentre.

Customers were also advised not to interact with suspicious links and to rely only on official websites and applications when making payments. ABK encouraged customers to visit its branches or mobile application before travelling to review and adjust their card withdrawal and spending limits to avoid interruptions while abroad.

In addition, the Bank recom-

mended that when downloading local applications specific to the country of travel, such as train transportation, food delivery, or taxi booking apps, customers should pay as guests and delete their card details immediately after completing transactions, while avoiding the activation of automatic card-saving options on untrusted platforms.

ABK also encouraged customers to issue digital cards through its mobile application and use them for online shopping or purchasing tickets and event bookings during travel. These cards can be set with limited spending amounts, helping to protect customers' primary accounts.

The 'Let's Be Aware' campaign is a comprehensive awareness initiative aimed at highlighting customer rights and responsibilities, introducing banking services, and promoting financial security principles to support financial inclusion and empower all segments of Kuwaiti society to successfully manage their banking and financial affairs.

'Good for the world economy'

US-Japan intervention lifts yen against dollar

TOKYO, Aug 4, (AP): The U.S. dollar weakened sharply Monday against the Japanese yen after U.S. President Donald Trump and Japan's finance minister confirmed both sides had intervened in markets.

Before late last week, the dollar was trading above 163 yen, touching 40-year highs. After regulators were suspected of stepping in, it fell below 160 yen.

Early Monday, after the official announcement of the intervention, the dollar fell to nearly 155.20 yen. That's a big drop for the exchange rate. The dollar was trading at 156.70 yen early Monday Eastern time.

Even though it has attracted millions of bargain-hunting tourists, the yen's prolonged weakness against the dollar has been a source of frustration for Tokyo. Since Japan imports so much of what it consumes, a weak currency pushes prices higher. High oil prices have amplified that problem and that's putting pressure on the administration of Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi to do more to address the rising cost of living.

Efforts earlier this year to raise the value of the yen against the dollar did little to budge the exchange rate.

Normally foreign exchange markets determine the relative values of currencies, but there are many factors that shape what happens in the markets.

A big gap between interest rates in the U.S. and Japan has led investors to sell yen and buy dollars to take advantage of the higher yields from dollar-denominated assets. Both the Bank of Japan and the Federal Reserve kept their interest rates unchanged at meetings last week, maintaining that gap.

So, last week, when the dollar slipped below 160 yen and stayed there, the U.S. side was suspected of lending a hand.

Officials usually stay mum on such actions. But on Sunday, Trump confirmed that the U.S. side had helped, and Japanese Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama likewise issued a statement saying the finance ministry had purchased yen in coordination with the U.S. Treasury Department.

"We will not hesitate to conduct further joint intervention," she said.

Such overt acknowledgment of market intervention is rare, said Neil Newman, managing director and head of strategy at Astris Advisory Japan. He said the last big example was when governments intervened following a massive earthquake and tsunami disaster in north-eastern Japan in 2011.

When asked why Washington was helping, Trump said Sunday that "We have a good relationship with Japan. We're very strong -- very, very strong financially - and they are, you know, they have a weakening yen, and they wanted a little bit of help, and we're always there for Japan. Japan's been very good to us, with the exception, of course, of Pearl Harbor."

Trump said the U.S. got "financial benefit" out of the intervention, calling it a "signal of friendship."

"It's also good for the world economy," he said.

A weaker dollar makes U.S.-made goods more competitive, reducing their costs in yen terms, and might help increase American exports to Japan, Newman said.

"It's very rare that the Americans will work with the Japanese on this, but there is an alignment of interests here basically between Japan and America," Newman said.

It was a "low-cost" way for Washington to pay a favor to a key U.S. ally, while also protecting the stability of foreign exchange and bond markets, Shigeto Nagai, head of Japan economics for Oxford Economics, said in a report.

The latest intervention appears to be having a more durable impact than earlier cases this year, and the yen may have a slightly stronger path for the rest of the year, Nagai said.

But the factors that have contributed to the yen's long-term weakness remain.

Takaichi has pushed to cut Japan's sales tax on food to 1% from 8% and to dramatically increase government spending. Such moves would tend to weaken the yen since it would increase inflation and add to Japan's already massive government debt.

The Bank of Japan has moved slowly to raise its benchmark rate from near zero to the current 1%, its highest level in 31 years but still well below the Federal Reserve's rate of 3.5%-3.75%.

It likely will continue to slow-walk any changes as it evaluates the impact of the Iran war and other factors on the economy, Nagai said.

Meanwhile, a surge in oil prices because of the war and resulting higher inflation has kept the Fed from cutting rates.

"The yield differential remains wide, Japan's energy-import burden remains significant, and the Bank of Japan is still moving more slowly than the market would normally require to generate a sustained currency reversal," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

Kuwait joins 43 countries in shaping the mobility of tomorrow

Moscow hosts 5th International Transport Summit

MOSCOW, Aug 4: The 5th International Transport Summit, a premier global platform for exchanging cutting-edge urban expertise, kicked off in the capital of Russia. As the host city, Moscow brought together 200 foreign delegates from 43 countries and 61 megacities. The central topic was the discussion of long-term development strategies, where the Moscow Government presented its Transport Development Strategy through 2030, approved by Mayor Sergey Sobyenin.

The summit reaffirmed the capital's status as a global Smart City hub, attracting 16 new countries, including the UAE, India, Kuwait, Tanzania, and Senegal. For the first time, leading Russian regions also joined the international dialogue (including Tatarstan, as well as the Tyumen and Rostov regions).

A key practical outcome of the summit was the signing of 19 co-operation documents, including a Memorandum between Moscow and the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. In addition, an Arab city joined the UrbanTransportData international analytical platform for the first time — Beirut, the capital of Lebanon.

"The summit reinforces its status as a key platform for knowledge exchange. As the organizers, we present the results of implementing Strategy 2030 and, together with colleagues from around the world, seek solutions to urban challenges. Such dialogue allows us to make transit in megacities more convenient, safer, and more high-tech," noted Deputy Mayor of Moscow for Transport and Industry Maksim Liksutov.



Photos during the summit.



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Tom Holland in a scene from “Spider-Man: Brand New Day.” (AP)

Spidey breaks Endgame’s opening-day spell

‘Spider-Man: Brand New Day’ made box office history in its first weekend in theaters. The Sony-released superhero movie became the second-biggest North American opening ever with an astonishing \$355 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday. It was just a few million shy of “Avengers: Endgame,” which debuted to \$357 million in 2019.

The film also made \$572 million from over 73,500 screens internationally, with China contributing \$121 million alone, adding up to a \$927 million worldwide debut that is second only to “Endgame” (\$1.2 billion).

Tom Holland’s run as the comic book webslinger has been a mighty one. “No Way Home,” his third standalone Spider-Man movie, made over \$1.9 billion worldwide to become the eighth-highest earning movie of all time, not accounting for inflation. It was also the first movie since the beginning of the pandemic to cross the \$1 billion mark.

But the triumph of “Brand New Day” also comes on the heels of another major movie featuring Holland and Zendaya: Christopher Nolan’s

“The Odyssey,” which slid to second place in its third weekend in theaters with \$51 million. Their combined might helped propel the biggest weekend of all time for North American movie theaters, with an estimated \$430 million in total ticket sales, according to Rentrak.

“Spider-Man: Brand New Day” started strong, with a record \$168 million opening day from 4,487 theaters in the U.S. and Canada, besting “Avenger: Endgame’s” \$157 million Friday. The studio predicted it would lead to a \$325 million opening weekend, which would still have beaten the second-place record. It takes the place of “Spi-

der-Man: No Way Home” which opened to \$260 million in December 2021. In the realm of best opening weekends in North America, they’re followed by “Avengers: Infinity War” (\$257 million in 2018) and “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” (\$247 million in 2015).

Expectations were always high for “Brand New Day,” which was directed by Destin Daniel Cretton and cost a reported \$225 million to produce, not including marketing expenses. But there were worries it wouldn’t attract the same level of mass audience enthusiasm as its predecessor which integrated past Peter Parker actors Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield into the mix. In reality, interest was higher than ever. “Brand New Day” also received strong reviews from critics and audiences. It currently has a 90% on Rotten Tomatoes; Audiences gave it an “A” CinemaScore and a five-star rating on PostTrak.

Ticket buyers were predominately male (about 61%) and many were on the younger side, with slightly more than half the audience under the age of 25, according to PostTrak exit polls. The biggest group was between the ages of 18 and 24, which made up 36% of the audience; 27% were between the ages of 25 and 34. The box office analytics company EntTelligence estimates that about 24.1 million people attended “Spider-Man: Brand New Day” this weekend.

It’s also the biggest ever opening for Sony Pictures. Tom Rothman, the Chairman and CEO of Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group, praised “the incomparable Tom Holland” in a statement. Rothman famously pushed back the production of the movie to allow Holland to act in “The Odyssey” as well.

Cries about the death of the superhero movie have been looming since “Endgame” with more than a few high-profile flops in the years since, including several from the once-impenetrable Marvel Studios. Still, when they work, they really work, most notably with “No Way Home” and “Deadpool & Wolverine,” which made over \$1.3 billion.

Marvel Studios president and ‘Spider-Man’ producer Kevin Feige said in a statement, “This debut reflects the enduring power of Marvel’s characters, and the connection they continue to have with fans around the world - and, as audiences saw, it sets up exciting things to come.”

Producer Amy Pascal added that it “reinforces that moviegoers are hungry for stories that are both spectacular and deeply human.”

This year has also seen a resurgence of moviegoing from younger audiences, who have made hits out of movies like “Obsession,” “Backrooms” and “The Drama,” which also starred Zendaya.

They’re also helping blockbusters soar, and in a business that is partly propelled by momentum, “Spider-Man” had the benefit of coming after “The Odyssey,” which fell only 43% in its third weekend. “The Odyssey” has now earned \$395.5 million domestically, bringing its global total to \$911.4 million. The film will soon open in South Korea (Aug. 5), China (Aug. 14) and Japan (Sept. 11). Its studio, Universal, also became the first this year to surpass \$4 billion globally thanks in part to “Michael,” which it distributed internationally, and “The Super Mario Galaxy Movie.”

