



SEVEN KUWAITIS NAMED AMONG FORBES MIDDLE EAST’S TOP 100 CEOs

— Details Page 10 —

Kuwait, Saudi, allies push new route to sidestep Hormuz risks

Strait closure brings Kuwait oil exports to standstill

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: Oil Minister Tariq Al-Roumi announced that Kuwait is in talks with Saudi Arabia and other Arab states to establish a new crude oil export pipeline as an alternative to the Strait of Hormuz.

Al-Roumi made the statement amid reports that the United States of America, Iran and Oman are getting close to concluding a temporary agreement to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, as reported by Axios.

Anadolu Agency reported that Al-Roumi told Japan’s Kyodo News that one proposed route will connect Kuwait to the Red Sea through Saudi Arabia or Oman, while the other will link Kuwait to the Fujairah Port in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). He added that the project will be developed through

consultations with Saudi Arabia, UAE and other countries.

He pointed out that the geographical location of Kuwait at the northern end of the Gulf makes it one of the countries most affected by the disruption of shipping traffic at the Strait of Hormuz. He said the exports remain zero as long as the Strait of Hormuz is closed.

He confirmed that the oil exports of Kuwait totally stopped due to the de facto closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran, while it will take at least a year to rebuild some of the oil storage tanks that were damaged due to the Iranian attacks.

He described Japan as one of the important clients of Kuwait in the crude oil and refined products sector, while affirming the ongoing discussions to bolster the reserves in friendly nations.

Separately, Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Defense announced Thursday the appointment of Rear Admiral Abdullah Al-Shehri as commander of the Multinational Maritime Defense Alliance, as part of efforts to complete the alliance’s institutional structure and enhance operational readiness.

The ministry said in a statement that the appointment follows the alliance’s establishment announcement on July 30, 2026 and aims to strengthen its ability to support maritime security, protect freedom of navigation, secure waterways and straits, and safeguard international trade and global supply chains.

It added that the alliance commander will oversee joint maritime defense operations, coordinate planning among member states and other naval alliances, and supervise joint activities in accordance with the alliance’s charter and procedures.

The ministry noted that procedures for additional countries to join the alliance are ongoing, with further states expected to complete signing the joint statement and join as founding members.

It said the alliance remains open to all countries aligned with its objectives and principles, with further meetings scheduled in August to finalize institutional requirements and advance cooperation in maritime security.

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs photo  
Australia’s Ambassador-designate presents credentials to Kuwait’s Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Kuwait FM receives credentials of Australian Ambassador-designate

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6, (KUNA): Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Thursday a copy of the credentials of Australia’s Ambassador-designate to Kuwait Amanda Jane Reithmuller during a meeting held at the Foreign Minis-

try’s headquarters.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the minister wished the new ambassador success in her duties and expressed hopes for further progress and prosperity in the close bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

Dust, 50°C heat to unleash weekend misery

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department said the country is being affected by hot, dry winds carrying dust, with the weather during the weekend expected to remain extremely hot during the day and hot to warm at night. Humid to relatively humid conditions are expected on Saturday evening, especially in coastal areas.

The acting Director of the department Dhirar Al-Ali told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that weather maps and numerical models indicate that the country is being affected by an extension of the seasonal Indian low-pressure system, accompanied by a hot and dry air mass. North-westerly winds will be light to moderate, occasionally becoming active and causing dust, particularly in open areas. Relative humidity will return on Saturday evening.

Friday’s daytime weather will be extremely hot, with northwesterly to variable winds ranging from light to moderate speeds between 10 and 35 kilometers per hour. Maximum temperatures are expected to reach between 48 and 50 degrees Celsius, while sea conditions will be light to moderate, with waves ranging from one to four feet.

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Photo by Samer Shqair  
A molten sunset paints the horizon after a day of relentless heat and humidity.

Select envoys get health fee waiver

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi issued a ministerial decree exempting diplomats assigned in the State of Kuwait, who hold diplomatic identification cards issued by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and nine other countries, from healthcare and medication fees, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decree covers diplomats from the GCC countries, Morocco, Pakistan, Bhutan, Italy, Albania, Cyprus, Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela.

Newswatch

Nine stripped of citizenship

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: The Higher Committee for Kuwaiti Citizenship Investigation issued Decision No. 13/72/2026, revoking Kuwaiti citizenship from nine individuals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The official gazette “Kuwait Al-Yaum” published an addendum to the decision, which was issued in accordance with Article 11 of Amiri Decree No. 15/1959 concerning the Kuwaiti Nationality Law and its amendments.

CAIRO: Arab and Islamic countries on Thursday strongly condemned the Israeli occupation’s continued attacks on health-care facilities, civilian infrastructure and civilians in the Gaza Strip, describing them as violations of international law and international humanitarian law.

In a joint statement, the foreign ministers of Egypt, Qatar, Jordan, UAE, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkiye and Saudi Arabia said the continued violations undermine international and regional efforts to implement the second phase of the Gaza peace plan and threaten prospects for a lasting ceasefire. (KUNA)

15 projects fuel Kuwait’s infrastructure boom

By Mohammed Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: The Ministry of Public Works has included 15 construction projects in its current annual plan for 2026/2027, covering buildings and headquarters for ministries and government institutions.

The contracts include both study and design phases as well as implementation phases, in accordance with the latest engineering, technical, and environmental stand-

ards. These projects aim to meet the requirements of government entities and provide suitable working environments for employees and visitors.

The ministry also plans to implement a project for the construction, completion, and maintenance of roads and intersections along the Southern Regional Road, extending north of Mina Abdullah Road in North Wafra.

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KFAED commits \$5 million through OCHA for Syria, Afghanistan relief



KFAED photo  
Acting Director General of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development Rashid Al-Bader and OCHA representative in Saudi Arabia Mohammad Zaid after the signing of the two agreements.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6, (KUNA): Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed Thursday two grant agreements worth a total of USD 5 million with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to support humanitarian funds in Syria and Afghanistan.

The fund said in a statement to KUNA, that each grant amounts to USD 2.5 million and aims to support urgent humanitarian responses by financing programs and projects addressing critical needs and delivering life-saving assistance to affected and vulnerable communities.

It added that the grants will enable Syria Humanitarian Fund and Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund, managed by OCHA, to enhance rapid and flexible responses, support implementing partners and improve coordination of humanitarian operations.

The fund said the agreements reflect Kuwait’s continued commitment to international humanitarian efforts and bring its total contributions to joint projects with OCHA to around USD 16.1 million.

The agreements were signed by Acting Director General of KFAED Rashid Al-Bader and OCHA representative in Saudi Arabia Mohammad Zaid.

22,000 rental cases drive Kuwait digital lease shift

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: With 22,000 rental lawsuits filed annually, the government is working to launch an electronic platform for rental contracts.

The project will usher in a new era based on standardized contracts, digital documentation, and electronic litigation, thereby enhancing transparency and improving the efficiency of the real estate system.

In this regard, real estate expert Suleiman Al-Dulaijan said the electronic platform for rental contracts is a vital project at this stage and forms part of efforts to reform and regulate the

real estate market.

He noted that similar systems have been implemented in some Gulf countries, demonstrating the importance of transitioning to electronic contracts.

Al-Dulaijan explained that one of the main challenges currently facing the market is the absence of an accurate and comprehensive database of rental contracts.

Electronically documenting contracts through a unified platform will help create an integrated real estate database, providing reliable information to decision-makers.

The availability of real estate data is one of the most important factors in regulating the market, as it enables accurate monitoring of rental trends and price levels, helping to prevent unjustified increases or decreases in rents.

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Kuwait revokes Iranian school’s license, begins transfer process

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6, (KUNA): Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei issued Thursday a decision revoking the educational license of the Iranian Private School in Kuwait and ordering its closure in accordance with laws regulating private education and in the public interest.

The Ministry of Education said in a statement that the decision cancels the school’s renewed operating license and tasks the General Department of Private Education with implementing the closure procedures.

The ministry said the school must stop accepting new students starting with the 2026-2027 academic year, while parents of currently enrolled

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## Kuwait Amir, leadership congratulate Jamaica, Bolivia on their National Days

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent, on Thursday, a congratulatory cable to the Governor-General of Jamaica, Patrick Linton Allen, on occasion of his country's national day.

In cable, His Highness the Amir wished the Jamaican leader good health and wellness, and the people of Jamaica further progress and prosperity.

### Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent, on Thursday, a congratulatory cable to the Governor-General of Jamaica, Patrick Linton Allen, on occasion of his country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished

the Jamaican leader good health and wellness.

### PM congratulates

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable on Thursday to the Governor-General of Jamaica, Patrick Linton Allen, on occasion of his country's national day.



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince



HH the Prime Minister

Highness the Amir wished the President of Bolivia good health and wellbeing, and more progress and

### BOLIVIA

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Thursday to the President of Bolivia, Rodrigo Paz, on his country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the President of Bolivia good health and wellbeing, and more progress and

prosperity for Bolivia and the Bolivian people.

### Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Thursday to the President of Bolivia, Rodrigo Paz, on his country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the President of Bolivia good health and wellbeing.

### Prime Minister congratulates

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KUNA photo

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan receives President of the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) Abdul-lah Al-Musaibeh.

## Deputy FM receives BADEA Pres., discuss boost in ties

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6, (KUNA): Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan received Thursday President of the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) Abdul-

lah Al-Musaibeh.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to enhance joint cooperation and reviewed a number of issues of mutual interest.

Bids forwarded to MEWRE for review

## Ten companies vie for street light gadgetry maintenance

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: Ten companies submitted bids for the street lighting equipment maintenance tender in Hawally Governorate, say sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

Sources confirmed that the bids were forwarded to the ministry for review and preparation of a technical recommendation to award the contract to the best bidder that meets the technical requirements.

Sources stated that this is one of the important projects being implemented by the Distribution Networks Sector in the ministry. Sources revealed that the project includes the periodic maintenance of main and secondary street lighting equipment, daily network surveys, fault detec-

tion and repair, responding to traffic accidents particularly vehicles ramming into light posts, and installation of light posts in dark areas and those requiring infrastructure upgrade.

Meanwhile, the ministry is finalizing procedures for floating two tenders through the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT). These tenders are for the supply, installation and operation of secondary transformer stations in five governorates. One tender covers Jahra and Farwaniya governorates, and the other for Hawally, Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates.

CAPT set Aug 25 as the deadline for accepting bids from eligible companies. Through these two tenders, the ministry intends to provide electricity to customers in newly developed areas in the five governorates in accordance with the regulations.



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor and acting Capital Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah had a meeting with Secretary of Kuwaiti Electronic Media Union and author Mohammad Al-Arada.

## Governor: Kuwait media persons enriching cultural & literary fields

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: Farwaniya Governor and acting Capital Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah had a meeting with Secretary of Kuwaiti Electronic Media Union and author Mohammad Al-Arada.

During the meeting, Al-Arada presented a copy of his first literary work -- the novel "Lawrence: The Clash of Civilizations and the Authenticity of Ancestors" -- to the Governor. He briefed the Governor on the main topics of the novel, as well as its historical and cultural dimensions, which depict the interaction between civilizations and the authenticity of

heritage.

The Governor praised the efforts of Kuwaiti media professionals and writers in enriching the cultural and literary fields. He stressed that intellectual production is crucial in raising societal awareness and solidifying the national identity.

Al-Arada expressed his gratitude to the Governor for the warm reception, appreciating his interest in supporting creative individuals and intellectuals. He affirmed that such interest serves as a motivation for him to continue contributing to literary and cultural productions.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6, (KUNA): Kuwait is steadily advancing the implementation of its strategic partnership with China, transforming the seven agreements signed in September 2023 into tangible development projects that mark a new phase of comprehensive bilateral cooperation.

The North Kabd Technology Station, whose construction and operation contract was signed last week, has become the second project to enter the implementation phase under the memoranda of understanding signed between the two countries.

The project follows earlier cooperation launched under agreements signed by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chinese President Xi Jinping, covering energy, housing, environmental protection, free zones and the strategic Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port.

The North Kabd Technology Station is expected to strengthen wastewater treatment infrastructure, improve environmental sustainability, enhance treatment efficiency and support Kuwait's urban expansion and long-term sustainable development goals.

In March 2025, Kuwait and China signed the framework agreement for technical arrangements governing cooperation in renewable energy, following directives from Kuwait's political leadership to accelerate major joint development projects.

Signed at China's National Energy Administration headquarters in Beijing, the agreement concluded nearly six months of negotiations to establish a practical roadmap for accelerating renewable energy projects at Shagaya Phases Three and Four and Abdaliya.

The two countries have since intensified coordination through regular bilateral meetings aimed at overcoming obstacles, accelerating implementation and expanding cooperation in support of Kuwait's economic development strategy and investment objectives.

A major milestone came in December 2025 with the signing of the engineering, procurement and construction contract for Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port, representing the first practical outcome of the Kuwait-China agreements and memoranda of understanding.

The strategic port project is expected to strengthen Kuwait's maritime infrastructure, enhance port capacity and operational efficiency, and integrate the country into regional and international trade and shipping networks.

Implementation began after Kuwait's Cabinet approved in January 2025 the nomination of China Communications Construction Company to undertake the design, construction, management and operation of the project through direct contracting.

The Cabinet had earlier approved the memorandum of understanding and its accompanying



protocol concerning the port project, with the law entering into force upon its publication in the Official Gazette in January 2025.

The legislation established the framework for bilateral cooperation, designated implementing authorities, created a joint working group and provided for reciprocal visits and technical recommendations related to the project.

In February 2025, Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan signed the consultancy contract covering studies, design and pre-execution services for completing Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port, with implementation beginning the following month.

Kuwait's Cabinet established a committee in February 2024 to oversee agreements and memoranda of understanding with China, holding dozens of meetings to facilitate implementation and coordinate technical cooperation between both sides.

The committee has accelerated consultations, supported government entities, resolved implementation challenges and prioritized projects, while the ministerial committee for major development projects has continued legal and technical reviews to ensure timely execution.

Prime Minister His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has repeatedly directed the committee to prioritize strategic development projects, remove implementation obstacles and strengthen Kuwait's partnerships with friendly countries through sustainable economic cooperation.

The Kuwaiti government has reaffirmed its commitment to expanding strategic partnerships with sisterly and friendly countries by broadening cooperation across key development sectors and advancing current and future major national projects.

### Other Voices

## Regulating the affairs of worship places

By Ahmad alsarraf

I have previously written and spoken in support of the need to regulate the work of places of worship and charitable organizations, ensuring that they do not become a burden on residents, a source of security concerns, a means of illicit enrichment, or a tool for political or sectarian exploitation, particularly given that their number has exceeded one thousand.

Much of what I previously advocated has now been realized through the issuance of a decree regulating the establishment and management of places of worship, excluding mosques affiliated with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. The decree stipulates the formation of a committee comprising representatives from several ministries, along with three experienced citizens, to establish regulations, determine the locations of places of worship and charitable organizations, and issue the necessary licenses.

The decree also mandates each place of worship to have a legal representative who must pledge to use any entrusted funds solely for the licensed purposes, refrain from conducting any activities other than those for which the place is licensed, and submit an annual budget within three months of the end of the fiscal year.

The decree prohibits any activities that involve insulting religions or sects, engaging in political interference, interfering in the

affairs of other countries, inciting sectarian or racial tensions, promoting extremism or violence, or conducting rituals that threaten security or public order. A permit must be obtained before collecting donations, and no event may be organized without prior approval.

Charitable organizations and places of worship are prohibited from communicating with diplomatic, security, or official institutions of other countries, or from hosting individuals from outside Kuwait without obtaining prior approval.

The use of the premises of a place of worship or charitable organization for activities other than those for which it was licensed is prohibited, as is using the premises as accommodation for individuals. The legal representative is also prohibited from transferring the license to another party without the ministry's approval.

Government inspectors are granted judicial authority, including the right to inspect facilities, review records, and document violations. All licensed places of worship and charitable organizations must comply with these regulations within six months.

The law imposes strict penalties, and

the legal representative of the organization bears personal and joint responsibility for the implementation of any judgments issued against the organization.

What prompted me to raise this concern is my fear of the dangerous situation in some countries resulting from the alarming increase in the number of places of worship and the diverse affiliations of those overseeing them. These institutions have become sources of social division as well as sources of power for those who manage them.

It was not surprising that the number of members affiliated with these institutions, representing various sects and religions, exceeded one hundred. The activities of some places of worship have disrupted people's daily life due to the significant increase in religious occasions that have become official holidays, as well as the frequent closure of roads and the organization of processions throughout much of the year. Had the governments of these countries taken timely action, the situation may not have reached its current state of disorder.

I reiterate my previous call for regulating the activities of all parties, limiting the presence of extremists in both private and official media outlets, and adopting a zero-tolerance approach toward anyone who attacks the beliefs of others.



email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

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KUNA photo  
Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Khaled Boodai receives Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Kuwait Yerzhan Yelekeyev.

## Kuwait, Kazakhstan mull ways to boost trade & food security

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6, (KUNA): Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Khaled Boodai met on Thursday with Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Kuwait Yerzhan Yelekeyev to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a statement that the two

sides reviewed cooperation opportunities in trade, economy and food security, alongside other issues of mutual interest.

They also exchanged views on developing bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation across areas of common interest.

## PAFN, CAIT ink protocol to boost up digital conversion

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) signed a cooperation protocol with the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) to support digital transformation efforts and enhance government integration, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The protocol aims to strengthen electronic connectivity and facilitate the exchange of government data and information between the two entities. This will help expedite procedures and provide secure, reliable data in accordance with the highest standards of efficiency, quality, and information security.

PAFN said the step reflects its ongoing efforts to develop digital services and enhance coordination with government agencies, and supports Kuwait's efforts to build a more efficient and integrated digital government.

**Transfer requests:** The Ministry of Education announced that it has begun receiving applications from school administrative staff who wish to withdraw their previously submitted transfer requests, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

# MoH and Mol seek Kuwaiti talent in forensic medicine

Kuwait launches first FETP program

**By Marwa Al-Bahravi**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health Sheikh Dr. Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah recently met with a delegation from the Criminal Evidence General Department at the Ministry of Interior in order to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation in preparing and training national talent in the field of forensic medicine, and solidifying the institutional partnership between the two ministries, reports KUNA.**

The delegation included Assistant Director General of the Criminal Evidence General Department Brigadier General Mishari Al-

Rish, Director of the Forensic Medicine Department Colonel Dr. Lujain Al-Rashid and Colonel Dr. Mohammad Al-Hariti.

They talked about the need to support scholarship and training programs to prepare specialized national personnel and enhance their professional readiness, in addition to expanding cooperation with academic and training institutions to support education and development in the field of forensic medicine.

**FETP program launched:** The Kuwait Center for Disease Prevention and Control, which is under the Ministry of Health, announced the launching of the first Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) in the country.

This program is for the development of the

skills of qualified national personnel, as well as the capabilities of the public health system, in surveillance and response to health related incidents.

The ministry revealed that the first phase of the program is for the health inspectors to develop their skills in epidemiological surveillance, field investigation, data analysis, and response to health related incidents and emergencies.

The program is in collaboration with the Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the Eastern Mediterranean, its office in Kuwait, and the Eastern Mediterranean Community Health Network (EMPHNET).

It will run from September to December 2026, including workshops and field applications under the supervision of mentors who will train the participants on global best practices in applied epidemiology.

The ministry urged its employees who meet the eligibility requirements to register for the program by filling up the electronic form through this link: <https://www.moh.gov.kw/PHS/PHA/FETPForm.pdf>



Dr. Salman Al-Sabah

## Panel focuses on 'Al-Naeem' Healthy City progress

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: General Coordinator of the Higher Coordinating Committee for Jahra Healthy City Dr. Laila Hamad Al-Hais presided over the meeting of Al-Naeem Healthy City at the Jahra Governorate headquarters recently, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Present at the meeting were Coordinator of Al-Naeem Healthy City Abdullah Boushaiba, as well as the chairpersons and members of the health, education and environmental committees.

They discussed the objectives of the Healthy Cities Program, role of Al-Naeem City in implementing the program as per the criteria, operational mechanisms of the committees, ways to strengthen coordination and integration among them, creation of the logo

for Al-Naeem Healthy City that reflects its identity and mission, and inventory of the health, education and environmental services, public facilities and community institutions in the city in preparation for the creation of a comprehensive database.

They also reviewed the priorities for the next phase, assigned tasks to the committees according to their areas of expertise, and established the implementation timeline.

Several recommendations were adopted related to the preparation of implementation plans, strengthening community partnerships, equipping the Healthy City Office, and adopting the mechanism for monitoring and submitting periodic reports detailing the progress, challenges and proposed solutions.



Jahra Governorate photo  
The meeting in progress.

## CSC accredits Kuwaiti trainers in corporate governance drive

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has accredited 70 national trainers from various government institutions as part of the National Corporate Governance Program, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release issued on Wednesday, CSC explained that the trainers were accredited after successfully completing the required qualification and evaluation procedures in accordance with the approved accreditation standards under the National Corporate Governance Program.

The program has a total of 109 participants from various govern-

ment entities, with the accreditation process currently ongoing for the remaining participants who have met all required conditions and standards.

CSC went on to explain that this achievement reflects its efforts to strengthen institutional capabilities and develop qualified national trainers capable of promoting a culture of corporate governance. It aims to unify concepts, enhance government performance efficiency, and reinforce the principles of transparency, accountability, and sustainability in all government agencies.

## Pediatric Dentistry Unit opened at Mutlaa Accident Center (N10)

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: The Dental Department in the Health Ministry inaugurated the Pediatric Dentistry Unit at Al-Mutlaa Accident Center (N10), with Assistant Undersecretary for Dental Affairs Dr. Ahmad Asad, Director of the Dental Department Dr. Jaber Taqi, Head of Al-Jahra Specialized Center for Pediatric Dentistry Dr. Turki Al-Majawib, Head of the Pediatric Dentistry Department Dr. Amal Behbehani, and Head of the Nursing Staff at the Dental Department Najat Al-Rajeeb in attendance, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The new unit consists of four spe-

cialized pediatric dental clinics, a fully equipped sterilization room and a dental X-ray unit, hence, providing a comprehensive treatment environment. It will serve children from six to 15 years old residing in Al-Mutlaa City in the morning and evening hours.

The opening of the unit is part of the plan of the department to develop treatment services and expand specialized services in various health districts in order to meet the needs of the growing population and in light of the ongoing urban expansion.

### Statistics on court rulings

## 4,357 under travel ban and detention for 2,645 debtors

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: The Court Rulings Enforcement General Department at the Ministry of Justice revealed that enforcement seizure reports for debtors' assets held by third parties topped the list of procedures implemented in June, totaling 83,380.

Statistics issued by the Statistics and Research Department showed that the number of travel ban requests reached 4,357, in addition to 2,645 requests for the arrest and detention of debtors.

It also revealed that the total number of procedures carried out in same month reached 400,519, covering the ruling enforcement departments in all governorates.

The enforcement seizure reports for debtors' assets held by third parties totaled 83,380, followed by sei-

zure release reports with 39,377 and the statutory case reports with 5,826.

The number of requests to lift seizures reached 4,983, requests to lift enforcement seizures on vehicles reached 4,481, travel ban requests reached 4,357, requests for arrest warrants for debtors reached 2,645, reports of receipt of funds outside the department reached 2,068 and reports of debtors being presented for payment reached 699.

The Enforcement Department in the Capital Governorate recorded the highest with 120,778 procedures, followed by Ahmadi with 75,634, Hawally with 67,452, Farwaniya with 56,736, Jahra with 48,744, and Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 29,860, while the number of procedures completed at the border crossings, Sulaibiya and Kuwait Lawyers Association reached 1,315.

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Traffic studies committee, E-platform among key upgrades

Kuwait Society of Engineers revamps accreditation council

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: The Kuwait Society of Engineers announced the restructuring of its Engineers Qualification and Classification Council for the 2026/2027 term, aiming to strengthen the engineer qualification and classification system and support the digital transformation of the council’s services, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Society President Eng. Mohammed Al-Subaie emphasized the society’s commitment to attracting Kuwaiti engineering expertise and talent from various sectors, which will contribute to improved council performance and the advancement of the engineer-

ing profession.

He said the new council includes a distinguished group of engineering leaders and experts representing various sectors, which will enhance cooperation among relevant entities and support the development of the engineer qualification and classification system.

The society affirmed its commitment to coordinating with government entities to expand the scope of accreditation and classification for engineers working on state projects and within the labor market.

Council Chairman Eng. Rashid Al-Enezi

expressed his appreciation for the confidence placed in him by the society’s board of directors, stressing the continued efforts to develop the accreditation, qualification, and classification system in a manner that serves the engineering profession and supports the state’s direction towards relying on national expertise in implementing development plans.

He explained that the council has approved its work plan for the upcoming phase, which includes establishing a traffic studies committee to keep pace with the expansion of infrastructure, road, and transportation

projects. The council has also approved the launch of a comprehensive electronic platform to manage all qualification and classification procedures, as part of the Engineers Society’s digital transformation efforts.

The new council is composed as follows:

Chairman - Rashid Al-Enezi

Vice Chairman - Rashoud Al-Azmi

Members:

- Barjas Al-Dousari
- Dr. Adel Malallah, Dean of the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University
- Eid Al-Rashidi, Acting Undersecretary

of the Ministry of Public Works

- Meshal Al-Zaid, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Communications
- Mubarak Al-Ajmi, Kuwait Municipality
- Faisal Al-Sumait, Assistant Undersecretary for Electrical Transmission Networks at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy
- Abdullah Al-Akshan from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare
- Adel Al-Meshri from the Kuwait Union of Engineering Offices and Consulting Firms
- Nouf Behbehani, Acting Director General of the Environment Public Authority

Continued from Page 1

15 projects

The ministry has included this project in its current fiscal year contracts, with the tender to be issued through the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) for a 39-month implementation period, according to the Roads Engineering Department at the Ministry of Public Works.

The project aims to achieve several important developmental objectives, including upgrading and modernizing the regional road, which is part of the international highway network in the Middle East.

It will contribute to developing an integrated transportation system and support regional and international trade among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Kuwait revokes

students will be notified to transfer their children to other schools before the school year begins.

It added that the decision is part of efforts to enforce regulations governing the private education sector, while ensuring students complete their transfer to other schools without disruption to their education.

Dust, 50°C

Friday night’s weather will be hot to warm, with northwesterly winds ranging from light to moderate speeds between 12 and 35 kilometers per hour. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 32 and 34 degrees Celsius, while the sea will remain light to moderate, with waves between two and five feet.

Saturday’s daytime weather will

be extremely hot, with relatively humid conditions expected in coastal areas. Winds will be northwesterly to variable, ranging from light to moderate speeds between 8 and 35 kilometers per hour. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 46 and 48 degrees Celsius, while sea conditions will be light to moderate, with waves between one and four feet.

Saturday night’s weather will be hot to warm and relatively humid, particularly in coastal areas. Winds will be variable to southeasterly, ranging from light to moderate speeds between 10 and 30 kilometers per hour. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 31 and 33 degrees Celsius, while the sea will remain light to moderate, with waves between one and four feet.

22,000 rental

Electronic contracts should not be limited to residential units but should also cover various types of rental assets, ensuring unified documentation procedures for all contracts.

Al-Dulaijan indicated that the project will naturally face some challenges and observations during the initial implementation phase, which is expected in any major transformation project.

Meanwhile, real estate legal consultant Iman Al-Hashash said the electronic platform for rental contracts is not simply a transition from paper to digital lease agreements, but rather the establishment of a more organized and transparent legal framework that will directly contribute to the stability of the real estate market.

She explained that her practical experience in real estate disputes shows that a large proportion of rental cases

do not result from ambiguity in legal provisions, but rather from insufficient documentation of contractual relationships or disagreements between parties regarding contract terms, duration, signing dates, or the validity of signatures.

The platform will significantly help reduce such disputes by standardizing, documenting, and electronically archiving rental contracts. The platform will not eliminate all rental disputes, but it will greatly reduce their occurrence, allowing courts to focus on assessing each party’s compliance with their obligations, while contributing to faster case resolution and improving the efficiency of the justice system.

The platform’s true value lies not only in its electronic format but also in its ability to regulate the rental relationship from its beginning to its conclusion.

Al-Hashash affirmed that the success of the project depends on integrating the platform with relevant government entities, including the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), the Ministry of Electricity and Water, Kuwait Municipality, judicial authorities, and electronic payment systems.

She noted that adding an electronic notification service would also help streamline many existing procedures.

Al-Hashash emphasized that the success of the project will not be achieved merely by launching the platform, but will require a clear implementation plan, a simplified user guide, and a transitional period to ensure full adoption.

She explained that the project will represent a qualitative shift in the real estate market, strengthen investor confidence, and make it easier for landlords to manage contracts and safeguard their rights. At the same time, it will provide tenants with

greater protection by ensuring that all lease terms are properly documented.

Furthermore, real estate expert Khaled Al-Saghir said that the Minister of Justice’s announcement of the electronic platform for rentals and contracts represents one of the most significant digital transformation projects.

He explained that the platform is part of a legislative package that includes amendments to the rental law and the preparation of a new law regulating homeowners’ associations.

The project is an important pillar of this package, as it will help standardize rental contracts, simplify procedures, and accelerate litigation processes.

Al-Saghir revealed that approximately 22,000 rental cases are brought before courts annually, accounting for around five percent of total cases, adding that a significant portion of these disputes results from differences in contracts and procedures, as well as the absence of standardized documentation.

He emphasized that adopting a unified electronic contract containing binding terms and conditions for all parties will help reduce these issues and ensure that landlords and tenants can obtain their rights more efficiently.

Al-Saghir explained out that one of the most prominent features he proposes for the platform is the automatic linking of property registration numbers with tenants’ civil ID numbers. This would enable verification of the number of units authorized for rental and prevent the leasing of non-compliant or unauthorized properties.

The project would also strengthen compliance with safety and fire prevention requirements. Linking tenant information to the number of family members would help match occupancy levels with the approved capacity

of each unit, thereby improving quality of life, enhancing safety, and facilitating evacuation procedures during emergencies.

Al-Saghir noted that the platform could be integrated with credit information network data to verify tenants’ financial solvency before contracts are signed, helping reduce cases of payment defaults.

It is worth mentioning that real estate transactions in Kuwait reached approximately KD 398.52 million in July 2026, marking an increase of 22.34 percent compared to June, when transactions totaled KD 325.76 million.

However, the figure represents a decline of 11.31 percent compared to July 2025, which recorded transactions worth KD 449.32 million.

The monthly report issued by the Research and Studies Center of Darwazat Al Safat Real Estate showed that the number of transactions decreased to 571 in July, compared to 599 in June, representing a decline of 4.67 percent.

The number of transactions also fell by 1.38 percent compared to the same month last year, which recorded 579 deals.

The report indicated that the residential sector maintained its leading position in terms of transaction value, reaching KD 167.99 million, representing a slight increase of 0.47 percent compared to the previous month and a 17.48 percent increase compared to July 2025.

The investment sector recorded the largest monthly growth, with transaction value rising to KD 137.10 million, an increase of 46.16 percent compared to June, despite a year-on-year decline of 27.84 percent.

The number of investment transactions increased to 133, compared to 126 in June. Commercial real estate

transactions also rose to KD 90.19 million, marking a monthly increase of 56.63 percent, despite a 14.10 percent decrease compared to July of last year. The number of commercial transactions increased to 17, compared to 11 in June.

Kuwait, Saudi,

Elsewhere, Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmail Baghaei, has said an agreement on the Strait of Hormuz with Oman, which lies on the other side of the waterway, is in the “final stage” of drafting. Speaking Wednesday, he said a joint statement will be issued “if certain parties do not obstruct this process,” apparently referring to the U.S.

The agreement is likely to be contingent on the U.S. lifting its blockade on Iran’s ports. The strait is crucial to global shipping and energy supplies. Before the war, which began with U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran in February, around one fifth of the world’s oil and natural gas passed through the waterway at the mouth of the Arabian Gulf.

On Thursday, all eyes were on the U.S. for the next development.

At least two ships were hit in the Strait of Hormuz in the past week, while several others reported near misses or warnings from entities claiming to represent Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, according to maritime data company Lloyd’s List Intelligence.

The company added that Yemen’s Iran-backed Houthi rebels continued to claim attacks on ships in the Red Sea. The claims could not be independently verified.

Vessel traffic through the Strait of Hormuz increased to 84 transits during the week of July 27 to Aug. 2, up from 45 the previous week. But traffic is still far below the more than 700 transits seen in a typical week before the crisis, Lloyd’s List said.



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Major victory for Democrats’ progressive wing

## Abdul El-Sayed wins Michigan Senate primary

DETROIT, Aug 6, (AP): Abdul El-Sayed, a former public health official who harnessed Democratic frustration with the party establishment, narrowly defeated Rep. Haley Stevens in Michigan’s US Senate primary, setting up a crucial test for progressives in a key battleground state.

El-Sayed will face Republican Mike Rogers, a former congressman, in November in a race that will help determine control of the Senate. His first challenge will be unifying Democratic factions after a bitter primary that offered divergent visions for a party desperate for a path back to power.

Stevens, who pledged her support for El-Sayed after conceding defeat, was backed by the Democratic establishment, including outgoing Sen. Gary Peters, whose retirement spurred a scramble to fill his seat. El-Sayed promised a more aggressive approach for confronting entrenched corporate interests and President Donald Trump, and declared his vic-

tory was nothing short of a political earthquake despite only scraping by Stevens.

“In the words of Muhammad Ali, we shook up the world,” he said.

The Associated Press declared El-Sayed the winner having confirmed that - after Wednesday morning updates in election returns in Wayne and Oakland counties, two of the state’s largest in the Detroit area - there were simply not enough votes left to count that would allow Stevens to catch up and overtake him as the leader.

El-Sayed’s victory was ultimately so narrow that it wasn’t assured until almost all ballots cast statewide were counted. At the time the AP declared him the winner, El-Sayed led Stevens by 14,893 votes - a margin of just under 1 percentage point - out of more than 1.5 million ballots counted.

His win, however slim, represents a significant shift for the Democratic Party; in 2018 he lost the gubernatorial primary to now-

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer by 21 percentage points.

The former health official campaigned on “Medicare for All,” halting military aid to Israel and campaign finance reform. He had support from progressive leaders including Sen. Bernie Sanders and U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who framed the race as a grassroots-focused movement and a broader fight against the establishment and big-money spending.

Sen. Chris Van Hollen, another progressive leader, said El-Sayed’s victory “should be a wake-up call to the Washington Democratic establishment.”

Now comes the more difficult challenge for Democrats: uniting the party to defeat Rogers, for whom Republicans have already reserved large sums of money ahead of the general election.

“We have got to work together to take this country back,” Curtis Hertel, the chair of Michigan Democratic Party, said.



Abdul El-Sayed speaks during a news conference at the Spirit of Detroit shortly after winning the Democratic nomination for US Senate in Michigan on Aug 5, in Detroit. (AP)

## It’s the most frustrating, helpless feeling: Air Force Tech Sgt Gbeve

# Trump’s immigration crackdown detains more than 50 military spouses, parents

WASHINGTON, Aug 6, (AP): US President Donald Trump’s administration has detained dozens of parents and spouses of active-duty US troops as it rolls back immigration protections for military families to pursue its mass deportation agenda, an Associated Press investigation found.

More than 50 parents and spouses of active-duty service members have been detained since Trump took office for a second term, and at least six have been deported and one self-deported, the AP found in the first accounting of such detentions, which the government does not track. At least eight immediate family members of US service members remain in federal immigration custody.

Parents and spouses of people in the military have generally been shielded from deportation under bipartisan consensus for decades. But the AP found they’re now routinely being detained for months as they try to adjust their legal status through the policies available to service members’ close relatives and even as the military continues to recruit by advertising immigration benefits for enlistees’ families. Experts warn that the reversal could undermine military preparedness even as the US is at war in Iran. It’s left military members without emotional support and caretakers for their children, delayed deployments and forced some to take leave.

“How can I even focus on my military career because I have to worry about how my wife is doing?” said Army Sgt. Hedar Leonel Turcios Juarez, who was stationed in Fort Bliss, Texas, when his wife was detained outside a Walmart in front of their 6-year-old daughter in July.

A handful of detentions of service members’ spouses have prompted public backlash and led to intervention by Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin to secure their release.

The Department of Homeland Security has said it does not compile data on these cases. The AP obtained information by analyzing thousands of federal court records compiled by Habeas Dockets, a project run by the Immigration Justice Transparency Initiative; by reviewing existing media coverage; and by verifying information with family members and attorneys. The actual number is likely much higher than the 52 cases AP found.

The AP asked for comment from DHS on each case, including the individuals’ immigration and criminal history. The agency did not provide specific information about the majority of cases but noted that at least seven people had been removed from the US before, at least eight had removal orders and at least two had drunken-driving or drug-related convictions.

“DHS and ICE value the contributions of all those who have served in the US military,” DHS said in a statement. “US military service alone does not automatically grant lawful immigration status, or exempt aliens from the consequences of



Army Sgt. Hedar Leonel Turcios Juarez, whose wife Cristy has been detained by immigration authorities, looks at family photos at home in El Paso, Texas on July 21. (AP)

violating US immigration laws.”

The Pentagon declined to comment on the AP’s findings.

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Wendy Gbeve, 30, said she hasn’t had a good night’s sleep since her father, Luis Alberto Ramirez Zavala, was detained by immigration officials last month. Gbeve was there when he was arrested at a routine interview with US Citizenship and Immigration Services in Missouri about his pending application for legal status.

She spent hours refreshing the USCIS page to track where the government was taking her father: from a county jail in Missouri to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facility in Texas. Finally, roughly two weeks after he was detained, she found out he had been deported to his native Mexico.

“It’s the most frustrating, helpless feeling,” Gbeve said.

Gbeve said ICE still hasn’t informed her family why her father was removed so quickly. Ramirez Zavala spent most of his life in the U.S. working as a ranch hand in rural Illinois.

Ramirez Zavala’s wife of 30 years, a legal permanent resident, is considering returning to Mexico to be with her husband. For Gbeve, whose husband is also in the Air Force, that would leave no one to watch their children, ages 2 and 4, if both were deployed.