A slew of animated PG-rated holdovers rounded out

the top five: “Toy Story 5” was in third place with \$6.3 million, followed by “Minions & Monsters” in fourth and “Moana,” in fifth. And there were bright spots further down the chart as well. In sixth place with \$2 million, “Hometown: The Musical” surpassed “Hamilton” to become the highest grossing live theater capture release ever with a running total of \$18.2 million.

Paul Dergarabedian, the head of marketplace trends for Rentrak, said the “Spider-Man” effect could help the summer movie season surpass the \$4 billion mark for the first time since the Barbenheimer summer of 2023, and the third-ever billion dollar August.

“This is perhaps the most important summer moviegoing season in the history of the business,” Dergarabedian said. August, he added, “could set up a home stretch of the box office year like no other and one that could push us over that \$10 billion mark.”

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

1. “Spider-Man: Brand New Day,” \$355 million.
2. “The Odyssey,” \$51 million.
3. “Toy Story 5,” \$6.3 million.
4. “Minions & Monsters,” \$5.8 million.
5. “Moana,” \$5.3 million.
6. “Hometown: The Musical,” \$2 million.
7. “The Invite,” \$1.2 million.
8. “I Want Your ...,” \$600,000.
9. “Young Washington,” \$477,727.
10. “Obsession,” \$470,000. (AP)

Influence persists in pop culture and traffic stops

‘Super Troopers’ celebrates 25th anniversary with third film

NEW YORK, Aug 4, (AP) — A quarter of a century is a long time for mustache rides and syrup binges, but “Super Troopers” has gotten a lot of mileage out of the simple joys of friends goofing around.

The comedy troupe Broken Lizard, a group of college buddies who began performing together at Colgate University, broke through with 2001’s “Super Troopers.” Made for less than \$3 million, the movie cast Jay Chandrasekhar (who directed), Kevin Heffernan, Steve Lemme, Paul Soter and Erik Stolhanske as a group of juvenile Vermont state troopers. A then-Emmy-less Brian Cox played their cantankerous chief.

The movie became an unlikely cult hit, making many times over what it made in theaters (\$23 million) on VHS and DVD. Roger Ebert begrudgingly called it “the kind of movie that makes you want to like it.”

Not all movies look like they were fun to make, but “Super Troopers” did. For Broken Lizard, the difference between the movie and the blooper reel is almost nonexistent. It’s like they’re living out the dream of every group of funny college pals.

“We talk about that being almost like the special sauce in the movies. You can’t fake 30 years of friendship. Even the best actors can’t do it,” Soter says before his fellow members make him question that declaration.

“OK, maybe Al Pacino could fake it.”



Cast members, from left, Kevin Heffernan, Paul Soter, Steve Lemme, Jay Chandrasekhar and Erik Stolhanske pose for a portrait to promote the film “Super Troopers 3” on Monday, July 27, 2026, in Burbank, Calif. (AP)

Broken Lizard has kept at it, making half a dozen other movies. In the intervening years, big-screen comedy has grown all but dead, so it hasn’t always been easy. They resorted to crowdfunding to help finance 2018’s “Super Troopers 2.”

But with “Super Troopers 3,” which Searchlight Pictures will release Aug. 7, they’re back again in aviator sunglasses, broad-brimmed hats and, of course, mustaches. Alongside big-budget blockbusters like “Spider-Man: Brand New Day” and “The Odyssey,” “Super Troopers 3” will try to hold onto its narrow stretch of highway.

“It’s kind of a show-business miracle to be able to make eight or nine movies with your friends from college,” says Chandrasekhar. “We certainly never thought it could get this far.”

“Super Troopers” wasn’t the first movie Broken Lizard made. In 1996, they released “Puddle Cruiser,” a comedy shot entirely on Colgate’s campus. It didn’t get distribution, so their only real hope for “Super Troopers” was that it play somewhere, anywhere. Around then, the quintet was performing in New York and touring college campuses. Road trips inspired the movie.



This image released by Searchlight Pictures shows, from left, Nat Faxon, Kevin Heffernan, Jay Chandrasekhar, Steve Lemme, Paul Soter, Andrew Dismukes, and Erik Stolhanske from the film “Super Troopers 3.” (AP)

“We were getting pulled over a lot. You talk a lot of smack when you see the cops,” Lemme says. “But the second they pull up to the car, you’re immediately in butt-kissing mode. We always wondered what the cops were thinking, if they knew how much power they had over us and how much they could screw with us.”

One of the movie’s most famous scenes featured two patrolmen (Lemme and Soter) pulling over a then-little-known Jim Gaffigan. During the course of giving him a ticket, they play a game where one has to say “meow” 10 times in place

of “now.” Over the years, they’ve heard countless stories of everyone from police officers to pilots doing the same.

“My friend is a pilot for United Airlines and he said the aviation radio communication system is just drowning in meows,” Chandrasekhar says.

“Super Troopers,” the group has come to realize, has filtered into culture as much through traffic stops as streaming services. Sometimes, it’s been to their benefit.

“I once got pulled over doing 120 miles per hour. The cop looked in the window. He said, ‘Mister, do you

have any idea how fast you ... Super Troopers?!’” recalls Lemme, laughing. “At the end, he brought over his ticket book and asked me for a photo and an autograph. His hands were trembling. I signed the ticket book, and made sure I didn’t sign on the dotted line. We took selfies by the side of the road.”

The guys of Broken Lizard are all now in their late 50s, but little of their dynamic has changed. In character, they playfully rag on each other - especially Heffernan’s loud-mouthed Rodney Farva - but with an affection immediately recognizable to a certain kind of acerbic friend group.

That was true, too, over a recent interview by Zoom. Broken Lizard was in the middle of a cross-country promotional tour. (One stop included interrupting a Limp Bizkit concert, to register a noise complaint.)

“We have families and our own lives and stuff, and when we come together it’s like summer camp,” Heffernan says.

Twenty-five years of “Super Troopers” has meant a lot of months in mustaches. They usually shave them right away but have to grow them back for marketing the release. “The studio,” says Heffernan, “thinks the mustaches are the stars of the movie.”

Living with “Super Troopers” has other, stranger legacies. The first film memorably included a maple syrup chugging race. That, they all agree, they’re too old for now.

Project aims to prevent extinctions

DiCaprio & Bezos back plan to save 100 endangered species



Jeff Bezos appears at the Vanity Fair Oscar Party in Los Angeles on March 15, 2026, left, Lauren Sanchez Bezos appears at Chanel’s 16th Annual Pre-Oscar Awards Dinner in Beverly Hills, Calif., on March 1, 2025, center, and Leonardo DiCaprio appears at the Oscars in Los Angeles on March 15, 2026. (AP)

LOS ANGELES, Aug 4, (AP): Foundations funded and co-founded by Leonardo DiCaprio and Jeff Bezos have launched an initiative committing \$200 million to revive 100 of Earth’s most threatened species, including endangered lemurs, salamanders, pangolins, pigs and echidnas.

DiCaprio’s Re:wild and the Bezos Earth Fund are leading the Phoenix Species Project, the groups announced Tuesday. They call it the largest single fund in history dedicated exclusively to recovering critically endangered species.

DiCaprio has for years been developing the idea of a major concerted effort to help species whose habitats and future existence are threatened by climate change.

In 2021, he and Re:wild co-founder Wes Sechrest, a biologist who serves as the organization’s CEO, met with the Amazon-founding mega billionaire Bezos and his wife, former TV news reporter and host Lauren Sánchez Bezos. He serves as chair and she as vice chair of the Bezos Earth Fund.

The meeting led to a series of conversations with local governments, environmental groups and Indigenous people on how best to reverse the decline of their most vulnerable species. Those conversations eventually led to the Phoenix Species Project.

Animals the initiative is seeking to sustain include:

- The golden-crowned sifaka, a lemur from Madagascar

- The Hickory Nut Gorge green salamander, a lungless tree-dweller that lives only in a small canyon in North Carolina.
 - The Visayan warty pig, endemic to islands in the Philippines.
 - Mexico’s Cozumel harvest mouse, which lives only on an island off the Yucatán Peninsula.
 - The pink land iguana, found only on Wolf Volcano in the Galápagos Islands.
 - The Malayan pangolin, also known as the Sunda pangolin, native to Southeast Asia.
 - Tanzania’s pancake tortoise, named for its flat, flexible shell.
 - The starry night harlequin toad, known and named for its black-and-white evening sky appearance, found only in the mountains of Colombia.
 - Attenborough’s long-beaked echidna, a monotreme, or mammal that lays eggs, from New Guinea named in honor of the 100-year-old naturalist and narrator-of-nature David Attenborough.
- The project’s goals include giving long-term sustenance to successful but fleeting smaller efforts.
- “We’ve protected the golden-crowned sifaka for years on a budget that would never match what this species deserves, but letting it go extinct was never an option,” Tiana Andriamanana, executive director of Association Fanamby, one of the groups getting a grant from the initiative, said in a statement. “This funding, this global platform and technical support change what is possible.”

Food

One-hour tomato marinade turns simple ingredients into bright basil pasta

No-cook tomato sauce for hot summer days

NEW YORK, Aug 4, (AP): When tomatoes are at their peak - and it’s too hot to turn on the oven - this simple, no-cook sauce from my cookbook “Pasta Every Day” is what I come back to time and again. It’s often called pomodoro crudo and served with very thin spaghetti, though you’ll find many variations, including those with onions, capers, olives and local cheese.

In that spirit, don’t hesitate to make this your own.

You can use any flavorful tomato here, from heirloom to plum to cherry. Remove the skins and seeds of the larger varieties if you’d like, or keep it rustic and leave them intact (I prefer the latter). The pasta will soak up the garlicky tomato juices over time, meaning it makes for great (dare I say better?) leftovers and picnic fare.