“That would be our entire safety net,” she said.

Some service members have been left caring for children alone.

Army Staff Sgt. Alexis Jaramillo, an aviation operations specialist who has served for more than a decade, said he would normally be involved in training soldiers at Fort Polk, Louisiana. Instead, he is on administrative leave, caring for his 5-year-old stepson, Noah, after his Brazilian wife, Maisa Lopes Eliaser, was detained in early July.

It happened during what the family thought was a routine appointment at a USCIS office in Alabama. Eliaser arrived in the U.S. on a tourist visa in 2019, and the couple was trying to change her status.

Immigration officials asked Jaramillo and his stepson to leave the room. Minutes later, they were told that Eliaser had been detained. The next time they saw her was inside a detention facility.

“It is really overwhelming because I need to take care of my kid by myself. No one is here to help me out,” Jaramillo said.

At least one active-duty soldier halted her imminent deployment after her husband was detained by immigration officers, leaving no one to care for their then-5-year-old son, court records show. A judge eventually ordered the husband released.

A new policy, implemented in April 2025, states that “military service alone does not exempt aliens from the consequences of violating U.S. immigration laws.”

Experts in military immigration law said this marks a stark shift from previous administrations across the political spectrum, including Trump’s first administration.

Dan Gividen, who served as ICE’s deputy chief counsel from 2016 to 2019 under Trump, represents a soldier’s father who has been in ICE custody for more than eight months. He said that during his time as an ICE prosecutor, immigration authorities rarely detained service members’ immediate family members unless they had committed violent crimes.

“We would not place them into removal proceedings, period. That’s insane,” Gividen said. “The fact that they’re doing it now is just outrageous.”



Firefighters put out a fire after Russian missiles hit a warehouse in Kyiv, Ukraine on Aug 5. (AP)

## Ukraine strikes more oil facilities deep inside Russia, says President Zelenskyy

KYIV, Ukraine, Aug 6, (AP): Ukraine hit more oil facilities deep inside Russia in nighttime attacks, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday, as Kyiv kept up its campaign to undermine Moscow’s wartime economy and embarrass the Kremlin.

The repeated strikes have caused fuel shortages and rattled Russians while heartening Ukrainians who are enduring regular Russian barrages that Kyiv’s weakened air defenses are struggling to counter.

Ukrainian forces hit a refinery in Bashkortostan, more than 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) behind the front line in eastern Ukraine, as well as a refinery in the Yaroslavl region, almost 700 kilometers (400 miles) from the Ukrainian border, Zelenskyy said on social media.

Also, Ukrainian forces hit two Russian military patrol boats in the Black Sea, according to Zelenskyy, as well as vessels belonging to Moscow’s so-called shadow fleet, which Russia uses to evade Western restrictions on its oil exports. He did not provide details about the vessels or the extent of the damage.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Thursday that its air defenses overnight shot down 605 Ukrainian

drones over a number of Russian regions, as well as illegally annexed Crimea and the Black and Azov seas.

Meanwhile, Russian drone and glide bomb attacks across Ukraine during the night killed at least three civilians and wounded 22 others, authorities said Thursday, as countries helping Kyiv resist Russia’s invasion scrambled to find more vital air defenses for its fight.

Moscow’s forces have in recent weeks pummeled Ukraine with ballistic missiles that Kyiv officials say only the US-made Patriot air defense system can stop. But the Iran war has drained stocks of Patriot interceptor missiles, leaving Ukraine at the mercy of Russian bombardments that seek to exploit its weakened aerial defenses.

“We are working as hard as possible with all partners who can assist with the supply of interceptor missiles to protect against such insane Russian strikes targeting life, people, and civilian facilities,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on social media late Wednesday after a Russian barrage killed 17 people in the Kyiv region.

He said he had spoken to NATO chief Mark Rutte and Finnish President Alexander Stubb about urgently

procuring interceptors from stockpiles.

Zelenskyy said he and Rutte “co-ordinated our efforts regarding countries that have the necessary missiles and the capacity to help.”

“It is important to cut through all red tape and make the necessary political decisions,” Zelenskyy said.

“I am discussing with allies how we can continue to get Ukraine the air defenses they urgently need,” Rutte said on X.

Russia appears determined to exhaust Ukraine through sheer weight of numbers in terms of soldiers, armor and weapons. Russian President Vladimir Putin thinks that time is on his side, that Western support will fade and that Ukraine’s resistance will eventually collapse under pressure, Western analysts and officials say.

Russia fired four missiles and 101 long-range strike drones at Ukraine from Wednesday into Thursday, Ukraine’s air force said, with air defenses shooting down or jamming 66 drones.

Three people were killed in Balakliia in the northeastern Kharkiv region, according to Vitalii Karabanov, head of the city’s military administration.

## Explosive drone at German airport poses new quality of threat: official

BERLIN, Aug 6, (AP): A drone with explosives was found at Germany’s Leipzig/Halle Airport and the device was defused, authorities said Wednesday, in an incident that the country’s top security official said posed a “new quality of danger.”

Both the runways at the major freight hub were closed and several flights, including one passenger plane, were diverted to other airports after a flying object was sighted nearby shortly before midnight Tuesday. An anti-explosives robot was deployed to check an object near the south runway.

Regional police and prosecutors later said an airport employee discovered a drone near the airport’s south runway with “an unknown explosive device,” and the object was examined by police. They removed its detonator.

That the drone was carrying explosives “is a new quality of danger,” German Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt told reporters at the airport after interrupting his vacation to travel to the scene.

“Drone sightings, drone threats including in a hybrid context, are something we know from the past,” he added. “That a drone armed with explosives is at an airport is a new threat scenario.”

Dobrindt described what happened as “a hybrid attack scenario,” but didn’t offer more details of au-



Police vehicles are parked at Leipzig/Halle Airport, where investigations were underway following the drone incident that occurred early Wednesday morning, in Schkeuditz, Germany on Aug 6. (AP)

thorities’ assessment or specify who might be responsible.

He said questions about details of the explosives, the origin of the drone and who was behind the incident were a matter for the ongoing investigation.

The regional interior minister of Saxony state, Armin Schuster, said authorities were looking for parts of a possible second drone.

Police and prosecutors said an apparent second flying object collided with a freight airplane after it

aborted a landing at Leipzig/Halle because the runway was closed. The plane flew to another German airport, Hannover, about 200 kilometers (125 miles) to the northwest, where officials found slight damage.

The north runway at Leipzig/Halle was reopened after about two hours. The south runway was scheduled to be out of action for maintenance on Wednesday. Authorities said there was no danger to passengers or airport employees, and flights weren’t affected during the day.

## Pope Leo XIV to visit Uruguay, Argentina and Peru: Vatican



Pope Leo XIV waves to faithful on the occasion of the weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Basilica, at the Vatican on Aug 5. (AP)

VATICAN CITY, Aug 6, (AP): Pope Leo XIV will make his first trip to Latin America as pontiff in November, returning to a region where he spent much of his ministry, with visits to Uruguay, Argentina and Peru, the Vatican announced Wednesday.

The Nov 6-17 trip will include stops in Montevideo, Paysandú and Florida in Uruguay; Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Luján in Argentina; and Lima, Chiclayo, Cusco and Pucallpa in Peru.

The visit is especially significant because of Leo’s long-standing ties to Peru. The first US-born pope spent decades there as a missionary and church leader and served as bishop of Chiclayo from 2015 to 2023. He also holds Peruvian citizenship.

His return to Chiclayo, the diocese he led before his election, is expected to be one of the key moments of the trip.

Leo will also visit Argentina, the homeland of his predecessor, late Pope Francis. Despite repeated invitations, Francis, the first Latin American pope, never returned to Argentina during his 12-year papacy.

The Vatican said Leo will be in Uruguay from Nov 6-8, Argentina from Nov 8-11 and Peru from Nov 11-17. A detailed itinerary will be released later.

No white phosphorus leak at air base in S.Korea: US military

## North Korea launches short-range ballistic missile toward sea, says South Korea

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug 6, (AP): North Korea launched a short-range ballistic missile toward the sea on Thursday, South Korea's military said, resuming weapons tests days before its rivals the U.S. and South Korea begin annual military drills that North Korea views as an invasion rehearsal.

The launch from North Korea's eastern coastal Wonsan area was detected around 5 p.m., South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said, explaining that South Korea's military has bolstered its surveillance posture and is closely coordinating with the U.S. and Japan.

Japan's Defense Ministry also said North Korea fired a possible ballistic missile but there was no impact in or around Japan, where the coast guard urged ships around the coast to use caution and notify authorities if any fallen objects were found.

The ballistic missile launch was North Korea's first since late June, when it tested a tactical ballistic missile with a "special mission" warhead and other weapons. After watching the testing activities, leader Kim Jong Un underscored the need to bolster the military's "deadly and

destructive offensive posture."

Thursday's launch also came ahead of large-scale, annual exercises to be conducted by the U.S. and South Korean militaries later this month. US and South Korean officials say the training is defensive in nature, but North Korea says the maneuvers are a practice invasion and often responds with its own missile tests and warlike rhetoric.

South Korean and US officials haven't formally released details about this year's joint exercise, but the drills are typically held in the latter half of August.

Kim has been focusing on enlarging its nuclear and missile arsenals since his high-stakes diplomacy with U.S. President Donald Trump collapsed in 2019. Experts say Kim wants international recognition as a nuclear state so that he can demand the lifting of international economic sanctions on North Korea.

UN Security Council resolutions ban North Korea from launches involving its huge stockpile of ballistic missiles. Tests of other weapons including cruise missiles and artillery systems are not banned, but experts say they still pose a threat to South



A North Korean flag flutters in the wind atop a 160-meter tower in North Korea's village Gijungdong as seen from the Taesungdong freedom village inside the demilitarized zone in Paju, South Korea on April 24, 2018. (AP)

Korea and the US.

In early July, Kim supervised tests of a nuclear-capable cruise missile aboard a new 5,000-ton destroyer. After years of prioritizing ballistic missile development, Kim has increasingly turned his focus to naval capabilities, including the construc-

tion of a nuclear-powered submarine.

In recent years, Kim has boosted his diplomatic credentials by expanding ties with Russia. North Korea has supplied conventional weapons and troops to Russia to support its war against Ukraine.

Kim also has pushed to deepen cooperation with China, the North's economic pipeline. Chinese President Xi Jinping visited the North Korean capital Pyongyang in June for the first time in seven years.

In response to Trump's repeated outreach to restart diplomacy, Kim has suggested talks can resume if the U.S. drops its demand for North Korean denuclearization as a precondition.

**Also:**

**SEOUL, South Korea:** The US military said Thursday its investigations confirmed there were no white phosphorus leak at one of its air bases in South Korea, days after local authorities urged residents to evacuate over concerns about a suspected leak.

On July 28, the **Pyeongtaek** city government sent text messages advising its residents to move to safe places and avoid skin exposure, saying white phosphorus was leaked at the Osan Air Base in the city, which is just south of Seoul, the capital.

White phosphorus is a controversial chemical substance used in incendiary munitions and smoke

shells. When ignited, it burns at extremely high temperatures and can set buildings ablaze and burn human flesh to the bone.

City officials said they lifted the evacuation alert later in the day after being informed that the U.S. military finished decontamination work. They said their earlier text messages were issued following consultations with the US military and South Korean police and emergency offices.

The US military said in a statement Thursday it has confirmed the crystallization and residue identified during a routine munitions inspection on the day was not white phosphorus nor contained traces of the substance.

It said that follow-up analysis concluded that the residue was non-hazardous surface corrosion resulting from environmental exposure over time. It said no injuries happened.

"We appreciate the city's close partnership in keeping our community safe, and we thank everyone for their patience as our team worked to resolve this situation," Col. **Ryan Ley**, commander of the 51st Fighter Wing, said, according to the statement.

Mayor deplores pursuit of nuke weapons

## Hiroshima marks 81st atomic bomb 'versary

TOKYO, Aug 6, (AP): Hiroshima on Thursday marked the 81st anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of the western Japanese city, with its mayor criticizing major powers for waging wars and urging them to stop justifying the possession of nuclear weapons as a method of deterrence.

"Downplaying the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and accepting the use of force to pursue one's own prosperity risk cycles of violent retaliation that could ultimately result in another Hiroshima or Nagasaki," Mayor Kazumi Matsui said.

Too many political leaders still consider nuclear deterrence a realistic approach and legitimize violence, which "simply pushes a world without nuclear weapons further into the distance," Matsui said in his peace declaration at the ceremony at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. He also called on each citizen to learn lessons from the past and take action.

About 50,000 people, including representatives from some 120 countries and regions including the United States and Iran, were to attend the ceremony. A minute of silence was held while a peace bell rang out at 8:15 a.m., the time when a U.S. B-29



Visitors pray for the victims at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, marking the anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing, in Hiroshima, western Japan on Aug 6. (AP)

dropped the bomb on the city.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who attended the memorial for the first time as prime minister, said she will take "a realistic approach" toward achieving a world where nuclear weapons are never used, within the framework of the United Nations' treaty to prevent the

spread of nuclear weapons.

This year's ceremony comes at a time of looming speculation that Takaichi's hawkish government, which supports the idea of nuclear deterrence, may ease Japan's post-war three non-nuclear principles when it compiles new security and defense documents later this year.

## Myanmar president seeks political legitimacy in Thailand's 2-day visit

BANGKOK, Aug 6, (AP): The head of Myanmar's military-backed government arrived in Thailand on Thursday for an official visit that could serve as a major stepping stone in his effort to win political legitimacy more than five years after seizing power from an elected civilian government.

President Min Aung Hlaing's two-day visit with members of his Cabinet included meetings with Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and other officials at Government House, where several memorandums of understanding were signed covering Myanmar migrant workers, water quality management in rivers shared by the two countries and space technology for Earth observation.

At the meeting with Anutin, Min Aung Hlaing sought to reassure Thailand that his government was restoring stability and steering Myanmar toward democracy.

"Myanmar has now reestablished itself on the path to democracy and is moving toward a better future," Min Aung Hlaing said. "As the new government, we have now begun working on national stability, peace, and



Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing, (right), shakes hand with Thailand's Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul during Thailand-Myanmar Business Forum in Bangkok, Thailand on Aug 6. (AP)

national reconciliation."

Following the meetings, the two leaders delivered speeches at a Thailand-Myanmar Business Forum.

Anutin said Thailand and Myanmar are ready to "step into the new chapter of economic cooperation that

is built upon mutual trust and benefit for the people of the two countries."

Min Aung Hlaing told attendees they could "invest with confidence" in Myanmar's energy, agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, technology and other sectors

## United States asks Philippine govt to extradite Filipino church leader accused of crimes and fraud

MANILA, Philippines, Aug 6, (AP): The United States has asked the Philippine government to extradite a Filipino church leader, who was once an influential adviser to former president Rodrigo Duterte, to face trial on charges including child trafficking and fraud that landed him on the FBI's most wanted list, two Philippine officials said Thursday.

The US request for Apollo Carreon Quiboloy's extradition was sent to the Department of Justice in Manila through the Philippine Foreign Affairs Department in July.

The request needs the approval of two Philippine courts, which have been trying the detained former televangelist for human trafficking and child abuse charges, according to two high-ranking officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to publicly discuss the issues.

The US Embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

Criminal suspects in the Philippines must finish their trials and serve their sentences if convicted prior to extradition. Philippine justice officials, however, can ask a do-



Apollo Quiboloy takes his oath as he attends a hearing at the Philippine Senate on Oct 23, 2024, in Manila, Philippines. (AP)

mestic court to allow the temporary surrender of a suspect to a foreign court to face trial prior to the resolution of their Philippine cases under the 1994 extradition treaty of Washington and Manila.

Quiboloy, 76, leads the Kingdom of Jesus Christ church, which was founded in 1985 in southern Davao

city and claims to have a wide following in the Philippines and abroad, including in the US.

In his heyday, Quiboloy was one of the most influential religious leaders in the Philippines and regarded as a political kingmaker. He served as spiritual adviser to the equally controversial Duterte, who took office in

June 2016.

Duterte was arrested in Manila last year under a warrant from the International Criminal Court and has since been detained in the Netherlands, where he will face trial for alleged crimes against humanity. The charges stem from the killings of large numbers of mostly poor drug suspects under his anti-drugs crackdowns, which alarmed Western governments and rights groups.

Quiboloy has made outrageous claims that sparked questions about his character but endeared him to his followers. He once claimed to have stopped a major earthquake from hitting the southern Philippines.

In 2024, Quiboloy went into hiding after a Philippine court ordered his arrest along with several others for alleged child and sexual abuse and human trafficking, police said. The Philippine Senate separately ordered Quiboloy's arrest at the time for refusing to appear in public hearings about his alleged crimes.

The preacher denied the allegations, saying they were fabricated by critics and former members who were removed from his religious group.

## Ex-Bangladeshi PM Sheikh Hasina to return from exile in December

NEW DELHI, Aug 6, (AP): Ousted former Bangladeshi prime minister **Sheikh Hasina** said Wednesday that she plans to return to her country from exile in India in December despite facing a death sentence in Bangladesh over a bloody crackdown on protesters in 2024.

In an audio address at an event in New Delhi marking the second anniversary of the uprising that toppled her government, Hasina said it was her duty to her people to return voluntarily despite her conviction in absentia on charges of crimes against humanity.

In a sharp reaction after Hasina's address, Bangladesh said it was "outraged" by her open engagement with the media in New Delhi where "she and her henchmen launched venomous vitriol against the State of Bangladesh and her people."

The country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement late Wednesday said the event was detrimental to ties between Bangladesh and India and



Hasina

questioned the timing of the event.

"On a day when the people of Bangladesh are observing the second anniversary of the July Revolution, this interaction by Sheikh Hasina on Indian soil stands as an affront to the sovereignty of Bangladesh and a grievous insult to the martyrs of the July Revolution," the statement said.

Hasina fled to India in 2024 after student-led protests forced her from power, and she has remained in exile there ever since.

In 2025, a Bangladeshi court sentenced her to death on charges of crimes against humanity for ordering a crackdown on the uprising. The United Nations in a report said nearly 1,400 people were killed in the crackdown. Hasina denies any wrongdoing.

Bangladesh has repeatedly sought Hasina's extradition, but India has so far declined to hand her over.

"I know that they may put me in jail, or they may kill me, or anything may happen, but still I have to go back," Hasina said during her address. "Fear cannot decide my duty to the people."

She also called for the ban on her Awami League party to be lifted and for political prisoners to be released.

### Lat/Am

**Bolsonaro announces running mate:** Brazilian presidential candidate **Flávio Bolsonaro** on Wednesday picked his running mate, a lawmaker from his party who will run for vice president in the October election after centrist parties largely failed to endorse his candidacy or opted to stay neutral in the race.

The senator and a son of former President Jair Bolsonaro was confirmed as the presidential candidate of his father's Liberal Party last month. He will run against incumbent President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and the two could go into a runoff if neither gets a majority vote.

But unlike his father, the younger Bolsonaro does not have the support of centrist parties in Brazil from which a vice-presidential candidate would have been expected. That lack of support has compounded his difficulties in choosing a running mate.

Alfredo Gaspar has been a member of Brazil's lower house since 2023. Before that, he worked as a prosecutor and served as secretary of public security of the northeastern state of Alagoas.

"He is someone I've come to admire, and everyone



Bolsonaro

here has come to admire him as well - for his courage, his honesty, and his track record in public security," Flávio Bolsonaro said. (AP)

**Mexican social media influencer killed:** A gunman killed a social media influencer during a livestream in Mexico's volatile northwestern state of Sinaloa, authorities said Wednesday, a public killing that underscored ongoing violence targeting social media personalities in the Latin American nation.

The influencer, César Gastélum, was killed on Tuesday night in the Sinaloa state capital of Culiacan, officials said. Mexican authorities implied the killing of the young man was linked to cartel violence but did not blame any particular group.

A video of the moment of his death, which was viewed by The Associated Press, shows him laughing with two other men in the parking lot of a Kentucky Fried Chicken when two men pull up on a motorcycle. One is seen pulling out a gun and shooting Gastélum. The attackers then flee the scene.

The attack was carried out just blocks away from the local prosecutor's office during rush hour.

Mexico's Security Cabinet and local prosecutors said an investigation was ongoing, and that it appeared Gastélum had released some videos in which he "alluded to a faction of a criminal group."

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum told journalists during her morning news conference on Wednesday that the "perpetrators must be arrested." (AP)

### Africa

**Nigeria rescues 308 kidnap victims:** At least 308 people abducted in different attacks in the northern part of Nigeria were rescued, the country's president said Wednesday.

Those rescued include 163 people abducted from Worocommunity in Kaiaama area of Kwara state in February, and 145 people kidnapped mostly from Niger state, Nigeria's President **Bola Tinubu** said in a statement. Details of the operation that freed the more than 300 people who spent months in captivity were not disclosed, with the statement only saying they were rescued from a forest and are now receiving medical attention.

It was described as the "largest rescue operation ever" undertaken in the country on a single day by security forces, according to Tinubu.

"The successful execution of this intelligence-led operation demonstrates the growing efficiency and collaboration among our security services," the president said. "I commend our gallant men and women in uniform for their bravery and unwavering commitment to safeguarding Nigerian lives."

Abductions at schools are common in Nigeria,



Tinubu

where militant groups target them to put pressure on the government and extract ransoms.

Armed groups, known as bandits in Nigeria, regularly carry out raids and kidnappings for ransom in the north-west and north-central parts of the country. (AP)

**S.Africa pushes for migration talks:** The South African government is pushing for Africa-wide talks on migration while seeking to manage the fallout over anti-immigration protests that have forced many migrants to leave the country and caused diplomatic tensions with some of its African counterparts.

The country has faced a backlash over protests calling for the deportation of migrants who are in the country illegally and reported violent attacks against migrants. But South African officials believe wider migration talks among all African nations could address the broader causes of the migration crisis throughout the continent.

The African Union, which includes 55 member nations, rejected a proposal last week by Ghana to add South Africa's migration tensions to the agenda of the bloc's next coordination meeting in October. South Africa opposed the idea, protesting it would be singled out without addressing the broader crisis.

South Africa's divisive migration situation is expected to be discussed by national leaders later this month at a Southern African Development Community summit in South Africa, which is pushing for a broader discussion by all members of the African Union. (AP)

Oil price down \$3.88 to \$74.33 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6, (KUNA): Price of Kuwaiti oil fell by USD 3.88 to USD 74.33 per barrel (pb) in Wednesday’s trading, compared with USD 78.21 pb on Tuesday, according to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). In global markets, Brent crude rose by 3 cents to settle at USD 79.39 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate fell by 55 cents to USD 75.22 pb.

Business

Zain first in Kuwait to launch AI Calling Pioneer Program

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: Zain has launched the AI Calling Translation Pioneer Program, becoming the first operator in Kuwait to introduce real-time Arabic-English translation directly through regular mobile calls, paving the way for a new generation of intelligent, AI-powered calling solutions.

The launch builds on Zain’s 2023 demonstration of its network’s readiness for next generation 5G calling innovations during the GSMA New Calling Summit in Paris, making it the only operator from the MENA region invited to showcase its roadmap and demonstrate intelligent calling capabilities.

The program will offer selected customers early access to an intelligent calling experience that enables participants to communicate in Arabic or English, with artificial intelligence translating the conversation in real time for both parties.

These capabilities will extend beyond real-time voice translation to include video calling, noise suppression, AI-generated call summaries, and other features designed to significantly enhance the overall calling experience. The solution also aims to reinvent the traditional phone call by enabling customers to interact visually with menus directly through the native call screen, without relying on external applications, helping them resolve inquiries more quickly and efficiently.

Unlike conventional translation applications, the service does not require a separate download, account registration, or additional device. It is integrated directly into the smartphone’s native dialer, allowing users to activate real-time translation during the call. The



Zain headquarters

service then recognizes and translates speech between Arabic and English before seamlessly playing the translated audio to the other participant.

- Selected customers to receive early access to real-time Arabic-English translation during regular mobile calls
- AI-powered service reflects Zain’s strategy to transform advanced network capabilities into intelligent customer experiences

The recently launched Huawei Pura90s series will serve as the flagship device platform for the initial Pioneer Program, combining a premium 5G-Advanced smartphone experience with the superiority of Kuwait’s most awarded 5G network.

Feedback from participating customers will help further optimize the service ahead of its wider rollout across Kuwait in the near future. Following its initial launch on the Pura90s Series, Zain plans to extend the experience to additional compatible devices.

Zain continues to harness AI and advanced network capabilities to make digital experiences simpler, more inclusive, and more valuable. By integrating translation directly into the calling experience, the service helps reduce language barriers without requiring users to switch between applications or interrupt their conversations.

In line with Zain’s ‘4WARD – Progress with Purpose’ strategy, the company is leveraging its 5G-Advanced connectivity and network capabilities to deliver differentiated digital services for consumers and businesses, making communication more intelligent, seamless, and responsive to evolving customer needs.

Kuwait’s international business community holds Annual Inter-Council Summer Dinner

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: Members of Kuwait’s international business community gathered at Waldorf Astoria Kuwait for the 2026 Annual Inter-Council Summer Dinner, a significant platform for bringing together business leaders, diplomatic representatives, government stakeholders, and professionals from across Kuwait’s diverse international communities.

The event highlighted the important role that business councils play in creating channels for dialogue, encouraging cross-cultural understanding, and building relationships across sectors and nationalities. By bringing several communities together in one setting, the dinner provided attendees with an opportunity to move beyond their usual networks, exchange perspectives, identify shared interests, and establish connections that may lead to future business and institutional collaboration.

The event brought together members, partners, and guests from eight participating organizations: ABCK–AmCham Kuwait, the British Business Forum, Canadians in Kuwait, Casa Italia Kuwait, the French Business Council Kuwait, the Indian Business and Professional Council, the Lebanese Business Council in Kuwait, and the Portuguese Business Council – Kuwait. Their Excellencies, representatives of the diplomatic community, and distinguished guests from Kuwait’s government entities were also welcomed during the opening remarks.

Following guest arrival and registration, attendees enjoyed dinner and extended networking in a relaxed setting designed to encourage open conversation and meaningful engagement. The diverse participation reflected Kuwait’s position as a meeting point for international business communities and demonstrated the value of maintaining strong relationships between the private sector, diplomatic missions, government entities, and professional organizations.

The program later recognized the organizations

whose support helped make the dinner possible. Waldorf Astoria Kuwait was honored as Hotel Partner, BDO as Silver Sponsor, and Arkan Legal Consultants as Gold Sponsor. Representatives received commemorative plaques, followed by an official group photograph with the heads and representatives of the participating business councils.

The evening concluded with a raffle featuring prizes generously contributed by Alshaya, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Easa Hussain Al Yousifi & Sons Co., Holiday Inn Salmiya, Michele’s Beauty Salon, Park Inn by Radisson Hotel & Apartments Kuwait, The Sultan Center, Waldorf Astoria Kuwait, and Virginia Dental. Prizes included dining vouchers, retail gifts, hotel stays, beauty services, and dental services.

In the closing remarks, the organizers thanked Their Excellencies, government and embassy representatives, participating councils, sponsors, partners, and guests for their support. Attendees were also invited to share feedback through the event survey to help shape future inter-council initiatives.

The Annual Inter-Council Summer Dinner continues to serve as an important bridge between Kuwait’s international business communities. Beyond providing an evening of networking, it creates a shared space where relationships can be developed, ideas can be exchanged, and future opportunities for cooperation can begin.

About us:

ABCK–AmCham Kuwait is a non-profit organization operating since 1985 and is composed of Fortune 500 corporations, small and medium-sized companies, and prominent business leaders and entrepreneurs, both American and Kuwaiti. ABCK–AmCham Kuwait advocates for American business interests in the State of Kuwait. For more information, please visit [www.amchamkuwait.org](http://www.amchamkuwait.org) or follow @abck1985 on social media.



Photos during the event.

Secure, paperless banking solution

NBK becomes first bank in Kuwait to activate the digital signature service



Abdulmohsen Al-Rushaid

- **Al-Rushaid:** Digital signatures streamline procedures and enhance transaction efficiency. We are enhancing service efficiency by adopting the latest financial technologies. We are committed to delivering a more convenient and seamless banking experience.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: The National Bank of Kuwait announced the activation of its digital signature service, becoming the first bank in Kuwait to incorporate this advanced feature into its banking system, which reflects its leadership in innovation and digital transformation, as well as its ongoing commitment to delivering advanced banking solutions that enhance customer experience and keep pace with the latest global developments in the financial sector.

This service enables customers to complete a wide range of banking transactions and documentation digitally and securely, eliminating the need for conventional paper-based signatures or branch visits, in addition to making procedures faster, operations more efficient, and banking experience more flexible and convenient.

The activation of this service aligns with NBK’s strategy to accelerate and enhance its digital transformation and infrastructure, ensuring the delivery of innovative banking services that meet customer aspirations while maintaining the highest standards of security and reliability.

Moreover, this achievement strengthens the Bank’s record of pioneering digital initiatives, as it has recently launched Kuwait’s first fully integrated digital loan, enabling customers to apply for financing, complete all procedures, and obtain approval entirely online and without visiting a branch. This marks a significant leap forward in the personal finance and digital banking experience.

NBK has emphasized that the digital signature service utilizes advanced technologies and digital verification systems, which ensures customer data protection and transactions confidentiality. It also supports sustainability efforts by reducing reliance on paper documents and lowering the environmental footprint.

“At the National Bank of Kuwait, we continue to invest in the latest digital solutions and technologies that enhance our customers’ experience and simplify their banking procedures. The activation of the electronic signature service represents a continuation of the bank’s innovation journey and reaffirms our commitment to delivering modern and secure banking services that place customers’ needs at the heart of our priorities.”

Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Abdulmohsen Al-Rushaid, SVP - Head of Digital Communications at National Bank of Kuwait, said: “At NBK, we continue to invest in cutting-edge digital solutions and technologies that enhance our customers’ banking experience and simplify their transactions. The activation of the digital signature service marks another milestone in the Bank’s innovation journey and underscores our commitment to delivering modern, secure banking services that place our customers’ needs at the heart of everything we do.”

Al-Rushaid also commended the significant efforts made by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) in enhancing the services of the Kuwait Mobile ID application and strengthening its digital signature capabilities. He noted



that these qualitative upgrades have helped streamline the customer’s digital journey and serve as a key enabler for organizations across various sectors to adopt more digital transformation initiatives and deliver integrated services based on digital identity and electronic signatures. These efforts are aligned with the State’s aspirations toward a more advanced, efficient, and digitally driven future.

He added that NBK remains strongly invested in providing advanced digital solutions to reinforce its leading position in the banking sector and meet customers’ growing expectations in terms of convenience and efficiency in their banking transactions.

Al-Rushaid also noted that this step is part of a chain of digital initiatives launched by the Bank recently, aimed at boosting the adoption of digital channels and providing a more seamless and efficient banking experience for customers.

Finally, Al-Rushaid pointed out that NBK has recently launched Kuwait’s first fully integrated digital loan, enabling customers to complete the entire financing process through digital channels, emphasizing that these initiatives reflect the Bank’s commitment to expanding its range of digital services and delivering advanced banking solutions.

NBK continues to solidify its position as one of the region’s most innovative financial institutions by adopting advanced digital solutions that contribute to the development of Kuwait’s banking sector and enhance customer experience, which also goes in line with its vision to lead the future of digital banking in Kuwait.

Ashkanani: The campaign encourages the use of digital banking channels through Pocket Points rewards

Warba launches incentive campaign for domestic worker salary transfers via SiDi

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: Warba Bank announced the launch of a new incentive campaign to encourage retail customers to transfer domestic worker salaries via its digital banking application, “SiDi.” Running from August 1 to December 31, 2026, the initiative rewards customers with 100 Pocket Points for each eligible salary transfer, up to a maximum of 1,000 points per month.

The campaign is available to both existing and new retail banking customers as part of Warba Bank’s strategy to expand the use of digital banking services and deliver value-added financial products.

Campaign Rewards:

The reward system provides benefits linked to eligible digital salary transfers:

- Monthly Reward Cap: Customers earn

100 Pocket Points per eligible salary transfer, valid for up to 10 eligible salary transfers per month (maximum 1,000 points monthly).

■ Point Accumulation: Earned points are credited in addition to any existing Pocket Points or cashback rewards available under the bank’s retail banking programs.

■ Cash Conversion: Points will be credited to the customer’s digital wallet within 10 business days following the end of each calendar month. Under the Pocket Points program, every 100 points may be redeemed for KWD 1, which is credited to the customer’s account.

Eligibility Criteria:

To qualify for the monthly rewards, transfers must adhere to the following framework:

- Account Balance Requirement: Cus-



Hamad Ashkanani

tomers must maintain a minimum monthly account balance of KWD 100.

■ Salary Range Limits: Eligible salary transfers must range between KWD 90 and KWD 250 per domestic worker.

■ Transaction Limits: The reward applies to one salary transfer per domestic worker each month.

■ Validity Period: Accumulated Pocket Points remain valid for 12 months from the date they are credited.

Executive Commentary:

Hamad Mohammad Ashkanani, Senior Director of Business Excellence at Warba Bank, stated:

“Warba Bank continues to invest in its digital banking infrastructure to offer a seamless, efficient banking experience. This cam-

paign encourages customers to utilize digital channels for managing domestic worker salary transfers, while providing practical financial incentives through the Pocket rewards program.”

Ashkanani added that enhancing transactional efficiency through mobile banking remains a core operational objective, enabling customers to complete routine salary transfers without visiting a branch.

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.

Despite ongoing challenges & slowdown in business activity

# Kamco Invest reports net profit of KD 3.6 mln in Q2

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced its financial results for the period ended 30 June 2026. The Company reported a net profit of KWD3.6mn (EPS: 10.57 fils) in Q2 2026 compared to KWD5.9mn (EPS: 17.28 fils) for the same period last year. The second quarter's performance offset the losses incurred during the first quarter, enabling the Company to return to profitability and close the first half of the year with a net profit of KWD0.3mn (EPS: 1 fils).

Despite ongoing geopolitical uncertainty, subdued market sentiment, and a slowdown in business activity, the Company delivered strong growth in its fee and commission income during the second quarter, increasing by 24% to KWD5.2mn (Q2 2025: KWD4.2mn). This drive fee and commission income for the first half of the year to KWD8.5mn (6M 2025: KWD7.5mn), an increase of 14% compared to the same period last year.

Fee and commission income continued to be the Company's primary source of revenue, accounting for 60.1% of total income during the second quarter and 82.8% during the first half of the year, underscoring the resilience and stability of its fee-based business model.

On the other hand, the Company continued to enhance operational efficiency, reducing its general and administrative expenses by 31.4% during the second quarter to KWD4.5mn, and by 16.5% during the first half of the year to KWD9.2mn, compared to the same periods last year.

The first six months of the year were marked by a sharp deterioration in the macro environment, as escalating regional tensions disrupted global trade flows and investor sentiment. The temporary closure of the Strait of Hormuz, alongside broader supply chain and logistics constraints, created significant uncertainty around energy exports and economic growth in the region. A sharp increase in crude oil prices also led to higher inflation that caused global central banks to consider rate hikes as against expectations of rate cuts at the start of the year.

Across the GCC, markets were directly impacted given the region's central role in global energy and petrochemicals supply. Disruptions to oil exports, rising input costs, and limited visibility on economic activity weighed on investor confidence and liquidity. Nevertheless, most GCC equity markets rebounded during the second quarter, recovering from the declines recorded in the first quarter and closing the first half of the year



Sheikh Talal Ali Abdullah Al Jaber Al Sabah

**Talal Al-Ali:** The second quarter marked a return to profitability, demonstrating the resilience of our business model



Faisal Sarkhou

**Sarkhou:** We remain focused on strengthening our strategic relationship with Burgan Bank and continue to grow our partnerships with leading global investment managers

in positive territory. Dubai led the recovery in regional markets during Q2 with a 9.6% gain, followed by Bahrain (+7.6%) and Kuwait (+3.4%).

Kamco Invest continued to strengthen its strategic relationship with Burgan Bank, enhancing client access to a broader and more integrated suite of financial services. Building on this collaboration, both institutions hosted the third edition of their Investment Conference, which has evolved into a flagship thought leadership platform in Kuwait, bringing together prominent stakeholders from across Kuwait and the region to explore global trends and emerging investment opportunities.

Assets under management stood at USD18.0bn as of 30 June 2026. Kamco Invest maintained its ranking amongst the largest ten asset managers in the MENA region. Furthermore, the Company was recognized by Forbes Middle East among top asset managers in the Middle East for 2026, thanks to its strong track record and deep expertise in delivering diverse investment solutions to its clients.

Managed equity and fixed income portfolios continued to

outperform their respective benchmarks. The Company's equity funds maintained their competitive positions with the Kamco Investment Fund receiving the 2026 LSEG (London Stock Exchange Group) Lipper Fund Awards in six categories, in recognition of its performance over 3, 5 and 10-year periods.

As for Alternative Investments, which covers real estate, private equity and structured products, the team continued to expand and diversify its range of offerings to provide clients with added value. Kamco Invest signed a EUR300mn partnership agreement with Santander Alternative Investments to offer sharia compliant, income generating investment opportunities in the European real estate private debt space to the investment community in the Arabian Gulf region.

The team also initiated capital call activity for the leasing strategy co-managed by Flexam Invest, a New York Life Investment Management company, and successfully completed the third income distribution to clients.

The Investment Banking team continued to advise clients on several transactions across equity capital markets, debt capital

markets, and M&A, with more deals expected to close during the remaining period of the year. The team successfully managed two debt capital market issuances amounting to over USD one billion, and played a prominent role in the financial restructuring of Digitus Group and acted as Issuance Manager and Subscription Agent for its capital increase, which was successfully completed with demand exceeding 21 times the shares offered, with an aggregate value exceeding KWD127mn.

First Securities Brokerage Company, Kamco Invest's brokerage arm, continued to strengthen its competitive position and attracted new clients through its online trading platforms.