- Serves 4 (enough for about 22 ounces of fresh pasta or 16 ounces of dried pasta)
- 2¼ pounds ripe, small tomatoes
 - 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
 - 1½ loosely packed cups fresh basil leaves, roughly torn, plus more for serving
 - Kosher salt
 - 1/3 to 1/2 cup high quality extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for serving
- Finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano or Pecorino Romano, for serving (optional)
- Halve or quarter the tomatoes and combine with the garlic and basil in a large serving bowl. Season generously with salt, then drizzle in the oil. Stir to combine. Leave the sauce to sit, covered, for at least 1 hour, ideally in a warm, sunny place.
- Cook your pasta of choice to your liking - this is not a time for undercooking and finishing in the sauce. Add the pasta to the sauce and stir to combine. Finish with



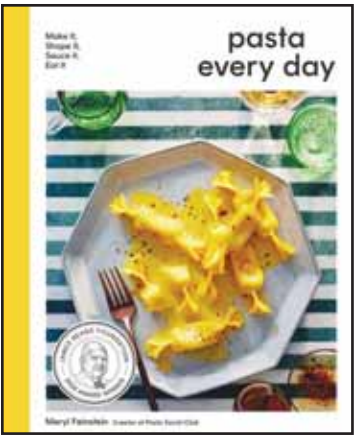
This image released by Voracious shows a recipe for no-cook tomato sauce from “Pasta Every Day” by Meryl Feinstein. (AP)

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This cover image released by Voracious shows the cookbook “Pasta Every Day” by Meryl Feinstein. (AP)

Nationwide laughter tour celebrating immigrant communities

Yang turns grocery stores into comedy clubs

NEW YORK, Aug 4, (AP): Stand-up comedians are used to tuning out the din of clinking glasses from two-drink minimums and patrons walking in and out during sets. But what about rolling shopping carts or the smell of fried fish?

That kind of ambience is what you’ll find on comic Jenny Yang’s unique nationwide summer comedy tour, where she has been turning cultural grocery stores into comedy clubs for a night. And she’s been leaning into her unconventional venue choice.

“I got to buy a bunch of small snacks and shrimp chips and throw it into the audience every time I felt like a joke didn’t land,” Yang said. “I mean this is my dream.”

A stand-up and sketch comedy veteran whose acting credits include the Netflix show “The Brothers Sun,” Yang is living a dream of “the most politically and creatively fulfilling project” she’s ever done. The Good Egg Immigrant Grocery Store Standup Comedy Tour is partly her reaction to the immigration crackdowns by President Donald Trump’s administration impacting Asian, Latino and Black communities. She wanted to entertain in cities with immigrant enclaves where she could give back. So, Yang and her team chose grocery store stops and nonprofits to donate to based on recommendations from local organizations.

The unorthodox tour has grown from five performances to nearly 20, far beyond her expectations. It started June 5 in Los Angeles, where Yang lives, and has taken her to Minneapolis, Phoenix and other cities. After stops in New York and San Francisco, the tour will wrap Sept. 26 back in L.A. with Yang filming a performance for a proposed comedy special.

She touches on topics ranging from infertility to awareness of immigrant experiences in the U.S. While comedians are divided on whether stand-up should stand down on politics, Yang has always spoken on it.

“People come into this art form as a stand-up comedian for different reasons. I am of the mind that my stand-up comedy is just an extension of my values and I believe in punching up, not down,” Yang said.

Last December, Yang, who immigrated from Taiwan, was back there to receive what was a failed round of in vitro fertilization treatment. Heartbroken and sitting in front of an omelet breakfast, she lamented



Jenny Yang walks through the Jerusalem Market prior to The Good Egg Immigrant Grocery Store Stand Up Comedy Tour show, July 31, 2026, in Phoenix. (AP)

not having “one good egg” to start a family. As she mulled a new endeavor to focus on, her mind drifted toward the “non-stop barrage” of headlines about U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations.

That’s when the idea for a tour weaving her past as a labor organizer with her passion for stand-up sparked.

“The ability to do and bring a show together, and bring people together inside of the immigrant grocery store, to me, reaffirms our ability to take up space and to own the space that matters to us,” Yang said.

After emceeing a gala for the Asian Law Caucus in April, Yang shared her outside-the-box idea with the San Francisco-based group. The Caucus works pro bono in immigrant communities and on high-profile cases like the recent birthright citizenship case. They hired Yang not just for her comedic touch but as “somebody who culturally could relate to the communities that we serve,” said executive director Aarti Kohli. The Caucus offered its vast network of Asian American community leaders and immigrant-centered nonprofits nationwide.

“Although we are a legal civil rights organization, we understand

that so much of how we reach community is through, especially for Asian communities, food and culture,” Kohli said. “I think comedy is healing and unifying.”

At Shuang Hur Supermarket in Minneapolis - half a block from where ICE agents fatally shot Alex Pretti - Yang put on a show in July, said manager Henry Zhou.

They reconfigured shelves near the checkout lanes to fit 150 chairs, he said.

“Everybody got in line to buy some snacks and some drinks. A few people even did a bit of grocery shopping,” Zhou said.

He then dimmed the lights for Yang.

“Just renting a spotlight makes a show,” Yang said. “How fun is it that I’m literally doing stand-up comedy next to an aisle that sells fungus and five pounds of rice?”

Zhou found it a “unique experience” that he’d do again.

“We enjoyed every minute. Even after the show, everyone stayed and chatted,” Zhou said. “I’m pretty sure it helped us promote the store.”

“Ethnic food” is no longer just a supermarket aisle. Chains like H Mart and 99 Ranch Market, as well as smaller stores, generate \$55.8 billion in revenue, according to a 2025 report from market research

another drizzle of oil, more basil and a shower of cheese if you’d like. If you can bear it, let the pasta marinate in the sauce for 15 minutes before serving.

If using larger tomatoes, I often peel and seed them before chopping. To do so, bring a pot of water to a boil and fill a large bowl with ice water. With a paring knife, score the bottoms of the tomatoes with a small X, just piercing the skin. Drop them into the water and cook until the skin near the X starts to loosen, about 2 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer them to the ice bath. When the tomatoes are cool, peel away the skins. Remove the pulp and seeds and roughly chop the flesh.

Meryl Feinstein is a chef, pasta maker and food writer. She founded Pasta Social Club and lives in Washington, D.C., where she teaches pasta-making workshops. She was the Resident Pasta Maker on the online site Food52.

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Ariana Grande arrives at the 31st Annual Critics Choice Awards on Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026, at The Barker Hanger in Santa Monica, Calif. (AP)

Steps back from spotlight

Grande exits London musical

LONDON, Aug 4, (AP): Ariana Grande has pulled out of an upcoming stage musical in London, producers said, and plans to withdraw from the public eye for a break from the intense scrutiny she faces.

Grande had been due to star alongside her “Wicked” co-star Jonathan Bailey in a production of Stephen Sondheim’s “Sunday in the Park With George” at the Barbican theater in 2027.

Empire Street Productions said Sunday that Grande will no longer be part of the London production. A representative for Grande told People magazine that the 33-year-old singer “will be taking a step back from visibility after she completes the Eternal Sunshine Tour.”

“She looks forward to finishing the tour and ending it on a high note, both healthily and happily, and then taking a much-deserved break from public-facing work and appearances, which has led to endless, ongoing public scrutiny,” the statement said. A representative for Grande did not offer further comment to The Associated Press.

With Grande’s recent breakup from “Wicked” co-star Ethan Slater, the ongoing tour and last week’s release of the album “Petal,” attention has swelled, fueling rampant speculation online about her

health and appearance. Grande has previously expressed discomfort with public discourse around her weight.

“I think we should be gentler and less comfortable commenting on people’s bodies, no matter what,” she said in a 2023 TikTok video.

Late last year, while promoting “Wicked: For Good,” she reshared a 2024 interview in which she said it was uncomfortable having being picked apart for her appearance since she was a teenager. In the December social media post, she called the clip a “loving reminder to all.”

Grande found fame as a child performer on Nickelodeon before releasing her debut album, “Yours Truly,” in 2013. She has won three Grammy Awards and was nominated for a supporting actress Oscar for her role as Glinda in “Wicked.”

Grande’s next concert is Monday in Chicago. Her tour is due to wrap up in London on Sept. 1.

“We know this cannot have been an easy decision, and she makes it with our complete understanding and support,” Empire Street Productions said. The company said “Sunday in the Park With George” will open next summer as planned, and that casting would be announced “in due course.”

BRUSSELS, Aug 4, (AP): The European Union rolled out a new team to rein in AI companies across the world, in one of the most aggressive regulations the high-tech sector has so far faced as fears rise over the risks the rapidly advancing technology poses to people, politics and prosperity.

Brussels aims to track the use of AI models for violations of its new regulations, like the publishing of sexually explicit material, fake photos and videos, and cyber threats to public infrastructure. When the bloc’s AI Act came into force on Sunday, AI companies will be required to make clear to consumers with labels or digital watermarks that chatbots or imagery are generated with AI.

“As enforcement begins, we are taking an important step towards AI that people and busi-

nesses can understand and trust, and whose benefits are shared widely across our society,” said Henna Virkkunen, the EU chief for tech sovereignty.

The European Commission said in a statement that new regulations also include “systemic risks” posed by AI like “chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents, loss of control, cyber offense, harmful manipulation and threats to fundamental rights.”

The team is the latest move in the 27-nation EU’s “tech sovereignty” strategy that welds landmark digital regulations with economic ambition that has seen over the past week billions of euros in fines on Big Tech companies as well as record investment in AI infrastructure inside the bloc.

The rollout comes on the heels of shocking AI



A data centre is pictured in Frankfurt, Germany, Friday, Aug. 22, 2025. (AP)

safety failures that rattled the nascent industry. Political leaders worldwide are now weighing control of the technology with market leadership.



Sargassum gathers in the water off the coast of Tulum, Mexico on July 30. (AP)

Blanket of seaweed smothers beaches, coastlines from Caribbean to Mexico

PUERTO MORELOS, Mexico, Aug 4, (AP): Swaths of seaweed are blanketing the beaches and coastlines of the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, suffocating shorelines and snuffing out marine life while spooking visitors in areas that depend heavily on tourism.