Kamco Invest - Saudi and Kamco Invest - DIFC continued to strengthen their presence in their respective markets by improving their services and contributing more to the company's core businesses, particularly in asset management.

The Company enjoys a strong financial position, with shareholders' equity attributable to the parent Company of KWD66.6mn as of 30 June 2026. Furthermore, Capital Intelligence Ratings maintained its Long- and Short-Term Corporate Ratings of Kamco Invest at 'BBB' and 'A3', respectively, with stable outlook.

Commenting on the results, Sheikh Talal Ali Abdullah Al Jaber Al Sabah, Chairman, said, "The second quarter marked a return to profitability, demonstrating the resilience of our business model despite the challenging operating environment. More importantly, the continued growth in our recurring fee and commission income underscores the quality and sustainability of our earnings, reflecting the strength of our core businesses and the confidence our clients place in our capabilities."

Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, Chief Executive Officer, commented, "We are encouraged by the continued growth in our fee and commission income despite a challenging operating environment and slower business activity. This is coupled with our disciplined cost optimization efforts, which delivered a double-digit reduction in operating expenses."

Sarkhou added, "Looking ahead, we remain focused on strengthening our strategic relationship with Burgan Bank to expand our client base and deliver a broader suite of integrated financial products and services. We will also continue to grow our partnerships with leading global investment managers to enhance our investment platform, expand access to differentiated opportunities, and create greater value for our clients."

## Markets slide due to geopolitical escalation, hawkish Fed

By KAMCO Invest

Global equity markets witnessed sharp volatility during the month due to a mix of factors including geopolitical issues, a hawkish Fed and the ongoing earnings season. Indices in the US showed a sharp decline until the last two days of the month due to doubts over earnings reported by companies in the AI space. But a rally of over 2.4% in the last two trading sessions pushed the index up to almost flat for the month (-0.1%). The MSCI World index also recovered from a loss of 2.6% until the 29th to close with flat performance.

Earlier during the month, a hawkish Fed tone on inflation and the decision to hold rates steady disappointed investors while growing unease about the scale of AI-related capital spending triggered a broader rotation out of high-momentum technology and semiconductor names, extending losses into global markets as the sell-off spread from Asian trading into the US session. The US Fed's decision sent long-term Treasury yields to decades-high levels while the geopolitical situation in the Middle East pushed oil prices to over USD 100/b by the third week only to slide to around USD 90/b by month end on supply fears from the Middle East. On the other hand, European markets held up notably better than the US and Asian markets due to minimal concentration around technology stocks.

GCC equity markets declined for the third consecutive month during July-2025 with the MSCI GCC index down by 0.7% mainly led by low to mid single-digit declines in most markets while Kuwait and Abu Dhabi showed marginal gains. Saudi Arabia's TASI declined for the fourth consecutive month with a fall of almost 2% led by a broad-based decline across a majority of the sectors partially offset by gain in large-cap Energy and Telco names. The monthly decline also curtailed the YTD positive performance for Oman to 24.0% and for TASI to 0.9% while Qatar, Bahrain and Dubai showed mid single-digit declines.

### Boursa Kuwait

The Boursa Kuwait All Share Index closed July-2026 with a modest monthly gain of 0.6%, ending at 8,756.7 points. The Main 50 Index and Premier Market Index advanced 2.4% and 1.5%, respectively, supported by gains in large-cap and mid-cap stocks. In contrast, the Main Market Index declined 3.6% during the month. In terms of YTD-2026 performance, the Main 50 Index remained the best-performing benchmark with a gain of 15.8%, followed by the Main Market Index, which advanced 5.2%. Meanwhile, the Premier Market Index declined 3.0%, while the All-Share Index recorded a 1.7% loss.

The monthly sector performance chart remained mixed in July-2026, with 6 of 13 sector indices ending the month in the red. The Insurance sector posted the steepest drop, falling by 26.4% during the month. The Basic Materials and Telecommunications indices were next with declines of 5.5% and 4.7%, respectively. On the gainer's side, the Consumer Staples index topped during July-2026 with a gain of 3.5% followed by Banks and Technology indices with returns of 3.1% and 2.7%, respectively. In the Banking sector, three out of nine banks reported gains in July-2026. Shares of Commercial Bank of Kuwait, Ahli Bank of Kuwait, and Kuwait Finance House led gains in the sector at 5.9%, 3.1% and 2.3%, respectively. Within the telecommunications sector, all constituent stocks posted declines during July-2026. Ooredoo Kuwait recorded the steepest loss, falling 11.5%, followed by Digitus Group, which declined 6.0%, reflecting broad-based weakness across the sector during the month. The performance of the Energy sector index was supported by gains of 2.7% in shares of Burgan Company for Well Drilling, Trading and Maintenance Co. and 2.5% gain in shares of the Independent Petroleum Group.

In terms of monthly performance, Shuaiba Industrial Co. topped with a gain of 27.3% followed by National International Holding Co. and Rasiyat Holding Co. with gains of 24.1% and 23.4%, respectively. On the decliner's side, Gulf Insurance Group peaked with a fall of 42.9% followed by Dar Al Thuraya Real Estate Co. and Advanced Technology Co. with the declines of 39.7% and 19.4%, respectively. Trading activity declined during the month as compared to the previous month. Total volume of shares traded during July-2026 decreased by 24.9% to 6.3 Bn shares as compared to 8.4 Bn shares during June-2026. Value traded also declined by 24.8% to reach KWD 1.6 Bn during July-2026 as compared to KWD 2.1 Bn during the previous month. The monthly volume traded chart was topped by National Real Estate Co. with 351.8 Mn traded shares followed by Ektitab Holding Co. and Privatization Holding Co. with volumes of 327.4 Mn and 293.6 Mn, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, Kuwait Finance House topped with KWD 161.7 Mn traded shares followed by NBK and Int'l Financial Advisors Co. at KWD 139.3 Mn and KWD 48.9 Mn worth of traded shares, respectively.

### Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)

Saudi Arabia's TASI recorded a decline in July- 2026 reflecting cautious investor sentiment amid renewed geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and continued volatility in oil prices. The benchmark started the month on a positive note, climbing to a closing high of 10,856.9 points early on 01-July-2026 but declined in the subsequent sessions. The index subsequently traded within a volatile range for the remainder of the month, closing at 10,589.7 points, down 1.9% on a monthly basis and marking its lowest close since March-2026. However, despite the decline, Saudi Arabia YTD-2026 performance recorded a gain of 0.9%, the second best performing market in the GCC.

In terms of sectoral performance, the picture was skewed towards decliners after eighteen out of the twenty-one indices recorded declines during July-2026. The Media sector posted the steepest drop, falling by 14.5% during the month. The Insurance and Capital Goods indices were next with declines of 11.8% and 10.2%, respectively. On the gainer's side, the Health Care Equipment & Svc index topped during July-2026 with a gain of 3.7% followed by Energy and Telecommunication Services indices with returns of 1.3% and 0.5%, respectively. The Banking sector declined by 1.7% during the month, despite gains across most listed banks. Bank Aljazira, Arab National Bank, and Saudi Awwal Bank were among the top performers, advancing 4.7%, 4.6%, and 4.6%, respectively. However, the sector's overall performance was weighed down by the 5.1% decline in Al Rajhi Bank. The Energy sector gains were driven by a 1.4% rise in Saudi Aramco and a 21.7% increase in Rabigh Refining and Petrochemical Co. shares. Aramco benefited from improved investor sentiment toward energy stocks amid elevated geopolitical tensions and supply-side concerns.

In the Telecom sector, three out of four stocks reported declines during July-2026. Shares of Zain KSA dropped by 2.1% followed by STC with monthly decline of 0.2%. The monthly stock performance chart was topped by Tabuk Agricultural Development Co., with a gain of 47.5% followed by Knowledge Economic City with a gain of 23.0% and Saudi Paper Manufacturing Co. with a gain of 22.6%. On the monthly decliner's chart, Naseej International Trading Co. topped with a decline of 31.7% followed by Saudi Fisheries Co. and Nice One Beauty Digital Marketing Co. with declines of 23.3% and 21.4%, respectively.

### Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

The FTSE ADX advanced by 1.1% during July-2026, recording its second consecutive monthly growth after registering a 1.1% gain in June-2026, and closed the month at 9,914.62 points. Sectoral performance over the month was evenly distributed, with five out of the ten sector indices on the exchange posting gains, which underpinned the overall upward movement of the broader benchmark, while the remaining five registered declines during the same period. The overall positive index performance was driven by heavily weighted sectors like Financials (+2.2%) and Telecom (+5.7%). Within the Financials Sector, a significant number of the constituent companies recorded share price gains, including Hily Holding (18.4%), while in the Telecom Sector, the 6% share price surge of Emirates Telecom supported the overall growth of the sector. Conversely, the Real Estate Index experienced the largest decline of 9.6% over the month, whereas the Basic Materials Index posted the steepest drop among all sector indices, falling by 3.6%.

In terms of individual stock performance, Hily Holding topped the monthly gainers chart, with its share price surging by 18.4%. It was followed by Al Buhaira National Insurance and FAB, which recorded gains of 16.7% and 14.1%, respectively. Al Buhaira National Insurance recently announced the sale of a real estate investment, representing 12.4% of its total capital, for AED 31Mn. Meanwhile, FAB reported net profit growth of 1.1% y-o-y to AED 10.8 Bn, underpinned by a 29.4% jump in income from Islamic financing and investing products. On the decliners' side, Phoenix Group registered the largest drop, with its share price declining by 28.0%. The decline came after the company reported a loss of AED 91 Mn in Q2-2026, down from a loss of AED 182.8 Mn in Q2-2025. Insurance House and Al Dar Properties were next on the decliners table with declines of 13.5% and 10.3%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange declined during July-2026, following growth in the previous month. The total volume of shares declined by 35.3% to 4.2 Bn as compared to 6.5 Bn shares in June-2026. Concurrently, the total value of shares traded declined by 23.4% to AED 21.9 Bn, down from AED 28.6 Bn in the prior month. Borouge was the most active stock by volume, with 461.6 Mn shares traded, followed by ADNOC Distribution and ADNOC Gas, which recorded 456.4 Mn and 352.9 Mn shares, respectively. In terms of value traded during the month, Aldar Properties led the market with AED 2.5 Bn worth of shares exchanged, followed closely by Alpha Dhabi Holding PJSC and Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank with AED 2.2 Bn and USD 1.8 Bn, respectively.

### Dubai Financial Market

The DFM General Index declined by 2.7% in July-2026, after a healthy gain in the previous month, to close the month at 5,795.9 points. Sectoral performance was skewed towards decliners during the month. Five out of the eight sectors registered declines during the month, while the remaining three indices posted gains. The Consumer Discretionary Index posted the biggest gain during July-2026 at 11.7%, followed by the Real Estate sector with a fall of 7.5%. All the four constituent companies in the Consumer Discretionary recorded share price declines during July-2026, led by a 16.6% share price fall of Talabat Holding Co. Similarly, all the six constituent companies of the Real Estate Sector Index recorded declines during July-2026, led by a 13.1% share price drop of Union Properties. On the other hand, the Materials Index recorded 6.9% growth during the month, the largest among the indices, due to the 6.9% share price growth of National Cement Company during the month, the only constituent company.

In terms of monthly stock performance data from Bloomberg showed Dubai Refreshments Company topping the gainers' table in July-2026 with its share price rising 30.5%. It was followed by Islamic Arab Insurance and National International Holding, which recorded gains of 20.4% and 19.4%, respectively. Dubai Refreshment recently reported a 20% jump in net profits for 1H-2026, which reached AED 94 Mn as compared to AED 78.1 Mn during the same period in 2025. On the decliners' side, Talabat Holding led with a share price decline of 14.6%, followed by Union Properties and Ektitab Holding, with share price declines of 13.1% and 10.7%, respectively. Talabat Holding PLC recently announced a post-share buyback program, detailing the dates, percentages, and financials involved in the share repurchase.

Trading activity declined during the month. Total volume declined by 39.2% to 3.2 Bn shares in July-2026 vs. 5.3 Bn shares in June-2026. Similarly, the total value of shares traded declined at a relatively faster pace of 43.3%, reaching AED 11.1 Bn in July-2026 as compared to AED 19.7 Bn in June-2026. Talabat Holding topped the monthly volume chart with 730.6 Mn shares traded, followed by Drake & Scull International and Emaar Properties, which recorded 357.1 Mn and 335.5 Mn shares changing hands, respectively. In terms of value traded, Emaar Properties led the market with AED 3.9 Bn worth of shares exchanged during the month, followed by Emirates NBD and TALABAT Holding at AED 1.4 Bn and AED 849.0 Mn, respectively.

### Qatar Exchange

The Qatar Stock Exchange benchmark index declined 3.1% during July-2026 to close at 9,920.7, reflecting cautious investor sentiment amid heightened geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. The decline was primarily driven by weakness in large-cap Banking and Industrial stocks, as escalating regional tensions triggered risk-off sentiment and foreign investor outflows. The market witnessed one of its sharpest daily declines on 19-July-2026, when the benchmark index fell 1.5% to close at 9,954.84 points. A brief recovery towards month-end, supported by hopes of diplomatic progress, was subsequently curtailed by renewed geopolitical tensions. The broader Qatar All Share Index also reported a monthly decline of 3.2% and closed at 3,884.0 points. In terms of YTD-2026 performance, the QE 20 index was down 7.8%, the biggest decline in the GCC while the All-Share index declined by 4.3%. Meanwhile, the 1H-2026 earnings season showed a slight decline in profits among companies that had announced their results by the end of the month. Profits for the Banks & Financial Institutions sector decreased marginally by 0.15% to QAR 15.10 Bn in 1H-2026, compared with QAR 15.12 Bn in 1H-2025.

In terms of sectoral performance, all the sector indices recorded declines during July-2026. The Telecoms sector posted the biggest decline among the sectoral indices at 5.0% to close the month at 2,307.8 points. The Industrials Index and the Real Estate index followed with declines of 4.5% and 3.9%, respectively. All the constituents of the Real Estate sector declined during the month with United Development Co. and Ezdan Holding Group leading the declines at 7.9% and 4.9%, respectively. The Telecommunications Sector declined during the month, mainly due to a 5.7% decrease in Ooredoo Qatar's share price, which weighed on overall sector performance. In the Banking sector, shares of most of the listed banks reported declines during the month. Large-cap banks like Qatar National Bank declined by 3.9% while shares of Commercial Bank continued to see healthy gains for the second consecutive month and surged

1.8%. In the Industrial Sector Index, nine out of the eleven companies that constitute the sector recorded declines during July-2026. All the constituents of the Goods & Consumer Services sector also declined during the month with Qatar German Co for Medical Devices and Zad Holding Co. leading the declines that came in at 9.6% and 7.7%, respectively. The Insurance sector was also under pressure, driven by declines in Qatar Islamic Insurance Group and Qatar Insurance Co., which fell 8.3% and 5.1%, respectively.

### Bahrain Bourse

The Bahrain Bourse All Share Index recorded a decline of 4.2% during July-2026, marking its first decline after three consecutive monthly gains, and closing the month at 1,956.33 points. In terms of sectoral performance, the overall trend was almost exclusively negative, with six out of the seven sectors recording declines during July-2026. This included declines in heavily weighted indices such as the Materials and Financial sectors. The Materials Sector registered the largest gain among all sectors during the period, falling by 6.6% to close at 4,203.68 points, followed by the Financial Sector (-4.1%) and the Real Estate Sector (-2.6%). On the other hand, the Consumer Staples Sector remained unchanged in its performance during July- 2026, at 0% to end the month at 2,375.6 points.

In terms of share price performance, according to Bloomberg data, Gulf Hotel Group topped the monthly gainers list with a 2.8% increase in its share price during the month, followed by Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain, which recorded share price gains of 2.0%. KFJ recently announced the distribution of a cash interim dividend of 10% of share nominal value or 10 Kuwaiti Fils per share, which is equivalent to approximately 12.21 Bahraini Fils per share or 3.2 US Cents per share. KFJ announced a 6.1% y-o-y increase during 1H-2026 of net profits that reached KWD 363.1 Mn (BHD 441.4 Mn) as compared to KWD 342.1 Mn (BHD 416 Mn) in 1H-2025. On the decliners' side, GFH Financial Group led the list with an 8.2% share price decline during the month, followed by Al Salam Bank-Bahrain and Aluminium Bahrain, which posted monthly share price declines of 6.8% and 6.6%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange witnessed a decline during July-2026. The total volume of shares traded during the month fell by 52.8% to 30.5 Mn shares, compared to 64.5 Mn shares in June-2026. Total value traded on the exchange also experienced a decline of 51.9% to reach BHD 9.6 Mn in July-2026, down from BHD 20.1 Mn during the previous month. Al Salam Bank-Bahrain BSC topped the monthly volumes chart with 8.9 Mn shares traded, followed by GFH FINANCIAL GROUP BSC and Gulf Hotel Group B.S.C with 8.3 Mn and 3.7 Mn shares exchanged, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, GFH Financial Group led with BHD 4.6 Mn worth of shares exchanged, followed by Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain and Al Salam Bank-Bahrain BSC, which recorded BHD 2.1 Mn and BHD 1.9 Mn in value traded, respectively.

In economic news, Bahrain's property market recorded BHD 134 Mn in sales in July-2026, recording growth in sales for the first time since January-2026, according to Bahrain's Survey and Land Registration Bureau. The number of real estate sales completed in the Kingdom in July-2026 reached 988, up from 857 in June-2026. However, despite the positive real estate activity in recent months, Bahrain's property market suffered a broad slowdown in Q1-2026, with foreign buyers retreating and transaction values falling sharply as the geopolitical situation in the region deterred investors. The slump was most evident among overseas buyers, who completed 202 transactions worth BHD 18.6 Mn, down 29% by volume and 20% in value y-o-y during Q1-2026. Their share of deals by number dropped from roughly 13% in Q1-2025 to just over 9% in Q1-2026.

### Muscat Stock Exchange

The MSX 30 Index recorded a decline of 3.1% during July-2026, marking its third consecutive monthly drop on the back of ten successive months of solid gains for the index, and closing the month at 7,277.2 points. However, despite the decline, the YTD return remains in double-digit territory, standing at 24.0%, the highest in the GCC. In terms of sectoral performance, the overall decline was comprehensive as all three indices recorded declines during July-2026. The Services Index registered the biggest drop at (-5.2%) to close the month at 2,890.6 points, followed by the Industrial Index with (-3.0%) and the Financial Index with (-1.2%).

In terms of company performance, Al Hassan Engineering Co, which is currently under liquidation, topped the gainers list with a share price gain of 25.0%. Al Anwar Investment and Oman Oil Marketing Co. were next on the gainers chart with monthly gains of 13.0% and 11.2%, respectively. On the decliners' side, Sohar Power led the chart with a 28.8% share price decline, followed by Asyad Shipping Company and Galfar Engineering & Contracting Co., which witnessed share price drops of 16.7% and 14.7%, respectively. Sohar Power recently reported a net profit decline from OMR 19.9 Mn in 1H-2025 to OMR 1 Mn in 1H-2026.