Some 27 million metric tons of self-sustaining sargassum have been recorded in the Atlantic, Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico in July, according to a report released Friday by the University of South Florida’s Optical Oceanography Lab.

The prickly seaweed covers miles of coastline, releasing a foul smell as it rots onshore.

This year marks the first time that scientists have observed sargassum growing in large quantities in areas including the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, instead of being swept into those areas by ocean currents.

The algae usually reproduces asexually as it travels from Western Africa, said Brian Barnes, a marine scientist and research assistant professor at the University of South Florida. “None of this is normal,” he said. “Every year is a little bit of a new story.”

The Great Atlantic Sargassum Belt has been growing since 2011, dumping an increasing amount of seaweed along coastlines in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. Experts have said that agricultural runoff, warming waters and changes in wind, current and rain could be factors.

The sargassum that began reproducing in the region earlier than usual this year stems from a record 40 million metric tons reported last year.

“The 2025 bloom was so big it never really left,” Barnes said. “It was enough to start a new bloom locally.”

Sargassum levels in the Caribbean reached record levels in June, while the amount present in the Gulf hit 5 million metric tons in June, nearly double last year’s record, according to the University of South Florida.

Scientists expect 2026 to be the second largest amount of sargassum recorded in the Atlantic, Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, noting that June alone saw 34 million metric tons, which was only 10% lower than the year-earlier period.

Mexico said it plans to invest \$115 million to tackle the blooming algae, which poses an environmental and economic threat. The government estimates that up to 9,000 tons reach its Caribbean coastline on the worst days. Given current resources, Mexico says it can only gather 1,200 tons of sargassum a day.

Australia confirms first H5N1 bird flu mass mortality event

Ebola kills 1,700 in eastern Congo as fastest-growing outbreak surges

BUNIA, Congo, Aug 4, (Agencies): Ebola has killed more than 1,700 people in eastern Congo in the fastest-growing outbreak of the disease, data showed.

As of Tuesday, 3,802 cases had been recorded, with 1,707 deaths, according to the latest government update.

It is not clear when the outbreak will reach its peak, Africa CDC Director-General Jean Kaseya said during his second visit to the town of Bunia near the outbreak’s epicenter on Tuesday. Kaseya cautioned that nearly 80% of new cases are not coming from contact tracing but instead from community spread.

The Director-General of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, will arrive in the Congolese capital, Kinshasa, today and is expected to visit Bunia later this week.

The outbreak, declared on May 15, has been linked to the Bundibugyo virus for which there are no approved vaccines or treatments. Delays in contact tracing, difficulties accessing affected areas, mistrust from communities, and violence by armed groups and some residents have hampered the response, the Africa CDC has said.

Two clinical trials for post-exposure prophylaxis drugs are ongoing in Ituri province as well as two separate vaccine trials in the U.K. and Canada.

The outbreak is mostly concentrated in eastern Congo’s remote Ituri province, which accounts for nearly 90% of cases, but cases have also been confirmed in five other provinces, including in one of the country’s largest cities, Kisangani.

Neighboring Uganda declared itself free of Ebola following the discharge of the country’s last patient in mid-June.

A key challenge is that patient zero has yet to be identified in the outbreak while displacement from armed conflict and illegal mining in the region have made it difficult to trace thousands who have come in contact with infected individuals. The WHO said Tuesday that it was monitoring over 17,000 potential contacts with nearly 80% of them being seen daily.

On Monday, healthcare workers in the hard hit town of Mongbwalu issued an ultimatum over unpaid wages saying that “if nothing is done within 24 hours, we will escalate our action.”

Previously, healthcare workers in Bunia went on strike over a lack of pay and dangerous working conditions. The World Health Organization says more than 100 healthcare workers have been infected since the beginning of the outbreak.

The latest outbreak has killed people at a quicker rate than any previous outbreak, including in 2014-2016 when 28,000 cases were reported, of which over 11,000 people died. That outbreak took about eight months to reach 1,000 deaths.

The response is also hampered by a funding gap, attacks on health centers, an ongoing conflict in eastern Congo and mistrust among local communities.

Enrollment in a highly anticipated study of two possible Ebola treatments recently started in Ituri.



Health workers disinfect an ambulance at Ebola Treatment Center at Bunia General Hospital in Ituri, Congo on July 22. (AP)

H5N1 bird flu: Australia’s first H5N1 bird flu mass mortality event has been confirmed in a flock of greater crested terns that were found on an island off the coast of South Australia (SA), authorities said on Monday.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Minister Julie Collins and Environment and Water Minister Murray Watt told reporters that the terns have tested positive for the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain of avian influenza.

The flock of 49 dead and 35 sick birds was located by aerial surveillance on a small island about 5 km off SA’s southeast coast on Friday amid a spike in H5N1 cases in the state.

Collins said on Monday that the mass mortality event was expected after the strain was first detected on the mainland for the first time in mid-June.

“Sadly, we do know that once the H5 bird flu is spreading in wildlife and the natural environment, it is not possible to avoid significant losses, which is what we are starting to see now,” she said.

“Australians should expect to see more spread and larger numbers now of wildlife being affected.”

The federal government committed 113 million Australian dollars (79.5 million U.S. dollars) in funding for H5N1 outbreak surveillance, response and preparedness measures prior to the strain arriving on the mainland.

Watt said on Monday that a national management plan for the strain has been activated, releasing an additional 24 million Australian dollars (16.9

million U.S. dollars) in funding.

Bone marrow transplant: Researchers have found a way to improve the quality of stem cells taken from bone marrow donors, which could help patients with serious diseases such as blood cancer and immune disorders, Ben Gurion University of the Negev said in a statement on Monday.

Most stem cells are dormant and do not divide in the healthy state. An acute infection activates stem cells and pushes them to divide to help supply the needed immune cells. Scientists have not figured out how a chronic infection affects the stem cells.

The study, published in Cell Reports, examined how long-term infection affects stem cells in the bone marrow.

The researchers used a mouse model of chronic Salmonella infection to understand what happens to these important cells during ongoing illness. They found that chronic infection pushes stem cells out of their normal resting state and impairs their function. This weakens the cells and may reduce the success of bone marrow transplants.

The team also found that treating the infection with antibiotics in mice restored the stem cells to a healthier state within about two weeks. After treatment, the cells behaved more like those in healthy animals, and their function improved.

The findings suggest that the health and infection status of bone marrow donors may be important when evaluating stem cell quality.

They also indicate that treating the donor’s infections before collecting cells could improve the chances of successful transplantation and help more patients benefit from this life-saving treatment.

Hearing loss: Researchers have identified a unique biological mechanism that could enable the regeneration of sensory hair cells in the inner ear, offering hope for millions of people with permanent hearing loss, Tel Aviv University said in a statement.

Hearing loss is often caused by damage to tiny hair cells in the cochlea of the inner ear, which detect sound and convert it into electrical signals transmitted to the brain. Unlike many other species, mammals, including humans, are unable to regenerate these cells once they are damaged, making the loss permanent.

In a study published in Science Advances, the researchers used live tissue imaging and single-cell analysis to examine supporting cells located next to the ear’s sensory hair cells.

They examined whether these supporting cells could be encouraged to replace damaged hearing cells by blocking the Notch signaling pathway, a key cell communication system.

The intervention prompted a small group of supporting cells to transform into hair cells, which are essential for hearing, suggesting that these cells may have a natural ability to regenerate under the right conditions.

Michigan reports first 2 US deaths related to diarrhea-causing parasite: state health officials

DETROIT, Aug 4, (AP): Two people have died in the cyclospora outbreak in Michigan, state health officials announced Monday, the first deaths confirmed in the US related to the microscopic parasite.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services said both people had underlying health conditions that may have been impacted by the intestinal illness and dehydration. The department said it would not provide additional information about the deaths.

Cyclospora is a microscopic, spherical parasite that commonly causes watery diarrhea “with frequent and sometimes explosive bowel movements,” according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Outbreaks tend to occur most often in the late spring and summer.

The CDC says the illness, called cyclosporiasis, is rarely deadly.

The heat-loving parasite infects the bowels and spreads through feces. In the past, people have been infected by consuming fruits or vegetables that were exposed to feces-contaminated irrigation water.

Dr. Joel Kammeyer, the division chief of infectious diseases at Wayne State University and the Detroit Medical Center, called the deaths a “tragedy” but noted that despite thousands of cyclosporiasis cases, only two people have died.

“For someone who comes into an urgent care and cyclosporiasis is their

only issue, it’s relatively easy to treat,” Kammeyer said. But for people who are struggling with other illnesses, he said, “it stands to reason that there are some patients that might not be able to withstand the dehydration that can come with severe cyclosporiasis.”

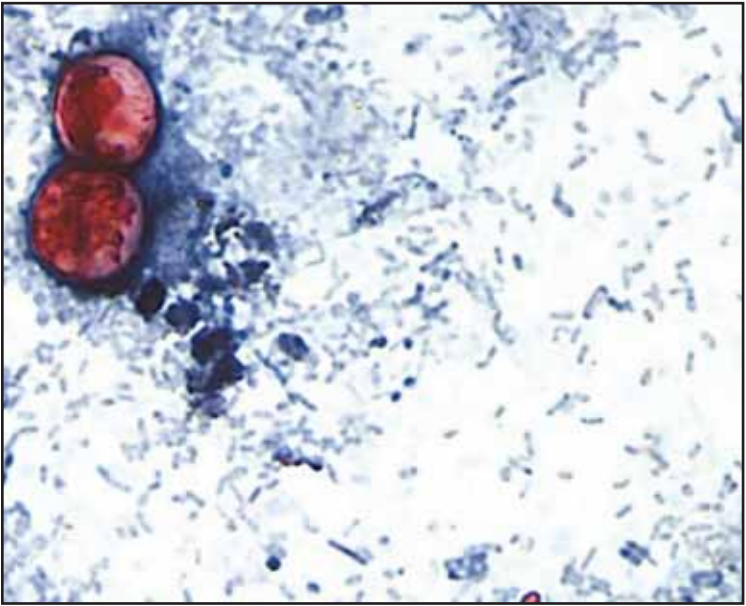
Cyclosporiasis is less common than other foodborne illnesses, including salmonella and E. coli. Many cases are never linked to a specific food or other source and, for years, few U.S. cyclospora outbreaks were reported. But the number started rising about a decade ago, with a particularly notable spike in 2018 and 2019.

Previously, 2019 saw the most reported US cyclosporiasis cases, with about 4,700.

The CDC said it is aware of more than 18,000 confirmed or suspected cases in the current surge. But CDC numbers can lag state reports, which suggest the number is more than 20,000 nationwide.

Federal health officials have identified lettuce from Mexico served at Taco Bell locations in nine states as a source of the widespread outbreak. As of late July, the number of cases linked to the lettuce was 1,947, including at least 98 people who had to be hospitalized, according to the CDC.

The agency has said other “brands, restaurants, retailers, or distribution channels” could be tied to the outbreak as the investigation continues.



This undated photo taken through a microscope provided by the CDC shows Cyclospora cayentanensis oocysts found in a fresh stool sample which had been prepared with a formalin solution and stained with safranin. (AP)



This photo provided by Bernardo Arriaza shows the Camarones coast on Nov 2, 2018, in Northern Chile, where scientists found evidence of ancient smallpox infections. (AP)

Ancient mummy DNA provides scientific evidence that colonization brought smallpox to Americas

NEW YORK, Aug 4, (AP): Ancient mummy DNA recovered in Chile has yielded the firmest evidence yet that European colonization brought smallpox to the Americas.

Smallpox was one of the deadliest diseases in human history before it was eradicated in 1980, largely thanks to vaccination. For centuries, the virus had killed about one-third of the people it infected and left most survivors with deep and sometimes disfiguring scars.

Outbreaks struck Asia and Europe and eventually spread to the Americas, where colonial writings, administrative records and missionary reports documented how it killed millions and devastated Indigenous populations who had never been exposed to the virus.

Now there’s scientific evidence for the spread: An analysis of Chilean mummies provides the strongest genetic link yet to the virus as it existed outside of the Americas, and provides a better picture of how it reached remote populations through colonization, said geneticist Shigeki Nakagome with Trinity College Dublin.

In the new study, Nakagome and colleagues examined 13 bone samples previously collected from an archaeological site at Camarones, in northern Chile. Researchers found evidence of two smallpox infections in ancient DNA from the leg bone fragments of an adult man and woman.

From dating the remains and peeking at the genes, scientists concluded the two likely died between 1492 and 1631. Scientists also compared the genes in this version of smallpox to other versions and fit it neatly between European strains from medieval times and later versions. This was important molecular evidence, suggesting that the strains of smallpox infecting people in the Americas evolved first from Europe.

“Nobody would ever question that smallpox came to this hemisphere from colonization, but this proves it,” said Patricia Foster, a biologist at Indiana University. She had no role in the new research, which was published Thursday in the journal Science.

Exactly which population brought smallpox to the Americas from the Old World remains unclear, said the study authors. European settlers came in different waves to the Americas following the explorations of Christopher Columbus in the Caribbean in 1492 and Amerigo Vespucci along the South American coast about a decade later. The disease also could have passed through Africa as part of the introduction and expansion of the slave trade.

These smallpox infections in South America were identified in an area with no previous record of the disease, opening new questions about how the virus got so far south - possibly spreading along Indigenous trading networks that had long pre-existed the arrival of Europeans.

Studying various strains of the virus also allowed scientists to pinpoint how it evolved over time, turning off certain genes to become more effective at its deadly mission.

In addition to confirming the history of smallpox, the research also shines a light on the human cost. The two sick individuals studied were between 18 and 35 years old, and the disease is likely what killed them.

The findings point to how devastating the disease was across the Americas, wiping out entire populations and leaving them vulnerable to European conquest, said study coauthor Constanza de la Fuente Castro, a biological anthropologist at the University of Chile.

“It wasn’t just cultural or demographic. It’s literally written into biological evidence that we can still recover and read today,” de la Fuente Castro said.

Eight-match tour starts in Cape Town and ends with the fourth test at Ravens’ stadium

South Africa & New Zealand renew rugby’s greatest rivalry on six-week tour

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Aug 4, (AP): Before the World Cup settled all arguments, rugby’s world supremacy was invariably decided between South Africa and New Zealand.

Two former outposts of the British Empire improved the game that England invented, and used rugby to forge their identity and raise their stature on the global stage. The Springboks and All Blacks stopped dancing around each other in 1921 when South Africa arrived in New Zealand by steamship.

For the next 75 years, to the dawn of the professional era, the rugby tours to each other’s shores were titanic in length and depth, and fervor and controversy.

On the 30th anniversary of the last traditional tour between them, the All Blacks are in South Africa, opening an eight-match, six-week expedition on Friday in Cape Town. They and the Springboks will cross the Atlantic for marketing reasons to play the fourth and final test match in the NFL home of the Baltimore Ravens.

“These are the tours we’ve only heard of,” Boks captain Siya Kolisi said when the tour was announced. “To experience this for the first time ... is unbelievable for us as a group.”

Two-thirds of the 88 total players across both squads weren’t even born during the last tour in 1996. Kolisi was 5 years old. New Zealand captain Ardie Savea was 2. But they all know the history and its weight.

From the beginning, South Africa-New Zealand matchups set the standard for intensity and tension, enhanced off the field by respect and reverence.

The Springboks didn’t lose a series anywhere from 1903 until 1956 in New Zealand. The period included their only series win in New Zealand in 1937.

New Zealand rugby officials crippled their team’s hopes by bowing to the South African government’s policy of racial segregation and blocking Maori players from touring the republic until 1970.

The lure of winning a series in South Africa outshone all other considerations for New Zealand players, including Colin Meads, acclaimed as the greatest All Black of the 20th century. He had two shots in 1960 and 1970 and was desperate enough to play two tests in 1970 with a broken arm.



In this file photo, Jesse Kriel, left, of South Africa attempts to fend off New Zealand’s Tyrell Lomax during their rugby international against the All Blacks at Eden Park in Auckland, New Zealand. (AP)

“If you’re ever going to play good rugby, you’ll play it in South Africa,” Meads said in his autobiography. “There is always that feeling inside you, as an All Black, that THIS is what it has all been about, that THIS is South Africa and THESE are the players you most want to beat.”

But as uncompromising and bitterly fought the tours were in the apartheid era, so were the protests from the 1970s onwards which caused division and disruption on an unprecedented scale.

When apartheid laws were abolished in 1991 and South Africa was readmit-

ted to international sport that year, the Springboks arranged their first match against, of course, New Zealand.

The All Blacks in South Africa enjoyed overwhelming support from Blacks but that diminished after Nelson Mandela backed the Springboks as South Africa hosted and won the iconic 1995 World Cup.

The All Blacks, losers in the 1995 final in extra time, returned the next year and finally clinched their first series win in South Africa. The enduring image of that 1996 tour is of All Blacks skipper Sean Fitzpatrick pounding the turf in Pretoria in joy. Fitzpatrick and his 1996 cohorts met the current All Blacks last week with the messages that this tour will be their greatest adventure, and a successful one if they stick together.

In tour history, the teams are in lockstep: Both have undertaken six tours, have four home wins, and one win on the other’s soil.

But the All Blacks will go into the upcoming tests as underdogs, firm No. 2s to South Africa’s undisputed No. 1 status.

Boks coach Rassie Erasmus has had an eight-year runway to prepare for the series, building enviable depth while winning the last two Rugby Championship and their last 11 tests, their best streak in 18 years. The series will tell Erasmus who has gas in the tank to win a third straight World Cup next year in Australia. He’s guiding the Boks in Argentina this week for a last tune-up for the All Blacks.

On the other hand, New Zealand coach Dave Rennie has been in charge since only June and for three matches. He’s lifted morale at home by having the All Blacks play direct and at tempo. Rennie has rested Savea until the tests and gearing for the tour games against the Stormers, Sharks, Bulls and Lions. Those provincial sides have not played in at least two months and are shorn of their main Springboks but, as usual, their role will be to soften up and expose the tourists.

Typical of South African hospitality was the greeting by Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis when the All Blacks landed last Friday.

“Off the field we will be the perfect hosts and treat you like royalty,” he said, “but on the field you can expect no mercy.”

Maguire leads captain’s pick

Europe’s Solheim lineup set

LYTHAM ST. ANNES, England, Aug 4, (AP): Europe captain Anna Nordqvist finalized her Solheim Cup team Monday by adding veteran Leona Maguire and three rookies as her picks for the Sept. 11-13 matches in The Netherlands.

Charley Hull of England easily earned one of the two automatic spots from the Ladies European Tour points list. The other went to Esther Henseleit of Germany, who surged to No. 2 in the final two events.

Henseleit finished fourth in the Women’s Scottish Open and then lost in a playoff at the Women’s British Open (points are double in a major) to narrowly beat Chiara Tamburlini of Switzerland for the second spot.

Henseleit’s 40-foot birdie putt to force a playoff with AIG Women’s Open winner Shiho Kuwaki wound up costing Tamburlini a spot. Even without making it on points, Henseleit would have made her second straight team as one of the leading six players in the world ranking.

Those six spots instead fell to Solheim rookie Lottie Woad of England, Maja Stark and Linn Grant of Sweden, Carlota Ciganda of Spain, Celine Boutier of France and Nanna Koertz Madsen of Denmark.

Nordqvist added Maguire and rookies Julia Lopez Ramirez of Spain, Nastasia Nadaud of France and Mimmi Rhodes of England. Rhodes is No. 91 in the world ranking. Tamburlini is at No. 109.

Missing from Team Europe is Dewi Weber of The Netherlands, who is ranked ahead of three of the



In this file photo, Charley Hull, of England, drops her club after driving off the 3rd tee during the fourth round of the Women’s British Open golf championship in Lytham St Annes, England. (AP)

captain’s picks. She was ineligible, however, because the Dutch player did not realize she had to be an LET member. Weber finished third at the KPMG Women’s PGA.