Trading activity on the exchange increased during July-2026 as compared to the previous month. The total volume of shares traded increased by 26.5% to 3.3 Bn shares in July-2026, compared to 2.6 Bn shares in June-2026. The total value traded on the exchange also increased by 19.2% to OMR 0.92 Bn, up from OMR 0.8 Bn in the previous month. Bank Muscat topped the monthly value traded chart with transactions totaling OMR 148.3 Mn, followed by OQ Base Industries and Sohar International Bank, with total values traded of OMR 146.8 Mn and OMR 116.8 Mn, respectively. In terms of monthly volume traded, Sohar International Bank again led the list with 657.5 Mn shares, followed by OQ Base Industries and OQ Gas Networks with volumes of 588.9 Mn shares and 421.1 Mn shares, respectively.

On the economic front, Oman's economy expanded 2.6% in real terms during Q1-2026, with GDP reaching OMR 9.7 Bn, supported by stronger oil and gas activity and ongoing expansion in the service sector. Oil activities in the Sultanate increased by 4.6% y-o-y to OMR 3.0 Bn in Q1-2026 as compared to OMR 2.9 Bn during the corresponding period of 2025. In comparison, Oman's non-oil activities increased by 2.4% y-o-y to OMR 7.0 Bn during Q1-2026 as compared to OMR 6.9 Bn during the same period in 2025. In the non-oil sector performance, agriculture and fishing registered the strongest growth, increasing 6.1% y-o-y to OMR 337.8 Mn during Q1-2026 as compared to OMR 318.3 Mn in Q1-2025. Meanwhile, the Services sector remained the largest sector contributor to non-oil economic activity, increasing 3.7% to OMR 4.7 Bn in Q1-2026 as compared to OMR 4.6 Bn in Q1-2025. Oman's economy has benefited the oil price increase caused by the US-Iran war. According to Arab Gulf States Institute, Oman's average export oil price for the first half of the year increased to USD 81/bbl,

from USD 74/bbl a year earlier and compared to the assumed budget price of \$60/bbl. A sustained oil price level of USD 81/ bbl, the gain in oil price alone means the sultanate could run an estimated surplus of USD 3 Bn in 2026.

By contacting customer service via 1803333

## Kuwait Finance House launches free calls service for its customers in Egypt, Bahrain, UK & Turkey

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has announced the launch of a free, express call service to its Group banks in four countries: Egypt, Bahrain, the United Kingdom, and Turkey via 1803333. This service reflects the Bank’s ongoing commitment to providing advanced, secure services and maintaining continuous communication with its customers.

The service aims to strengthen communication bound between the Group and its customers beyond borders. Customers can simply call the contact center in Kuwait to be transferred to the selected international branches instantly and for free. This service enhances both customer experience and direct interaction between Group

subsidiaries and their customers.

The new service is accessible for KFH customers and non- customers, whether to complete transactions via interactive voice response or to know more about the Bank’s services and products, by contacting the 24/7 contact center.

KFH also offers free contact service internationally through the following numbers:

1. USA & Canada: 1-800-818-8608
2. UK: 0-800-014-8898
3. France: 0805-086620
4. Germany: 0800-181-7080
5. Spain: 900-905-440
6. Turkey: 00908507712154 (Local tariff charges in Turkey might be applied by local Turkish service providers when calling this

number)

The free contact service is available only for mobiles & landlines users in the countries mentioned above. This service does not apply to the Roaming Service.

Additionally, customers can contact KFH through KFHOnline, or through WhatsApp for general inquiries, and contact center at 1803333, to ensure constant support and availability of a range of services at any time.

KFH contact web contributes to building and strengthening trust with customers across the Group’s banks and customers, by providing the best services, according to the highest standards, where customer calls abroad have priority in being answered by the service official.



KFH headquarters

## Seven Kuwaitis recognized among Forbes Middle East’s Top 100 CEOs

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: Kuwaiti figures, including legal personalities, have been consistently featured in the rankings of Forbes Middle East – the most famous magazine in the world, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The magazine released 11 rankings this year, the latest of which is the 100 Most Powerful CEOs in the Middle East, preceded by the 50 Most Powerful Asset Managers in the Region, as well as the rankings of major real estate companies, family businesses and other entities. These rankings are considered a manifestation of the competitive and concerted efforts that enabled Kuwait to achieve such a position.

The magazine pointed out that the role of CEOs in the Middle East is no longer limited to leading companies in a traditional manner, as they are now required to guide their companies through rapid technological transformations, geopolitical uncertainty, and the changing landscape of financial markets.

Forbes Middle East released its sixth annual list of the most powerful CEOs in the Middle East, recognizing those who have achieved strong financial performance and contributed to supporting economic development and resilience.

Forbes based its selection of the CEOs on their achievements and performance in the past year, as well as the innovations and initiatives they implemented, along with their impact on the region, the countries in which they operate, and the markets they oversee. Criteria included the size of the companies they manage.

The list includes 102 executive officials of 21 nationalities. The banking sector recorded the highest with 30 participants, followed by the real estate and construction sector with eight participants. Kuwait boasts of seven leaders representing 29 sectors.

Following are the Kuwaiti leaders on the list:

- **Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah:** Vice

Chairman and CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). He ranked the highest in Kuwait and fourth in the Middle East. He continues his presence among the elite executives in the region for the fourth consecutive year, maintaining his position among the top 10 CEOs in the Middle East.

- **Isam Al-Sager:** Vice Chairman and CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait Group ranked the most powerful CEO in the Kuwaiti banking sector and third in the Middle East.
- **Khaled Al-Shamlan:** CEO of Kuwait Finance House Group ranked one of the most powerful CEOs in banking sector in Kuwait, affirming his leadership role in strengthening the position of the group and achieving outstanding financial and operational performance.
- **Bader Al-Kharafi:** Vice Chairman and CEO of Zain Group, who also serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Boursa Kuwait and Injaz Kuwait, and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Gulf Cables and Electrical Industries Group and National Investments Company. He founded BNK Holding.
- **Dana Nasser Al Sabah:** CEO of Kuwait Projects Company Holding (KIPCO), which has investments in the



Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah



Isam Al-Sager



Khaled Al-Shamlan



Bader Al-Kharafi

financial services, petrochemicals, food, media, real estate, education, healthcare and logistics sectors, with more than 60 subsidiaries operating in 24 countries. She also serves as Chairperson of the Board of Directors of OSN Group, Jordan Kuwait Bank, and the United Education Company, which was established through the American University of Kuwait in 2003.

- **Ahmed Al-Eidan:** CEO of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), who assumed the position in 2022. KOC plays a vital role in the exploration, development and production of oil and gas in Kuwait. The company expanded its non-associated gas production by bringing the Jurassic 4 and 5 production facilities online, each adding a production capacity of 160 million cubic feet per day of gas and 50,000 barrels per day of light oil.
- **Donna Sultan:** President and CEO of KEO International Consultants who has been with the company since 1985. She became CEO in 1991 and then President and CEO in 2016. The company has grown from a single office to an international consulting firm with 14 offices in the Middle East and Europe. It has more than 2,700 employees. It expanded into the data center sector in April 2026 to leverage its infrastructure capabilities, thereby, enhancing its services for leading cloud computing and data center companies in the Middle East. She also serves as Advisory Council member of Mass General Brigham International.



Dana Nasser Al Sabah



Ahmed Al-Eidan



Donna Sultan

### Main market rises 0.5%

### Boursa ends session mixed

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Thursday’s trading session mixed, with the general index declining 11.14 points, or 0.13 percent, to 8,865.62 points.

Trading activity saw 241.7 million shares change hands through 17,708 transactions, with a total value of KD 68.3 million, equivalent to approximately USD 222.8 million.

The Main Market Index gained 44.44 points, or 0.50 percent, to close at 9,003.95 points. Some 128.1 million shares were traded through 9,029 transactions, valued

at KD 23.8 million, or around USD 77.6 million.

Meanwhile, the Premier Market Index fell 23.56 points, or 0.25 percent, to reach 9,296.33 points. Trading volume stood at 113.5 million shares across 8,679 transactions, with a value of KD 44.4 million, equivalent to approximately USD 144.8 million.

The Main 50 Index rose 23.98 points, or 0.23 percent, to close at 10,339.66 points. A total of 79.3 million shares were traded through 5,487 transactions, worth KD 15.6 million, or approximately USD 50.2 million.

### Europe shares rise

## Global markets mixed as Kospi plunges 4.6%

BANGKOK, Aug 6, (AP): Shares were mixed Thursday in Europe and Asia and South Korea’s Kospi dropped more than 4% following declines for some Big Tech giants including memory chipmaker SK Hynix.

Oil prices held steady, with Brent crude trading near \$79 a barrel. Uncertainty about the direction of the U.S. war with Iran is still overhanging markets despite hopes for a reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

The future for the S&P 500 was up 0.1% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.3%.

Markets will get an update Friday on U.S. jobs with the monthly employment report for July, and analysts say investors appear to be bracing for its potential impact.

“Asia’s chip selloff looks like a combination of profit-taking and risk reduction ahead of Friday’s nonfarm payroll report,” Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

Strong corporate profits and expectations for more growth ahead generally have been steering U.S. stocks higher. But Asian benchmarks have been hit by bouts of selling of computer chipmakers and other companies related to the boom in artificial intelligence.

SK Hynix plunged 10.4% after dropping 30% ahead of the open in Seoul, while its larger rival Samsung Electronics lost 6.3% in the latest rout for shares linked to the AI boom.

The Kospi lost 4.6% to 6,296.38.

In early European trading, Germany’s DAX picked up 0.3% to 26,194.59, while the CAC 40 in Paris surged 0.7% to 8,726.92. Britain’s FTSE 100 added 0.3% to 10,923.34.

Japan’s Nikkei 225 lost 0.9% to 65,683.26.

In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng declined 1.5% to 25,530.28, while the Shanghai Composite index climbed 0.6% to 3,900.35.

Australia’s S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.5% to 9,271.60.

U.S. President Donald Trump said a deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz was coming soon. But there have been many stops and starts during the five-month-old conflict that has stifled the global supply of oil and rattled energy markets.

The price of Brent crude, the international standard, edged less than 0.1% higher to \$79.50 a barrel. Oil prices have been swinging for months and were as high as \$102 per barrel at one point during the conflict, jolting already stubbornly high inflation. Higher oil prices pushed gasoline prices higher and increased shipping costs for a wide range of products.

U.S. benchmark crude oil was almost unchanged at \$75.21 a barrel.

On Wednesday, the S&P 500 slipped 0.2% from an all-time high and the Dow industrials rose 0.5%. The Nasdaq composite lost 0.8%.

Among big technology companies losing ground, Google’s parent company, Alphabet, fell 4% and Microsoft lost 1.1%.

Overall, the market has been rising as companies head into the closing stretch of their latest round of earnings reports with sharp overall gains. Three-quarters of the companies within the S&P 500 have reported results so far, and Wall Street expects profit growth of 50% when they are all finished.

The Walt Disney Co. rose 3.6% after easily beating Wall Street’s profit forecasts, helped by a \$1 billion box office haul from “Toy Story 5” and theme park revenue.

Elon Musk’s SpaceX fell 13.6% following the release late Tuesday of its first quarterly report as a public company, which showed that it sharply boosted spending on artificial intelligence. The company did help give semiconductor giant Nvidia a 3.4% boost after announcing it would exclusively use that company’s chips for its artificial intelligence technology.

Musk had said earlier he would use chips from both Nvidia and Advanced Micro Devices for SpaceX and his electric vehicle company, Tesla.

Inflation concerns have been hanging over markets and the Federal Reserve. The central bank has been holding its key benchmark rate steady as it monitors the costs and the impact on the economy.

In other dealings early Thursday, the dollar rose to 157.85 Japanese yen from 157.77 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1545 from \$1.1555.

## US filings for jobless benefits rise to 199,000 last week, but layoffs remain historically low

WASHINGTON, Aug 6, (AP): The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits rose last week but layoffs remain in the historically healthy range of the past few years.

U.S. filings for jobless aid in the week ending August 1 rose by 1,000 to 199,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. The previous week’s figure was revised up by 1,000 to 198,000.

Weekly filings for unemployment benefits are considered representative of layoffs and are close to a real-time indicator of the health of the U.S. job market.

Last week, the Federal Reserve’s preferred inflation metric, PCE, came in at 3.7% for June, still well above the U.S. central bank’s 2% target. If inflation remains elevated, Fed officials say they are ready to raise interest rates to combat higher prices, raising costs for businesses and making them less likely to hire.



A now hiring sign is seen in front of an auto body shop in Chicago, June 25, 2026. (AP)

Last month, the government reported that employers pulled back on hiring in June, adding only 57,000 jobs. That’s less than half the previous month’s total and a sign that companies remain cautious about adding to their head counts.

The unemployment rate dropped to 4.2% from 4.3% in May, though that decline is mostly because many out-of-

work people gave up looking for jobs and were no longer counted as unemployed.

June’s tepid hiring comes after a relative surge in job gains the previous three months, countering concerns that the conflict in Iran could trip up an already wobbly labor market. The government’s July jobs report is due out Friday.

Weekly jobless aid applica-

tions have stabilized in a range mostly between 200,000 and 250,000 since the U.S. economy emerged from the pandemic recession. However, hiring began slowing about two years ago and tapered further in 2025 due to President Donald Trump’s tariffs, his purge of the federal workforce and the lingering effects of high interest rates meant to control inflation.

Among the companies that have trimmed their workforce recently are Verizon, UPS, Amazon, Disney, Starbucks, Walmart and Microsoft.

The Labor Department’s report Thursday also showed that the four-week moving average of weekly jobless claims, which balances out some of the weekly volatility, fell by 4,500 to 198,750.

The total number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits for the previous week ending July 25 was 1.8 million, an increase of 24,000 from the week before.



Traditional crafts, folk arts and customs come to life at the “Return of the Past” event, offering visitors a glimpse into Dhofar’s rich cultural heritage.

# ‘Return of the Past’ unlocks Dhofar’s living history

Photo feature by Safeyah Al-Hajri

SALALAH, Aug 6, (KUNA): The “Return of the Past” event at the Khareef Dhofar 2026 season takes visitors on a journey through time, showcasing the governorate’s rich cultural heritage through live displays reflecting traditional maritime, agricultural, rural, Bedouin and urban lifestyles.

Held in the Al-Saadah area of Salalah, the event features traditional

crafts and occupations, heritage markets, folk arts and performances that highlight customs and traditions passed down through generations. Visitors can explore traditional fishing tools and maritime arts, discover Dhofar’s agricultural heritage and crops such as coconuts and bananas, and experience authentic rural and Bedouin homes that reflect the simplicity of life in the past.

The event also includes Souq Al-Fardah, recreating the atmosphere of

traditional markets with local products, handicrafts and popular foods presented by productive families and Omani women’s associations, alongside a stage hosting traditional folk performances. The event offers visitors an opportunity to experience Dhofar’s cultural heritage firsthand while learning about the customs and traditions of past generations through an engaging blend of education and entertainment.

## Music

# Bridgers’ ‘Lost Weekend’ turns love and loss into sonic reckoning

Atuning radio. The shouts and muffled beats of a New Year’s Eve party. A voicemail from her father. On her excellent third studio album, “Lost Weekend,” Phoebe Bridgers creates a collage of the years since we last heard from her as a solo artist. It’s her first solo album since 2020’s beloved “Punisher” and the return of her supergroup with Lucy Dacus and Julien Baker, Boygenius. Those intervening years, Bridgers explains in press materials, were also full of personal changes and challenges. One relationship dissolved and another blossomed. And in 2022, her father died. The album is dedicated to him. Those are the dominant experiences across the record, which sees her pair her signature lyrical style with enthralling, complex sonic arrangements. The journey she brings listeners on is not linear, but feels instead like a sort of road trip. Some experiences are

lingered within; others merely drift past. Bridgers visits a mall on “Liberty Tree,” as a relationship sparks. A van breaks down in the title track, just before she acknowledges the breakup of a proposed marriage. On “Panorama,” ambient beats pulse and mix with a guitar track for over a minute before the listener arrives at Bridgers’ verse, and a hotel room. It’s a resting place, giving listeners space to absorb some of the more intense lyrical revelations surrounding the track. In classic Bridgers fashion, the images evoked send listeners lurching from euphoria to heart-wrenching melancholy. Screams undercut the opening of “Bobby,” about how the intensity of a love can be felt in the mundane details of a shared life. Banjo played by co-producer Jack Antonoff peeks out from below the heavier drum and guitar track - a wistful, carefree, sonic thread. “Bobby, this could be the end of wanting,” she sings, as the instru-



This album cover image released by Dead Oceans shows “Lost Weekend” by Phoebe Bridgers. (AP)

ments soften. When the track resurges, that refrain is repeated: “This could be the end.” Endings remain a Bridgers motif, but the hope imbued in this one makes it feel like an antidote to her apocalypse-anthem “I Know The End.” “Still Standing” sees Bridgers reflect on a different kind of ending. Acoustic guitar builds as she recalls moments from her childhood, and considers her relationship with her late father: “I wasn’t too young to understand / I just didn’t think it was so bad,” she sings. “And it wasn’t in a way / And now there is nothing.” Across the project, the intentionality displayed is stark. Space is not wasted. “Never Going Back!” is lyrically simple, for example, but complicated by that voicemail. Throughout, those collected clips are grounding - like intercepted signals from reality, breaking into the soundscape Bridgers has crafted to help herself (and us listeners) un-

derstand it. In early June, Bridgers played a selection of hits and songs from the album at Madison Square Garden, the cap on a series of pop-up concerts. Phones were strictly prohibited. Even pencils were banned. The limited distractions didn’t silence the gasps and cries of reaction, but the lack of electronics allowed for more careful listening. Those shows were a signal for how this album should be absorbed: carefully, deliberately. And the experience was meant to be fleeting - just like feelings. On the beautiful “Haunted,” Bridgers gets on the road again. “I have no secrets, only feelings,” she sings. “And I know those go away.” “Lost Weekend” by Phoebe Bridgers Four stars out of five. On repeat: “Bobby,” “Still Standing,” “I Can’t Wait” Skip it: “Lost Parade” For fans of: Road trips without a destination, old home videos, ambient music. (AP)



The Meroe pyramids stand at the Meroe archaeological site in Bejrawiya, Sudan, Saturday, Aug. 1, 2026. (AP)



Ancient carved reliefs decorate the interior wall of a pyramid chapel at the Meroe archaeological site in Bejrawiya, Sudan, Saturday, Aug. 1, 2026. (AP)



The burial chamber inside a pyramid at the Meroe archaeological site in Bejrawiya, Sudan, Saturday, Aug. 1, 2026. (AP)



A pyramid stands at the Meroe archaeological site in Bejrawiya, Sudan, Saturday, Aug. 1, 2026. (AP)



A man walks across sand dunes at the Meroe archaeological site in Bejrawiya, Sudan, Friday, July 31, 2026. (AP)



A family visits the Meroe pyramids at the Meroe archaeological site in Bejrawiya, Sudan, Friday, July 31, 2026. (AP)



A guide, left, speaks with a visitor at the Meroe archaeological site in Bejrawiya, Sudan, Sunday, Aug. 2, 2026. (AP)



A visitor walks among the Meroe pyramids at the Meroe archaeological site in Bejrawiya, Sudan, Saturday, Aug. 1, 2026. (AP)

War and sand threaten Sudan’s Meroe pyramids

Sudan’s ongoing war is threatening the integrity of its ancient Meroe pyramids, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its unique and angular architecture, as preservation efforts have completely halted.