The 31-year-old Maguire’s record is 8-3-1 in her three Solheim Cup appearances but she missed the cut in four of the five majors this year and has not won in two years.

Europe will try to win back the Solheim Cup after a three-point loss in Virginia two years ago. Team USA, which has yet to fill out its team, hasn’t won on European soil since 2015.

Young’s triple-double leads Aces to victory over Dream

Liberty extends streak with Storm win

ATLANTA, Aug 4, (AP): Jackie Young had 28 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for her third career triple-double, A’ja Wilson added 23 points and the Las Vegas Aces beat the Atlanta Dream 109-87.

Young secured the triple-double on an assist to Brianna Turner with 2:21 left in the fourth quarter to give Las Vegas a 101-81 lead.

The Aces led by as many as 28 points.

NaLyssa Smith scored 18 points, and Chelsea Gray had 17 points and six assists for Las Vegas (21-9). Wilson also had her 587th blocked shot to pass Lauren Jackson for sixth on the WNBA’s career list.

Angel Reese had 23 points and 16 rebounds for her 20th double-double of the season for Atlanta (18-11), which had a five-game winning streak halted. Reese has recorded a 20-point double-double in five of her last six games. Rhyne Howard added 19 points.



Las Vegas Aces guard Chelsea Gray (12) drives the ball during the first half of an WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

Liberty 95, Storm 83

In New York, Breanna Stewart scored 24 points and Jonquel Jones added 20 to help New York beat Seattle.

Sabrina Ionescu had 18 points for the Liberty (18-13), who have won five of their past six games. The previous four victories came by a total of eight points.

New York led 70-67 late in the third quarter before scoring the final nine points of the period to take a 12-point advantage heading into the fourth quarter. Stewart had four

points during the spurt.

The run continued at the start the fourth with Marine Johannes and Han Xu for the Liberty, who went up 85-67. Seattle could get no closer than nine the rest of the way.

Flau’jae Johnson scored 25 points, while Natisha Hiedeman and Dominique Malonga each added 17 for Seattle (6-26).

Mercury 106, Sky 101

In Chicago, Kahleah Copper

scored 20 of her 31 points in the second half and Kelsey Plum added 20 points in her Phoenix debut to help the Mercury beat Chicago.

Plum, who was traded from Los Angeles on Saturday, made a 3-pointer from the corner with 53 seconds left to give Phoenix 103-101 lead.

After a timeout with 11 seconds remaining, Phoenix forward DeWanna Bonner blocked a layup attempt by Courtney Vandersloot and

then sank two free throws at the other end for a four-point lead. Copper sealed it with a steal.

Alyssa Thomas had 19 points, 15 rebounds and 12 assists for her WNBA-leading 27th career triple-double for Phoenix (12-19). Bonner finished with 14 points and Valerieanne Ayayi added 10 off the bench. Plum was 6 of 10 from the field with three 3-pointers in her first game since June 21.

Ryan reflects on his rise

Gerard returns to Paris after PGA Tour success

LONDON, Aug 4, (AP): It was nothing more than a post-British Open vacation with his mother, but there could be no better place than Paris to remind Ryan Gerard how much life has changed in seven months.

Think back to the penultimate week in December when Gerard, a month into his offseason and at No. 57 in the world ranking, flew halfway around the globe to the tiny island of Mauritius for a shot at finishing the year in the top 50 in the world.

He lost in a playoff and moved to No. 46 to secure his trip to the Masters. His flight home included a long layover in Paris, enough time for him to see the Notre Dame cathedral, the Arc de Triomphe and the Eiffel Tower. “Pretty sick,” he said that day.

Gerard opened the year with consecutive runner-up finishes. He earned his way into the U.S. Open and British Open, lost in a playoff at the Memorial and goes into the Wyndham Championship at No. 16 in the FedEx Cup as he looks toward making the Tour Championship.

His mother came over to Royal Birkdale, where Gerard tied for ninth, and they were off to Paris for three days. That’s when Gerard, who doesn’t take much serious outside of his golf, went on a most unusual search to find “the worst statue that I could possibly find.”

“There’s a lot of just random statues,” he said. “In the Louvre there’s a statue of a child choking out a duck, like full, rear-naked choke. So I felt like I found it pretty quickly.”

That would be “Boy with a Goose” by the Greek sculptor Boethus.

It sounded as though his mother, meanwhile, enjoyed herself. She certainly had more time in Paris than Gerard did seven months ago on his way home from Mauritius.

“She thought I was stupid,” Gerard said. “She was appreciating the art, and I was just looking at dumb statues.”

The PGA Tour plans an update on its two-tiered scheduled for 2028 at the season-ending Tour Championship. But it keeps dropping tidbits along the way.

The latest came Tuesday, and just like the previous two from last week, it wasn’t a big surprise. The tour said the Cadillac Championship at Trump Doral would be part of the upper tier Championship Series in 2028. Still to be determined is the spot on the calendar.

Doral was added as a signature event this year - Cameron Young smoked Scottie Scheffler and everyone else in the field - in a sparsely attended tournament that ended May 3. It moves to the first full week in March for 2027, making it the Florida swing opener.

Last week, the tour announced on July 27 the Travelers Championship would be part of the upper tier Championship Series. The next day it announced a new sponsor (Somp) for a Championship Series event. The Sentry at Torrey Pines was announced as upper tier on July 29, and the Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill was announced July 30 as a Championship Series event.

Macron backs UEFA over abandoned commercial rights plan

FIFA rejects Infantino-Trump contact claims

PARIS, Aug 4: French President Emmanuel Macron has reportedly stepped into the growing dispute surrounding FIFA President Gianni Infantino, backing UEFA’s stance against the proposed restructuring of FIFA’s commercial rights model.

According to French newspaper L’Équipe, Macron held a series of discussions in recent days after FIFA’s controversial proposal to sell a minority stake in the commercial rights of its competitions through a new business entity sparked widespread criticism before eventually being abandoned.

A source close to Macron told L’Équipe that the French president responded in a similar way to his previous opposition to the European Super League, stressing the importance of sporting fairness, solidarity and merit-based competition.

The report added that Macron supported UEFA President Alek-



FIFA President Gianni Infantino greets French President Emmanuel Macron during the World Cup opening ceremony in the US.

sander Čeferin and French Football Federation President Philippe Diallo, who was among the first national

federation chiefs to reject the FIFA proposal.

Meanwhile, FIFA dismissed re-

ports that Infantino had contacted US President Donald Trump or members of his administration over the issue.

FIFA’s media office said on X that claims suggesting Infantino had spoken with Trump or US officials in recent days were “completely untrue,” responding to a report published by British newspaper The Times.

FIFA Secretary-General Mattias Grafström described the abandoned plan to sell a stake in World Cup commercial rights as an “unfortunate and regrettable series of events,” saying the situation had been difficult to understand and accept.

In an internal message to FIFA staff reported by Sky News, Grafström said the controversy had fortunately ended with the project being fully dropped, adding that while there was disappointment over the episode, it should not overshadow the decision to abandon the plan.

Change Name

I, Hasan Mohammad Jamal, holder of Indian Passport No. B6037974 Hereby Declare that I have Changed my Name To: Hasan Khan Mohammad Jamal, So from now and in Future, I will be Known As Hasan Khan S/O Mohammad Jamal.

Churchill Downs, NYRA unveil 6-race championship series

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y., Aug 4, (AP): Churchill Downs Incorporated and the New York Racing Association on Monday announced a six-race championship series over a span of five months that includes the Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes and a \$5 million prize pool, set to begin next year.

The first and third legs of the Triple Crown are scheduled next year for the traditional five weeks apart between May 1 and June 5. A spokesperson for the Maryland Jockey Club said a date for the Preakness next year has not yet been announced and declined comment on the championship series of races in Kentucky and

New York.

There has been some speculation about the Preakness moving back to three weeks after the Derby from two in an effort to convince owners and trainers to enter their horses in the race in Baltimore. Golden Tempo became the third Derby winner in five years not to take part.

This championship series includes the Matt Winn Stakes at Churchill Downs in Louisville in July and the Jim Dandy and the Travers Stakes at Saratoga Race Course later in the summer. It’s scheduled to also have a championship race at Churchill Downs in September ahead of the Breeders’ Cup in the fall, which in 2027 is set to

take place at Belmont Park on Long Island.

“This series is designed to showcase the sport’s best 3-year-olds across a season-long championship, elevating our biggest events and creating the next generation of fans,” NYRA president CEO David O’Rourke said in a statement.

NBC is set to broadcast the races at Churchill Downs and Fox the ones in New York.

“By connecting these premier events through one championship, we’re creating a season-long storyline that benefits the future of thoroughbred racing,” Churchill Downs Inc. CEO Bill Carstanjen said.

‘I’m honored to lead the league into its next era’

MLS appoints LAFC co-owner Berg as new commissioner, replacing Garber

NEW YORK, Aug 4, (AP): Larry Berg, co-owner of Los Angeles FC, will be the next commissioner of Major League Soccer, the league announced Monday.

At the start of the new year, Berg will take over for Don Garber, who has served as the league’s commissioner since 1999.

The 60-year-old Berg, who will divest his ownership interest in LAFC, will be officially introduced on Tuesday at MLS headquarters in New York.

“I’m honored to lead Major League Soccer into its next era,” Berg said in a statement. “Thanks to the vision and commitment of so many people, Major League Soccer has achieved tremendous success, but I believe our greatest opportunities are still ahead. We have an extraordinary opportunity to strengthen the quality of our competition, develop more world-class players, deepen our connection with supporters, and continue elevating Major League Soccer’s place in the global game.

“Together with our owners, clubs, players, partners, supporters, and league staff, I could not be more excited for what comes next.”

Garber will remain MLS commissioner through the end of the 2026 season before taking over as chairman of the league. MLS has grown tremendously during Garber’s tenure, and hopes to capitalize on the momentum of the 2026 World Cup.

“Having worked closely with Larry over the past decade, I’ve seen firsthand the

qualities that make him an exceptional leader, and I have complete confidence he is the right person to serve as Major League Soccer’s next commissioner,” Garber said in a statement. “His integrity, judgment, collaborative leadership, and unwavering commitment to building LAFC and the league have made him an invaluable partner. I look forward to working alongside Larry during this transition and supporting him as he leads MLS into its next chapter.”

Berg previously held ownership stakes in Serie A club AS Roma, as well as Swansea City AFC in Wales. Under Berg’s ownership, LAFC won the MLS Cup in 2022, and the Supporters’ Shield in 2019.

Before he came to MLS, Garber was head of NFL International. In 1999, NFL team owners Lamar Hunt and Robert Kraft approached Garber and asked if he might be interested in serving as commissioner of the league, which was launched in 1996.

At the time Garber took over, the league was in trouble. By 2001 MLS appeared on the verge of folding, but Garber steered the league out of the crisis.

Under his watch, the league has expanded from 12 to 30 teams with the addition of San Diego FC in 2025. He introduced the league’s marketing arm, Soccer United Marketing, encouraged the construction of soccer-specific stadiums and spurred the growth of an academy system to develop players in the

United States.

Five clubs, Inter Miami, home of superstar Lionel Messi, LAFC, the LA Galaxy, Atlanta United and NYCFC are valued at over \$1 billion, according to Forbes.

At the start, Berk will help guide the league as it shifts to a new calendar, with the season running from on a summer to spring schedule to more align with its international counterparts. Currently the league plays a late winter to late fall schedule.

Following the conclusion of the current season, MLS will play a shortened 14-game “sprint season” in early 2027 before the league switches to its new schedule, kicking off in July with the league championship to be played in May 2028.

Last week in an interview with The Associated Press, Garber said it in was important for his successor to share the collective vision for the league.

“The next commissioner, I hope and expect, is going to believe in the future opportunity for our league and our clubs, and what role we can play domestically and internationally to grow the game and be responsible stewards for the game, and drive value for every stakeholder, every group that cares about their local club,” Garber said.

Burgan shuts down senior team ahead of new volleyball season

Club turns attention to youth development

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Burgan Club has decided to discontinue its senior volleyball team ahead of the 2026-2027 season, with the club opting to focus solely on age-group competitions from the junior categories through the Under-19 level.

Burgan Secretary-General Nawaf Al-Adwani said the board’s decision followed a review of the challenges affecting the team, including financial limitations, difficulties in securing professional contracts for players, and the absence of a dedicated training facility for daily sessions.

He explained that these factors made maintaining the senior team increasingly difficult at this stage, prompting the club to redirect its resources towards developing younger players and strengthening its youth structure.

Al-Adwani added that Burgan’s priority for the upcoming season will be to improve its age-group teams, develop emerging talents, and create a strong base capable of competing at a higher level in future seasons. He also wished all clubs and players success in the



A file photo of players in action during league match.

new campaign.

Burgan becomes the third club to withdraw its senior volleyball team from competitions, after Al-Jahra and Al-Tadamon.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club has appointed national coach Meshaal Al-Sabti as head coach of its Un-

der-14 volleyball team for the upcoming season.

Al-Sabti is considered one of Kuwait’s notable youth volleyball coaches, having previously worked with age-group teams at Al-Qadsia Club and the Kuwait national team, in addition to serv-

ing as an assistant coach with the national youth side.

The appointment is part of Kuwait Club’s strategy to develop a strong youth system and create a pipeline of talented players to support the club’s teams in the years ahead.

Reyna joins Strasbourg from Mönchengladbach

Ter Stegen moves to Ajax on loan to revive career

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands, Aug 4, (AP): Germany goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen joined Ajax on loan from Barcelona on Tuesday as he aims to revive his national-team career with new coach Jürgen Klopp.

Ajax said the 34-year-old Ter Stegen signed a season-long deal that reunites him with the storied club’s new coach Michel Sánchez.

Ter Stegen had a complicated 12th season with Barcelona and moved to Catalan neighbor Girona on loan in January.

After three straight World Cups as understudy to Manuel Neuer, including a title in 2014, Ter Stegen was not selected for a fourth this summer. Germany went out in the round of 32 against Paraguay.

Ter Stegen played the last of his 44 games for Germany in June 2025 at the Nations League final four mini-tournament.

“Marc has an outstanding track record, and his qualities are widely recognized,” Ajax technical director Jordi Crujeff said in a statement.

Ter Stegen is the second Ger-

many international joining the Amsterdam club, which is seeking to rebound from a chaotic season that ended in fifth place in the Dutch Eredivisie.

Julian Brandt last week signed a three-year deal as a free agent after his Borussia Dortmund contract expired.

Ajax already started in the qualifying rounds of the third tier Conference League and hosts Shelbourne on Friday in a first-leg game.

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United States midfielder Gio Reyna is getting a fresh start at French club Strasbourg to reset after an underachieving season in Germany.

Strasbourg said Tuesday it signed the 23-year-old Reyna on a five-year deal from Borussia Mönchengladbach. The transfer fee was reported to be 3 million euros (\$3.5 million).

Reyna played in all five U.S. games at the World Cup, and scored a signature goal to cap the opening 4-1 win against Paraguay.

He had a quiet debut season with Gladbach, scoring just once in 20 games, after several seasons at Borussia Dortmund.

Strasbourg, which is in a shared ownership group with Chelsea, placed eighth in Ligue 1 last season and did not qualify for any European competition.

Reyna will play for new coach Hugo Oliveira, a long-time former assistant to Marco Silva who left Fulham to join Benfica.

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Chelsea signed veteran England midfielder Jordan Henderson to a two-year contract on Monday following his departure from Brentford last week.

The 36-year-old Henderson is Chelsea’s oldest signing since BlueCo took over the club in 2022.

“The midfielder, who has won eight trophies in his career, including the Premier League and UEFA Champions League, has signed a two-year contract with the Blues and will join his new team-mates ahead of the 2026-27 campaign,”

Chelsea said on its website.

Henderson won the Champions League in 2019 and Premier League in 2020 with Liverpool.

“Given the size of the club, the manager (Xabi Alonso), who I have great admiration for, and the quality of the players, this was a huge opportunity I couldn’t turn down,” Henderson said. “I was also so impressed with how much the ownership want Chelsea to be successful and move in the right direction.”

Henderson’s off-season signing follows that of Danny Welbeck,

Morgan Rogers, Maxence Lacroix, Marco Palestra and Geovany Quenda by the Stamford Bridge club.

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Borussia Dortmund signed highly-rated Greece attacking midfielder Konstantinos Karetzas for a reported fee of 30 million euros (\$34.6 million) from Belgian side Genk.

The 18-year-old Karetzas penned a five-year contract through June 2031, the Bundesliga club said.

“Despite all the talent he already brings, we see even more potential in him that we want to help him realize together,” Dortmund managing director for sport Lars Ricken said.

Karetzas was reportedly a target for many clubs after impressing at Genk last season. He set up 11 goals in 28 Jupiler Pro League appearances.

Kicker magazine reported Dortmund was paying Genk 30 million euros plus 2 million in realistically attainable bonus payments.

“With his creativity and game intelligence, Kos will enrich our team,” Dortmund sporting director Ole Book said. “He is technically very skilled and has the ability to find quick solutions in tight spaces, especially in the final third.”

Karetzas played for Belgium’s youth teams before opting to represent his parents’ country and making his debut for Greece in March 2025. He has scored three goals in 10 international appearances.

Best of the Rest

Oda and Kamiji are the top seeds: Top-ranked Tokito Oda will try to complete a calendar year Grand Slam when he leads the men’s singles field in the U.S. Open wheelchair tournament.

Yui Kamiji, also of Japan, the first woman from her country to complete a career Grand Slam in wheelchair, is the top seed in women’s singles.

The U.S. Tennis Association announced the 16-player fields for men’s singles, women’s singles and quad singles on Monday. There are also eight-team doubles competitions.

Oda, 20, won his first Grand Slam title at last year’s U.S. Open and has gone on to capture all the major tournaments this year. Alfie Hewett, a 10-time major champion from Britain, is the No. 2 seed. (AP)

□ □ □

Godfrey commits to Arizona: Former Clemson forward RJ Godfrey has committed to Arizona, potentially filling the biggest hole in coach Tommy Lloyd’s roster.

Godfrey announced his decision on Instagram Sunday, positing “Committed” with a photo of him in an Arizona jersey.

Godfrey averaged 12.0 points and 5.3 rebounds in his return to Clemson last season after a year at Georgia. He played his first two seasons at Clemson in backup roles.

Arizona went to the Final Four for the first time in 30 years last season and lost several key players from that team, including bruising power forward Tobe Awaka.

The 6-foot-8, 240-pound Godfrey will likely fill his spot and create another formidable frontcourt in the desert alongside 7-footer Moteijus Krivas and scrappy forward Ivan Kharchenkov. (AP)

Egyptian refereeing row intensifies as Zamalek responds to Al Ahly

CAIRO, Aug 4: Zamalek has hit back at Al Ahly’s statement to the Egyptian Football Association (EFA), insisting that questioning the integrity of Egyptian referees is unacceptable.

In an official statement, Zamalek’s board said it was surprised by what it described as an early campaign against local refereeing and objections rose before the formation of the referees’ committee.

“Early threats against referees, objections to certain appointments, and revisiting refereeing decisions from last season in an attempt to create doubt and controversy are completely unacceptable,” the club said. “Such actions aim to put pressure on referees before the start of the new

season, as has happened in recent years.”

Zamalek stressed that casting doubt on the credibility of Egyptian referees or any part of the country’s football system should not be tolerated.

The club also praised the Egyptian Football Association board, led by Hany Abou Rida, for its efforts to improve the sport’s administration and build on the national team’s successful World Cup campaign.

Zamalek further welcomed the EFA president’s confirmation that the club’s player contracts are valid, while calling on the federation and relevant authorities to review the contracts of players at other clubs to ensure transparency across Egyptian football.v



Players fight for the ball during the Egyptian league.