“The site may face a disaster and collapses are possible,” warned archaeologist Mahmoud Suleiman.

Meroe, located some 200 kilometers (125 miles)

north of the capital Khartoum, comprises over 200 pyramids built between 800 B.C. and 350 A.D. as royal tombs for the rulers of the Kingdom of Kush.

“The sand has thickened heavily on the pyramids and even inside the temples, and the grass grows thick,” Mustafa Ahmed, one of the guards at Meroe, told The Associated Press as he made his way through sand dunes on site. “The pyramids have deteriorated greatly and stones have

begun to fall.”

Mohamed Mubarak, an antiquities inspector, said salt, released from accumulated sand, has collected inside the funerary temples and is degrading the “inherently fragile” stones, risking the erosion of ancient inscriptions.

“Climate change, war leading to the dispersal of the workforce, and the difficulty for foreign missions to continue their work amid the country’s security

instability ... all contributed to the significant deterioration of the site,” said Suleiman, the archaeologist.

Sudan’s deadly conflict, which erupted in April 2023, has destroyed multiple of the country’s historical sites and museums. UNESCO warned in April that cultural and historical sites are under growing threat, with over 100 cultural sites damaged, and at least 22 museums looted or destroyed since the onset of the war. (AP)

Event celebrates African diaspora unity and timeless musical voices

Hill & Wyclef revive Fugees’ legacy at UK festival

NEW YORK, Aug 6, (AP): Moments before Ms. Lauryn Hill hopped on a call with The Associated Press, she and Fugees’ bandmate Wyclef Jean stood in the center of London’s Piccadilly Circus, surrounded by fans. Broadcast above them, on the bright LED screen of Piccadilly Lights, was a short film curated by Hill and created by Los Angeles artist Lauren Halsey: an animated, colorful collage depicting the heroes and symbols of the global African diaspora.

The message was clear: This is a celebration of community, culture, music and art.

“The crowd was captivated,” Hill said.

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“It was surreal,” Jean jumped in. “The love was felt. It was amazing.”

It was a tease of what’s to come. On Friday, Hill will bring her Diaspora Calling! festival to the U.K. for the first time, marking 10 years since its inaugural edition in Brooklyn.

The event, hosted by Dave Chappelle and featuring performances by Erykah Badu, YG Marley, Zion Marley, Giggs, Fireboy DML and other artists, will be held at The National Bowl in nearby Milton Keynes. And its center: Hill and Jean, two-thirds of the Fugees, will perform their landmark album “The Score” in its entirety.

Below, Hill — joined briefly by Jean — discuss their festival, the 30th anniversary of “The Score” and the legacy of the late D’Angelo. This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

**AP:** Why bring Diaspora Calling! to the UK?

**HILL:** We were given an opportunity by the promoters — the same promoters that do Reggae Land. He gave me the venue. And I said,



Lauryn Hill accepts the living legend icon award during the BET Awards on Sunday, June 28, 2026, at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. (AP)

“This is what I want to do.” We’re basically blessed to have the opportunity. And, you know, ‘tis the season to bring people together in the name of growth, healing and pushing forward.

**AP:** The African diaspora is everywhere — are you hoping to do other international editions?

**HILL:** Absolutely, absolutely, absolutely.

**AP:** How has the concept evolved since the first event in 2016?

**HILL:** First of all, it started when I did a show in Ghana. There was a gentleman who brought me out to Ghana. And as I was talking to him, I realized that our conversa-

tion was not just about the immediate subject matter. I knew that we made a connection for a reason. And I know myself and Wyclef have community over the years — even when we weren’t necessarily doing the Fugees thing anymore, we built community all over the diaspora. And now it’s the time to bring them together.

**AP:** The lineup is dynamic. How do you go about selecting artists?

**HILL:** We put a call out to the people that we know, love and respect. And I’ve gotten so much positivity — an abundance of responses, in terms of the creative community out here wanting to participate. So

that’s huge.

**AP:** You and Wyclef Jean will perform all of “The Score” on Friday, in celebration of its 30th anniversary. Has your relationship to that album changed in that time?

**HILL:** Absolutely. Absolutely. That’s a timeless piece of work for us as well. Timeless. How do you feel about it, Wyclef?

**JEAN:** You hit it on the dot. You know, I remember when I was coming up, listening to like Bob Marley’s “Exodus”; a lot of the early Dylan, Bob Dylan records; Pink Floyd’s “The Wall”; The Police’s “Synchronicity” and we got “The Score.” So that’s forever.

**AP:** It is interesting to hear that you have been transformed by it the way your listeners have.

**HILL:** I think what is powerful about the album was that, you know, I’m a big fan of what Wyclef does. And I think he’s appreciative of what I do. So, we engage with each other’s art. And every time we perform it, even though (it’s) singing older lyrics, there’s a new energy, a new spirit. There’s a timelessness. I almost feel like we’re reclaiming timelines, healing timelines, so to speak, every time we’re performing.

**JEAN:** A hundred percent. Every time I perform “The Score” now, I feel like it’s the first time.

**HILL:** Yeah. It doesn’t feel old.

**AP:** How does performing that at Diaspora Calling! differ from another kind of concert?

**HILL:** It’s kind of the pinnacle of what the Fugees were all about. Our makeup is diaspora calls. I think we were a call to a particular unity, a particular kind of reflection and a particular kind of resistance to certain ideas that we knew better than. And we wanted to channel that outside and have other people feel what we were certain about, which is that there was being and resourcefulness and incredible brilliance throughout diaspora. And that division was not really an option.

**AP:** That is beautifully put. That spirit reminds me of your performance at the Grammys earlier this year, where you paid tribute to the late Roberta Flack and D’Angelo. We’re approaching the one-year anniversary of D’Angelo’s passing. How do you hope he continues to be remembered?

**HILL:** We lost another timeless soul who made timeless music. We obviously want to protect his family and just keep holding up that brilliance.

He was good — without question.

**Variety**

**NEW YORK:** Talking about beauty can get really ugly - particularly when it comes to public figures.

In an increasingly connected world, there’s no shortage of hot takes and judgment. That is evident yet again in recent days in the wake of a new music video from singer Ariana Grande and the release last week of her new album, “Petal,” which reignited commentary about her thin appearance.

It also raised the question: Just because we can say anything, does that mean we should? Some saw yet more body-shaming being aimed, no surprise, at a woman in a society that constantly judges them; others said it was simply concern. Some called for respecting her privacy, while others said the influence of celebrities on young fans made it a valid topic.

Grande, 33, has faced attention and commentary throughout her career around her appearance, with the current focus being on the increasing visibility of her body’s bone structure, including her sternum and rib cage.

She has pushed back against discourse that she’s anything other than healthy, and repeatedly insisted that she doesn’t think commenting on people’s bodies is acceptable. Her representative told People magazine that she would be stepping back from public life after her current tour finishes due to the “endless, ongoing public scrutiny.”

Even in the video, a nearly seven-minute indictment of the harsh process of assessment and judgment that leads to fame and celebrity, Grande hits on the subject of being constantly sized up. “I don’t need someone to save me,” she sings. “I’m not a victim.” (AP)

What the panic over Gen Z’s reading habits gets wrong

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

□ □ □

**Kathi Inman Berens, Portland State University and Rachel Noorda, Portland State University**

A trove of recent articles bemoan the collapse in recreational reading among younger Americans, with COVID-related reading declines, artificial intelligence and social media often described as causes.

But as the authors of “How Gen Z Discover and Consume Books,” we think many claims about Gen Z’s reading behaviors miss the mark.

Some long-standing, influential studies aren’t designed to capture how Gen Z often reads: multimodally - bouncing between print, e-book and audiobook for the same book - and on web platforms such as Wattpad, Webtoon, Kindle Unlimited, DC Universe Infinite and Marvel Comics online.

In fact, according to our 2025 data, a growing proportion of Gen Z - 66% - is identifying as readers, up 14 percentage points from 2022. In the previous 12 months, 65% of Gen Z read at least one print book, up from 59% in 2022. These findings roughly correspond with those of the Pew Research Center for the general population across all ages.

In other words, Gen Z shows us that

reading isn’t dying. It’s changing.

Gen Z is the first generation to grow up with internet access from an early age. Kids born from 1997 to 2012 came of age during what researchers describe as the postdigital condition, where the option to be online is constantly and pervasively available. Nowadays, no matter your age, engaging with printed books and other physical media - vinyl records, film cameras, DVDs - represents a deliberate choice rather than the only way to access media.

To Gen Z, physical books carry a different meaning than they do for older generations.

A longing for “digital detox” is a part of why print books are Gen Z’s top preferred reading format, according to our data. Perhaps that’s because printed books don’t ping or track you. They look great when posted on Instagram or in BookTok, TikTok’s influential online reading community. You can loan books or give them as gifts. And used books bear the traces of other humans. You could argue that these physical qualities actually make books more alluring than they were in the days before the internet and social media.

Across three nationally representative surveys - conducted in 2020, 2022 and 2025 - we collected data about a wide swath of Gen Z’s reading behavior. It ranged from reading text messages, game chats and emails to reading printed books, manga and fan fiction. We asked respondents about book “engagement,” which gave them



Young people are still using librarians as a resource for book recommendations. (AP/David Brewster/Star Tribune via Getty Images)

permission to include reading that isn’t intended to be finished, such as cookbooks and travel guides. We also asked them questions about their uses of social media, AI and libraries.

In 2025, Gen Zers visited bookstores and public libraries more than they did in 2022. About 36% of Gen Zers said they found a book through a librarian, up from 15% in 2022. We also asked about their experiences of loneliness, with 85% saying they want-

ed to find another place to relax outside their home. Gen Zers who didn’t visit libraries had higher loneliness scores than those who did.

Nearly one-third bought a book in a physical bookstore, which was their preferred place to find new books, ahead of Amazon.

The market appears to be responding: The American Booksellers Association notes a 70% increase in independent bookstores in the past five years.

In 2026 alone, Barnes & Noble plans to open 60 new stores across the U.S.

Current methods to measure recreational reading aren’t capturing data that reveals the full scope of how Gen Z reads.

In a 2025 journal article that describes a decline in recreational reading over two decades, one of the co-authors, Jill Sonke, calls an annual 3% drop in the time that Americans spend reading as “not just a small dip - it’s a sustained, steady decline.” This “loss,” she adds, is “significant and deeply concerning.”

The study’s authors, however, used an imperfect tool to analyze this decline: the American Time Use Survey.

That survey records respondents’ activities over one 24-hour “diary day.” The survey’s definition of reading includes time spent reading printed books or magazines, reading on a Kindle or other e-reader, and listening to audiobooks. But it doesn’t capture platform-based reading or the book-related activities that happen online: reading and writing fan fiction; BookTok and Bookstagram; and reading or writing online reviews for Goodreads. These activities are known as postdigital reading practices, and they’re almost never addressed in reading surveys.

In her August 2026 cover story, “The End of Reading is Here,” Atlantic staff writer Rose Horowitz goes further, arguing that the U.S. has become “postliterate.”

Horowitz focuses on one very specific form of literacy: sustained close

reading of complex literary texts. Throughout the essay, she treats this ability as encompassing all forms of literacy.

When she points to a study of students who struggled to interpret the opening pages of Charles Dickens’ “Bleak House,” she concludes that many “didn’t even know how to go about figuring out what they didn’t understand, or they didn’t bother.”

But literacy researchers have long argued that literacy involves far more than reading novels or parsing Victorian prose. It includes the ability to interpret, evaluate and create meaning across a range of texts, media and social contexts.

Identifying as a reader used to mean sitting alone with a book. That is less true for Gen Z than any previous generation. Gen Zers are more likely to experience reading as a social activity.

The growing popularity of silent reading parties, where groups of people come together to read quietly and independently, suggests that Gen Zers enjoy finding community around books, even as they immerse themselves in a largely solitary act. We also note how some young people are bridging the distance between story worlds and real life by participating in literary cosplaying, in which readers dress up as characters from their favorite books and gather at conventions or themed events. Then there’s “book excerpt aesthetics” - a social media trend in which readers post memorable passages and quotations from books. (AP)



SpaceX's mega rocket Starship lifts off for a test flight from Starbase, Texas on July 24. (AP)

## Scientists certain wayward SpaceX rocket slammed into moon as predicted

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Aug 6, (AP): A SpaceX rocket that launched a pair of lunar landers slammed into the moon as predicted on Wednesday after drifting off course for the past year, scientists reported.

Although no one observed the actual 5,400-mph (8,700-kph) collision, a telescope in Chile spotted what astronomers have identified as the debris plume resulting from the crash. Space tracking experts said it was inevitable that the leftover rocket segment plowed into the moon.

It's the latest instance of lunar litter, a problem that many fear could worsen as the US and China race to put astronauts on the moon. In 2022, a Chinese rocket unintentionally hit the moon following a lunar mission, and many more stray rocket pieces likely struck the moon in decades past without scientists' knowledge.

SpaceX's Julianna Scheiman said this week that the company is working with NASA to avoid future wrecks, stressing that this projected crash was not deliberate. A combination of solar activity and gravity ac-

cidentally put it on a collision course with the moon, she said.

Boston University's Carl Schmidt said he is "100% certain" that his team's observations revealed signs of the lunar crash. The European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope detected a stream of sodium and lithium stretching for miles (tens of kilometers) into space for at least five to 10 minutes following the impact, he added.

"We don't have images of the impact" but there's telescope evidence, Schmidt said in an email.

Even before signs of the debris plume were spotted by the telescope in Chile, retired astrophysicist Jonathan McDowell noted that observations of the dead 4-ton upper stage on Tuesday night showed it heading straight for the moon. The anticipated crash site was a dusty, barren patch near Einstein Crater on the moon's sunlit western limb - near the edge of the near and far sides, which is especially difficult to observe from Earth.

"There's no doubt in my mind" that the rocket "is now in teeny, little

pieces scattered over the moon near Einstein Crater," McDowell told The Associated Press.

"As a physicist, I know that what goes up must come down," he added. Stargazers knew it would be difficult, if not impossible, from the ground to see the plume of dust and rock ejected from the resulting crater, let alone the flash of light from the impact. Orbiting spacecraft had the best chance of witnessing anything - or at least observing the crater after the fact.

Dutch scientist Marco Langbroek was among those aiming his telescope at the moon at the appointed time, but he came up empty.

"We knew this would be a long shot," Langbroek said.

Like McDowell, Langbroek said he had "no doubt" the rocket met its doom.

Visual confirmation, McDowell noted, will have to wait for NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter to fly over the crash scene and send back photos of the impact crater. The space agency doesn't expect that to happen until next week.

### Health workers protest unpaid wages

## Fastest-growing Ebola outbreak outpacing response: WHO chief

KINSHASA, Congo, Aug 6, (AP): The world's fastest-growing Ebola outbreak is spreading faster than efforts to fight it, the head of the World Health Organization said on Wednesday during a visit to Congo where some health workers are striking over a lack of pay.

Nearly three months into the outbreak, new cases are doubling in some hot spots, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a post on X after meeting with officials in the capital, Kinshasa. It was the second visit by the WHO director-general to the Central African country since the outbreak was declared in mid-May.

"We all agree that we must urgently and massively scale up all our efforts across all pillars of the response and by all partners," Tedros said.

Confirmed cases in the outbreak, meanwhile, reached 3,973, including 1,801 deaths, according to the government data as of Tuesday published on Thursday. It is the second-largest Ebola outbreak on record, behind the 2014-2016 West Africa outbreak that recorded more than 28,000 cases, including over 11,000 deaths.

In Ituri province, the epicenter of the outbreak, families said many front line workers have gone on strike, worsening access to health-care that was already challenged by rebel conflict in one of Congo's most remote and vulnerable areas, its east

near the borders of South Sudan, Uganda and Rwanda.

While some workers say they have started receiving payment in the last week for work done since the outbreak began, they are demanding improved wages.

Anicet Baluku, a resident of Bunia, the capital of Ituri, blamed the death of his two brothers from Ebola on the strike. "We urge the authorities to quickly find a solution to prevent other families from experiencing the same tragedy," he told The Associated Press.

The US Department of State said on Wednesday that it will provide an additional \$242 million in funding for immediate Ebola response and preparedness efforts in the region and for humanitarian assistance related to the outbreak. Such funding, it said in a statement, has now exceeded \$512 million in direct assistance.

The Bundibugyo virus that is causing this outbreak has no approved treatment or vaccine, and local officials believe it began in a remote area long before it was declared on May 15.

The outbreak is still "spreading at an alarming and unprecedented rate," the medical charity Doctors Without Borders said on Wednesday, adding: "The response is expanding but is still not reaching communities quickly enough to break transmis-



In this photo released by the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director General, speaks during a meeting with partners in Kinshasa, Congo on Aug 5. (AP)

sion chains."

Dr. Jean Kaseya, head of the Africa Centers for Disease and Control, said on Tuesday during a visit to Bunia that contact tracing isn't working, with at least 60% to 70% of new cases coming outside of those being monitored after exposure to patients.

Late detection of cases has been a key contributor to the 45% fatality rate, officials say. Of the 77 most-recent cases reported during a 24-hour period, 44 were fatal, according

to the health ministry. At least 717 patients are in isolation while 749 patients have recovered.

Kaseya, who met with Tedros on Wednesday, said Africa CDC is aligning its efforts with responders "around earlier detection, stronger contact tracing, rapid access to quality care and deeper engagement with communities."

Tedros called for action to reach all affected localities, strengthen coordination under the government's

leadership and protect health workers.

"Above all, communities must be at the center of and have ownership of the response," he said. "We cannot stop Ebola without their trust, leadership and partnership."

Dozens of Congolese health workers at the epicenter of the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak on record staged protests Thursday to demand payment for their wages, abandoning several health facilities even as aid workers warn that the disease is still spreading at an alarming rate.

The health workers are protesting at the governor's office in Bunia, the capital of Ituri province, which accounts for nearly 90% of the Ebola cases in the country. They are the latest group to walk off their jobs since protests over pay issues began weeks ago.

The health workers, including nurses providing critical care to Ebola patients, said they haven't received wages and bonuses for their work fighting Ebola since the outbreak was declared in mid-May in one of Congo's most remote and vulnerable areas ravaged by rebel conflict.

"With this way of managing things, Ebola will not end in this province. We ask the authorities to get involved at all levels so that a solution is found quickly," said Edouige Makosi, one of the protesters.

Officials have in the past blamed

logistical issues for the payment delays. Congolese authorities did not immediately respond to an inquiry for comments on Thursday.

Poor welfare for frontline workers has been a key source of concern in the outbreak. Apart from the payment issues, many health workers and facilities have been attacked by rebels and angry mobs.

During his visit to Congo on Wednesday, World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus urged authorities to prioritize care and support for the responders.

The medical charity Doctors Without Borders said this week that the outbreak is still "spreading at an alarming and unprecedented rate" and that the response which has been expanding with more steps "is still not reaching communities quickly enough to break transmission chains."