In this file photo, Barcelona’s goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen warms up prior to the start of the Copa del Rey soccer match between Guadalajara and Barcelona in Guadalajara, Spain. (AP)

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NEWS



Dominican Republic's gold medalist team stands on the winners podium for the 4x400-meter relay mixed final at the Central American and Caribbean Games in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. (AP)

Sports

Resilient Eala wins maiden WTA singles title

Fritz defeats Jodar in men's final

WASHINGTON, Aug 4, (AP): Alexandra Eala's breakthrough week at the DC Open lasted one day longer than expected. By the time it ended, the Filipino expression written across the Nike T-shirt she had worn earlier that week had become a reality.

"Once it grows, it cannot be stopped." After the women's final stretched across two days because of heavy rain, Eala rallied past Jessica Pegula 4-6, 6-4, 6-0 Monday to capture her first career WTA Tour title.

The victory made the 21-year-old Eala the first Filipina to win a singles title on the tour, completing the same career-defining breakthrough that the Washington tournament once gave Pegula when she claimed her first WTA title in 2019.

"At the beginning of the week, there's no way I would have thought that I would be holding this trophy," Eala said. "Winning a 500 (level tournament) is insane. It's an incredible milestone for me."

In the men's final later Monday, third-seeded Taylor Fritz defeated Rafael Jodar 7-6 (2), 6-4. Fritz broke the Spaniard twice early in the second set and eventually converted his fifth championship point after letting four earlier opportunities slip away.

Fritz lay on the court for several moments after winning the 11th title of his career, then got to his feet with a roll of his eyes as the tension of finally closing out the match gave way.

Eala arrived at Stadium Court as the story of the tournament, carrying the hopes of her nation.

Philippine flags decorated the stands throughout Sunday's rain-interrupted session and remained visible Monday, with the lower bowl filled for the resumption. Chants for Eala routinely outweighed those for the top-ranked American playing on home soil.

"It's not fun to play against, but I do appreciate the really fun atmosphere," Pegula said of the crowd. "I think it's amazing."

It capped a week in which the rising star transformed the atmosphere around the tournament while reaching her first WTA final in her debut at the hard-court tune-up for the U.S. Open.

The two traded breaks midway through the opening set, with Pegula breaking again at 4-4 and serving out the set at love. The players held through the opening three games of the second set before heavy rain suspended play on Sunday afternoon, with Eala up 2-1.

When they returned on Monday, the momentum belonged to Eala.

She stormed back to claim the second set, then swept through the third. Eala ultimately won the final eight games of the match to secure the championship, beating all three of the tournament's top seeds along the way.

Eala dropped to the court with her head in her hands, overcome with



Alexandra Eala's celebrates after winning DC Open title.

emotion. Tears filled her eyes before she rose, embraced Pegula at the net and let out a triumphant scream. "I was so nervous, and I kind of just blacked out," Eala said. "Everything just came rushing to me."

Eala then received congratulations from former eight-division boxing champion Manny Pacquiao, who wrote on social media that her comeback showed the "heart of a Filipino" before calling her "our new champion."

'Turmoil difficult to comprehend and accept'

Top FIFA officials Wenger and Grafström 'distance' themselves from Infantino's World Cup sell-off plan

GENEVA, Aug 4, (AP): Two senior FIFA executives - coaching great Arsène Wenger and CEO-like secretary general Mattias Grafström - distanced themselves Tuesday from their boss Gianni Infantino's failed plan to sell stakes in future World Cup profits to private investors.

Wenger said in a statement he knew nothing of the \$20 billion plan and that it was "absolutely necessary" to drop the proposal, and Grafström sent an email to all FIFA staff - seen by The Associated Press - calling the last week a "sad and reproachable series of events." He also said it created "turmoil which is difficult to comprehend and accept."

Neither directly named Infantino or offered support for the now-embattled president.

The comments by Wenger and Grafström had echoes of the direct criticism from FIFA chief operating officer Kevin Lamour, who said Friday that staff had been "deceived" by Infantino's private equity plan, which provoked a furor in global soccer. Lamour called it the "project of one person" and said FIFA staff "deserve better than contempt and intimidation."

The three executives are respected and trusted figures among the 211 FIFA member federations who now hold sway over Infantino's grip on a presidency that looked unshakable after the World Cup ended barely two weeks ago.

Wenger, Grafström and Lamour also were named in a letter from UEFA's lawyers to Infantino among 18 executives whose data and communications should be retained as potential evidence.

"You do not need to worry," Grafström wrote Tuesday to the hundreds of FIFA staff based mostly in Zurich and Coral Gables, Florida. "I assure you that you as members of the administration, you will be defended and safeguarded from the political



In this file photo, FIFA president Gianni Infantino, right, and Arsene Wenger, Chief Officer (FIFA) and former soccer coach arrive for the Women's Euro 2025 quarterfinals soccer match between Sweden and England at Stadion Letzigrund in Zurich, Switzerland. (AP)

context we currently experience."

Wenger, who was hired by Infantino in 2019 and is FIFA's Chief of Global Football Development, said he was "not involved in this strategic plan and first became aware of the project through media reports."

Infantino withdrew his \$20 billion proposal early Saturday after a furious backlash by global soccer officials, including European body UEFA warning of a boycott of all FIFA games and events.

The plan would have created a subsidiary - known as FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE) - to run the money-making parts of the not-for-profit soccer body's work: organizing tournaments like the World Cup, selling broadcasting and sponsorship rights, tickets and hospitality.

It proposed raising \$4.2 billion from investors by selling stakes amounting to about 20% in FFE, based on an equity valuation of \$20 billion. The "anchor investor" would have been Thrive Eternal, launched by Joshua Kushner, whose brother Jared Kushner is a son-in-law of

U.S. President Donald Trump.

"The decision to withdraw the project was absolutely necessary and beyond question, because I firmly believe in an independent FIFA that serves our game with commitment, transparency, and integrity," Wenger wrote.

FIFA's 211 member federations - already effective owners of the governing body as a nonprofit association under Swiss law - were offered \$20 million each. The deadline to accept was Sept. 19. They also were promised a doubling of their FIFA funding for the four years through 2030 to \$20 million instead of the previously announced \$10 million.

Infantino shared details of the project to FIFA management just one week after the July 19 final of the financially successful World Cup in North America that drove FIFA's revenues to \$15 billion for the 2023-26 commercial cycle - almost double the income tied to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Grafström, a long-time loyal aide to Infantino since their work together at UEFA, urged FIFA staff to "all continue being proud and happy"

about the first 48-team World Cup.

"A sad and reproachable series of events - which were thankfully concluded with the FFE project permanently abandoned - for as much as we feel dismayed by them, should not overshadow this reality," he wrote.

The World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico was judged a success on the field, though it had unprecedented issues linked to Infantino's close ally Trump, who received a specially created FIFA Peace Prize at the tournament draw in December.

During the tournament, Iran's team could not stay in the U.S. where it played three games, a Somali referee picked by FIFA was refused entry, and U.S. forward Folarin Balogun was allowed to play against Belgium despite a red card in his previous game.

"We have all been thrown into the middle of a turmoil, which is difficult to comprehend and accept, but, as secretary general, I urge you to remain focused on what has always united us," Grafström wrote. "I will continue to support our teams, our work and our mission every hour of every day for as long as my work is valued by those we serve."

Infantino has not commented in public on the schism in soccer since a FIFA statement early Saturday announcing that the proposal had been dropped. His official Instagram account has posted letters of support from several member federations, including 2030 World Cup co-host Morocco, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Infantino has been president of FIFA for more than 10 years and had seemed sure to be re-elected unopposed next March in Morocco. FIFA has set a Nov. 18 deadline for challengers to come forward, with Sweden's soccer leader saying Monday that UEFA is seeking a rival candidate.

Al-Enezi honoured after Montenegro assignment

BELGRADE, Aug 4: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Serbia Fayeze Al-Mutairi welcomed national coach and physical preparation specialist Waleed Al-Enezi at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Belgrade following the conclusion of his stint with Montenegro's handball national teams at the European championships for the Under-20 and Under-18 categories.

During the meeting, both sides discussed the importance of Kuwaiti sporting talents making their mark at international events and contributing to enhancing Kuwait's reputation in global sports. The ambassador highlighted the growing recognition of Kuwaiti coaches and experts, who have proven their ability to work within European technical setups and meet the demands of elite-level competition.

Al-Mutairi praised Al-Enezi's efforts during his month-and-a-half experience across Montenegro, Kosovo, and Serbia, saying the achievements of Kuwaiti professionals at continental competitions reflect the capabilities of the country's youth and their readiness to succeed in different professional sporting environments.

Al-Enezi thanked the ambassador and the Kuwaiti diplomatic mission for their warm welcome and support, saying the recognition motivates him to continue representing Kuwait with pride while developing physical



Kuwaiti Ambassador to Serbia Fayeze Al-Mutairi welcomes national coach and physical preparation specialist Waleed Al-Enezi at the Kuwaiti Embassy.

preparation and technical analysis methods in line with modern standards.

The meeting concluded with Al-Enezi presenting Ambassador Al-Mutairi with a Montenegro handball national team jersey.

Best of the Rest

Serena and Venus to play doubles together: The Williams sisters are back on track to playing doubles tennis ahead of the U.S. Open.

Serena and Venus Williams are set to take part in the Cincinnati Open, which begins next week. Organizers announced Monday they had received a wild-card entry into the doubles field.

They last played a doubles match together at the 2022 U.S. Open. It is their first time teaming up in the hard-court tune-up tournament in Mason, Ohio.

The Williams sisters received a wild-card entry to play doubles at Wimbledon, but an injury to Serena prevented that from happening. They have won 14 major titles and three Olympic gold medals in doubles play. (AP)

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US men to host Peru, Chile, Mexico and Canada: The U.S. men's national team will kick off the next World Cup cycle with four matches over 11 days on home soil.

The friendlies include games against Peru, Chile, Mexico and Canada in U.S. cities that didn't host World Cup action this summer.

The Americans will face Peru on Sept. 26 at Inter.co Stadium in Orlando, Florida. Three days later, they will host Chile at Energizer Park in St. Louis. The US-Mexico rivalry resumes Oct. 3 at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona. And the finale against Canada follows three days later at Allianz Field in St. Paul, Minnesota. (AP)