Government data shows 674 patients are currently in isolation, most of them in Ituri.

At least 75% of contacts being traced after their exposure to patients, the data showed. A bigger concern, though, according to officials, is that 60-70% of the new cases are coming from outside of those contacts, and are mostly from remote localities where rebel conflict and mining-related movements are limiting access.

## This summer isn't breaking heat records – yet. Wait until El Nino kicks in, say experts

WASHINGTON, Aug 6, (AP): Wildfires are burning in North America and Europe. Deadly heat waves have parked over cities and the world's oceans are the hottest ever recorded for this time of year. A strengthening El Nino is forecast to be off-the-charts, spiking global temperatures and warping weather all over.

While it may seem like the planet is baking through a record-shattering summer from hell, it's not quite in record territory. Yet.

So far this is only the third-hottest year, behind 2024 and 2025, climate statistics show. But give 2026 time. Because of a one-two punch of accelerated human-caused global warming and a supersized El Nino, there's an increasing chance that by the end of the year, 2026 could eke out the crown for the hottest year on record, eclipsing 2024 - or at least come close, scientists said.

Even if this year sets the record, it won't last long. Although scientists disagree on whether 2026 will be the hottest year on record, they agree on it being a near lock that 2027 will beat out any modern year for heat, maybe by a great deal.

With wars around the globe in the last few years people didn't pay much attention to climate change "because the world was on fire in different ways. The world is now on fire again with climate change in a way that's increasingly difficult to ignore," said climate scientist Zeke Hausfather of Berkeley Earth. "It's going to keep getting worse."

Hausfather calculated there's a 35% chance that 2026 will pass 2024 as the hottest year on record. But Hausfather keeps increasing those odds nearly every month - up from only 7% in March.

Former top NASA climate scientist James Hansen, often called the godfather of climate science for 40 years of accurate long-term warnings, predicted that 2026 will edge out 2024 at the end of the year.

The world's daily sea surface temperature tied 2024 starting in May and since June it's been record hot nearly every day. With oceans more than 70% of the globe's surface, there's generally a month-and-a-half lag between heat showing up in oceans and then being reflected in the global average temperature,



In this photo made with a long exposure, Bench Fire burns above the Pelton Reservoir in Jefferson County, Oregon on July 25. (AP)

Hansen said. So it's about time that the entire globe starts shattering records, he said. About 82% of the world's ocean surface is overheated with marine heat waves this year, according to Europe's Copernicus climate service.

About a month ago the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration forecast that there was a 66% chance that 2026 would be the fourth hottest and only a 0.1% chance it would be No.1 for warmth by year's end. NOAA monitoring chief Russell Vose said those odds will be rising when NOAA finishes its analysis from July.

Hausfather said what's changing outlooks is the increasingly strong forecasts for a "mind-numbing" record-setting El Nino.

El Nino is a natural temporary warming of parts of the equatorial Pacific that heats up the globe's average temperature and warps weather extremes across the planet. Most forecasts have El Nino becoming the strongest in history. El Ninos always release pent-up heat in the ocean, but because of greenhouse gases trapping heat and 90% of it going into the world's seas, there's more heat to release, said Zachary Labe, a climate scientist at Climate Central, a science and communications nonprofit.

The amount of heat in the world's oceans - a marker of human-caused climate change - keeps setting new

record highs, Labe said.

Climate scientists said what we've seen this summer can't be blamed on El Nino because its impacts really don't kick in for a few more months. The fires, heat and extremes that have dominated the summer of 2026 are what scientists have long been warning about from the burning of coal, oil and gas.

"The driver of the record warmth is climate change in the background. And it's a much larger - much, much larger - contribution than El Nino, which is just a tenth to two-tenths of a degree on top of that long-term trend," Labe said.

That warming is accelerating, Hansen said.

That's because traditional industrial pollution that creates soot and smog - which cool the planet and mask greenhouse gas-triggered warming - is decreasing, Hansen said. Also, it looks as if the climate might be reacting to greenhouse gases stronger than scientists anticipated, he said.

This summer's heat waves have hit hard in places where people aren't used to triple-digit heat, unlike in the tropics, climate scientists said. And they've been especially noticeable at night, making it hard for people to sleep, which impairs their health and their ability to be productive at work, said Samantha Burgess, global strategic lead at Copernicus climate service.

## 15 states now linked to iceberg lettuce cyclospora outbreak: CDC

NEW YORK, Aug 6, (AP): Parasitic illness cases in 15 states have been linked to iceberg lettuce, U.S. health officials said Wednesday.

Cyclospora cases have been reported in at least 47 states this year, and investigators have continued to probe how many could be linked to a common contaminated source.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the number of states tied to the deadly outbreak had grown from nine to 15. Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire and North Carolina were added to a list that previously included Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Investigators initially narrowed in on lettuce served at Taco Bell. Federal officials subsequently said they are focused on Taylor Farms as the source of the lettuce in the outbreak, and the company has recalled iceberg lettuce grown in central Mexico.

There are several reasons cyclospora outbreaks can be hard to investigate and contain, said Dr. Juan Luis Marquez, medical director of the Washtenaw County and Livingston County health departments in Michigan.

It can take weeks between when



Lettuce is stocked in the produce section at a grocery store chain in Minneapolis on July 31. (AP)

someone is exposed to the parasite and when they come down with symptoms; it's harder to analyze the parasite in laboratories; and it's a lot of work to interview everyone who is sick and clearly identify common exposures, said Marquez, an adjunct public health professor at the University of Michigan.

Also, "there have been staffing cuts at all levels of public health -

federal, local, state - so there are less resources and capacity generally available," Marquez said in a statement.

Cyclospora is a microscopic, spherical parasite that commonly causes watery diarrhea "with frequent and sometimes explosive bowel movements," according to the CDC. Outbreaks tend to occur most often in the late spring and summer.

## Philippines to use AI and satellite tech to improve food security – local media

MANILA, Aug 6, (Xinhua): The Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) will use artificial intelligence (AI) and satellite technology to improve agricultural data collection and strengthen the country's food security, according to local media reports.

According to the DA, improved data sharing between the two agencies will help policymakers make better decisions on food production, logistics and supply, while ensuring government resources are directed to areas where they are needed most. The PSA has begun piloting the use of satellite imagery and AI to estimate crop production, while the DA is expected to support the initiative through field validation to improve data accuracy.

The DA said better agricultural and population data will help improve production forecasts, estimate future food demand, and enable faster government responses to issues affecting the country's food supply.

### Also:

**KABUL:** Afghanistan's Ministry of Interior Affairs unveiled its first rapid DNA identification system on Wednesday, a landmark advancement designed to modernize the country's forensic capabilities and fortify criminal investigations.

The cutting-edge technology will enable swifter and more precise suspect identification, facilitate the exonerations of innocent individuals, and furnish judicial authorities with scientifically irrefutable evidence, according to an official ministry statement.

The launch represents a notable upgrade to Afghanistan's technical and forensic infrastructure, addressing long-standing deficiencies in evidence-gathering and case resolution that have hampered law enforcement for decades, the statement added.

The system is expected to significantly reduce investigative backlogs and enhance the overall integrity of criminal proceedings.

Even staunch traditionalists began changing their views on the Triple Crown’s spacing

Big changes in horse racing create new questions about future of Triple Crown

WASHINGTON, Aug 6, (AP): Two days before Maryland officials were set to make one of the biggest changes to the Triple Crown in horse racing history, the announcement of a new thoroughbred championship series featuring the Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes - but not the Preakness - dominated the discourse.

Mark Anthony Thomas of the Greater Baltimore Committee got worried text messages from many in the business community.

“There was immediate concern on two parts,” Thomas said. “One, does this mean the Triple Crown loses its luster? And then second is, how do we fortify the Triple Crown to where it retains its prominence within horse racing?”

The Preakness is moving back to three weeks and a day after the Derby, which will lead off a brand new series of races - and now there are more new questions about the future of the Triple Crown.

Depending on who you talk to in the industry, there are very different answers to that question.

During much of the 37-year drought between Affirmed winning the Triple Crown in 1978 and American Pharoah in 2015, there was plenty of debate over whether it was too difficult for modern 3-year-olds to sweep three races over a five-week span.

“One of the trainers said it to me a few days ago. ‘The Triple Crown is supposed to be hard, and it’s not meant to be easy,’” Maryland Jockey Club CEO Bill Knauf said. “It’s a test, and so the great, great horses are the ones that can finish it and complete it and win all three.”

Justify doing it in 2018 quieted the conversation for a bit. Then, in the past several years, trainers and owners increasingly opted to skip the Preakness after running a horse in - or even winning - the Kentucky Derby.

Two Derby champions in a row and three of the past five bypassed the middle leg two weeks later to shoot for the Belmont five weeks later. Stakeholders, even some of the most staunch traditionalists, began to change their minds about the spacing of the Triple Crown.

Right away, it all but certainly means 2027 will be a ninth consecutive year without a Triple Crown winner.

The Kentucky Derby - by far the pinnacle of horse racing and an event that transcends sports - remains entrenched in its sacred place on the first Saturday in May. The Preakness is set to be run on Sunday, May 23.



In this file photo, fans watch as Golden Tempo (19) ridden by Jose L. Ortiz wins the 152nd running of the Kentucky Derby horse race at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky. (AP)

But with the Thoroughbred Championship Series announcement on Monday also came word that the Belmont will take place on Saturday, June 5. The 13-day turnaround, especially with the Belmont going back to 1 1/2 miles, is an incredibly difficult ask for even the best 3-year-olds and figures to make it a choice between that race and Preakness for at least next year.

“We made the decision upon what we felt was the best move for the Preakness long term,” Knauf said when asked about the concern over the short gap. “That’s what we control, and that’s what the decision was based off of.”

New York Racing Association President and CEO David O’Rourke was asked Monday what would happen if the Preakness moved from its current timing and didn’t want to speculate beyond saying, “If anything else changes

out there, of course everyone’s going to have a discussion about what does that mean to our game?”

The Belmont has been on the first or second Saturday in June for nearly a century, except for 2020 when the three races were run out of order because of the pandemic. To give enough space for horses to be considered for all three, it would likely have to go back a week or two but still in June.

“Obviously it’s in Belmont’s court now to determine what is best for their race,” Knauf said. “That’s honestly up to them, wholeheartedly. That’s their decision.”

Knauf said Maryland officials were never party to the discussions between NYRA and Churchill Downs Inc. The six-race series takes place at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky; Belmont Park on Long Island and Saratoga Race Course in upstate New York.

It is unclear how much, if at all, a couple of business transactions had on the situation.

In April, Churchill Downs, Inc. agreed to buy the Preakness intellectual property from outgoing owner 1/ST Racing for \$85 million with a plan to license it to Maryland annually. The state, which was taking over control from 1/ST Racing, had the right of first refusal to match and opted in June to do so.

“I don’t know if I even realized what the IP acquisition would mean for the industry as a whole as far as the earthquake that would come of that,” Thomas said.

The Preakness’ absence was noteworthy. Columns appeared calling the Triple Crown dead. O’Rourke on Monday said “in no way does this touch the Triple Crown.”

“Each spring, the Triple Crown captures the public imagination, creates new fans and brings people together,” O’Rourke said. “The new series builds on the success of the Triple Crown and adds to it.”

Gov. Wes Moore, at a news conference Wednesday in Annapolis, Maryland, said he did not believe the Preakness being excluded was retaliation for holding on to the property rights.

“What I did take from it was it actually validated why we made the decision that we did to hold on to our IP and hold on to our own destiny,” Moore said.

Asked whether the situation affected negotiations, CDI declined to comment through a spokesperson.



In this file photo, Switzerland’s Lara Gut Behrami speeds down the course during an alpine ski, women’s World Cup downhill training, in St. Moritz, Switzerland. (AP)

‘I’m fortunate to have a long career’

Swiss ski great Gut-Behrami retires after glittering career

BERN, Switzerland, Aug 6, (AP): Olympic gold medalist and two-time world champion Lara Gut-Behrami announced her retirement from Alpine skiing on Thursday.

The speed specialist from Switzerland won the Olympic super-G gold medal in the 2022 Beijing Games among three career Olympic medals, and the 2021 world titles in super-G and giant slalom.

Her 48 World Cup wins - 24 in super-G - are the fifth most all-time for women. She was the overall World Cup champion in 2016 and 2024.

“I have been fortunate and honored to enjoy such a long career, to express my dreams and ambitions through skiing, and to experience this journey alongside extraordinary people,” Gut-Behrami said in statement.

The 35-year-old was planning to retire at the end of last season in March but was not able to compete due to a severe knee injury from crashing in training at Copper Mountain, Colorado, in November. She ruptured ligaments in her left knee and damaged the meniscus.

The Milan Cortina Olympics was due to be her fourth Winter Games, with skiing on the Cortina d’Ampezzo course where she took the two world golds in 2021, along with a bronze in downhill.

“I consider that a knee injury, as

complex as it is, cannot be considered a tragedy,” Gut-Behrami said then in a statement that noted recent deaths of young skiers who crashed in training.

“After almost 20 years in elite sport, and despite the crashes and injuries I have experienced, I am fortunate not to suffer from recurring pain - and I want to keep it that way,” she said about her retirement.

“This is another reason why I feel the right time has come: The moment when I no longer need to push myself to reach and exceed my limits at all costs.”

She also missed the 2010 Vancouver Olympics because of a serious hip injury and tore her left ACL at the 2017 worlds on Swiss snow in St. Moritz when she crashed in warmups for the slalom run in the combined event after placing third in the downhill that morning.

Since her 2008 opening season, Gut-Behrami reached 101 podiums in 395 World Cup races. Her 48 victories were second for a Swiss woman to Vreni Schneider, a slalom specialist in the 1980s-1990s

Gut-Behrami previously said she intended to move to England where her husband, former Switzerland midfielder Valon Behrami, works in the front office at second-tier club Watford.

Dream defeats Mercury as Reese posts double-double

Liberty sweeps Storm behind Stewart



Atlanta Dream forward Angel Reese gestures after scoring a basket during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Arlington, Texas. (AP)

COLLEGE PARK, Ga., Aug 6, (AP): Rhyne Howard had 23 points and eight assists, Allisha Gray added 20 points and the Atlanta Dream beat the Phoenix Mercury 96-82.

Howard made five of Atlanta’s 14 3-pointers, while Phoenix was just 7 for 24 (29%).

Angel Reese had 14 points and 10 rebounds for her 21st double-double of the season for Atlanta (19-11), which has won six of its last seven games. Jordin Canada set Atlanta’s single-season record for assists with 227, passing Layshia Clarendon’s mark in 2017.

Kelsey Plum scored 19 points in her first start for Phoenix (12-20), which never led. Alyssa Thomas scored 17 points, and DeWanna Bonner had 11 points and 11 rebounds.

Liberty 92, Storm 86

In New York, Breanna Stewart scored 28 points, Jonquel Jones added 14 points, 15 rebounds and seven assists, and New York beat Seattle to complete a two-game sweep.

The teams also played Monday and New York came away with a 95-83 victory. Seattle (6-27) has dropped 10 straight.

New York (19-13) has won six of its last seven games.

With the game tied at 50, Sabrina Ionescu got New York going. She scored eight points during a 12-2 run, starting it with a three-point play and a 3-pointer. Ionescu had a quiet first half, scoring just two points. Seattle hung around and only trailed 69-65 after three.

Jones scored the first six points of the fourth quarter with a three-point play and a 3-pointer to restore the double-digit advantage. Seattle got within six a few times in the final

few minutes, but New York had answers each time to hold on for the victory.

Dominique Malonga led the Storm with 31 points and 10 rebounds. Awa Fam and Jade Melbourne each added 13 points.

**Mystics 96, Wings 92**

In Washington, Shakira Austin had 27 points and 13 rebounds, rookie Cotie McMahon scored 10 of her season-high 18 points in the fourth quarter and Washington overcame a 20-point deficit to beat Dallas for their fifth straight victory.

Washington trailed 76-56 with three minutes left in the third quarter. But the Mystics went on a 12-0 run in the fourth to tie it at 86-all with

3:38 remaining.

McMahon completed a three-point play with three minutes left to give Washington its first lead of the game at 89-88. Then, Sonia Citron made a shot in the lane on back-to-back possessions to make it 93-88 with 1:12 left.

Washington had a foul overturned with 33.2 seconds left and McMahon scored at the other end for a 95-90 advantage.

Citron and Georgia Amoore each scored 12 points for Washington (17-12). Kiki Iriafen added 11 and Michaela Onyenwere had 10.

Jessica Shepard had 22 points and 11 rebounds for her 20th double-double of the season, and Alanna Smith added 21 points and 11 boards

for Dallas (19-12). Paige Bueckers scored 17 points and Arike Ogunbowale had 15.

**Sky 95, Sparks 88**

In Chicago, Natasha Cloud, Kamilla Cardoso and Jacy Sheldon each scored 15 points and Chicago used a 34-point fourth quarter to beat Los Angeles.

Elizabeth Williams added 14 points off the bench and rookie Aicha Coulibaly scored a season-high 13 for Chicago (12-19). Cloud had nine of the Sky’s 28 assists. Sydney Taylor (groin) did not play.

Dearica Hamby had 22 points and 14 rebounds for Los Angeles (11-18). Erica Wheeler added 14 points and Rae Burrell had 13.

New era for USA Basketball with WNBA stars set for WCup debuts

NEW YORK, Aug 6, (AP): Caitlin Clark, Angel Reese and Paige Bueckers will make their World Cup debuts as members of the U.S. women’s national team next month.

The trio will try to help the U.S. win its fifth consecutive FIBA World Cup title. The young stars will be joined by Olympic medalists A’ja Wilson, Breanna Stewart, Napheesa Collier, Chelsea Gray, Jackie Young, Kahleah Copper and Kelsey Plum.

Rhyne Howard and Aliyah Boston will also be making their World Cup debuts to round out the team.

“I’m so excited to announce the 2026 USA Basketball Women’s National Team,” USA Basketball national

team managing director Sue Bird said. “This is an incredibly talented group that has earned the opportunity to compete in Berlin. Wearing a USA jersey is a privilege, and I know these 12 players will embrace that responsibility as we go after another gold medal. I can’t wait to see what this team accomplishes together.”

This is the first time that USA Basketball had a managing director choose the team. In the past it was a committee. Kara Lawson will coach the squad. Stewart is the third player in USA Basketball history to appear in four World Cup tournaments, joining Bird, who played in five, and Diana Taurasi, who also played in four.

American urges transparency and balanced dialogue

Coco Gauff backs WTA gene-testing rule

TORONTO, Aug 6, (AP): Coco Gauff understands the reasoning behind the WTA Tour’s newly introduced gene-testing policy. What the two-time Grand Slam champion doesn’t favor is how politicized the discussion becomes in generating what Gauff called, “animosity towards the trans community.”

To her, the topic requires a more nuanced conversation, which is why Gauff provided what she called a nuanced answer, in speaking to reporters at the Canadian Open in Toronto following her opening-match win over Kayla Day on Wednesday.

“So, yes, I guess I kind of agree with trying to protect the fairness in women’s sports. But I also do not like the attack that it is creating,” Gauff said. “People who don’t really care, but just want to use this as a reason to attack the trans community - so I’m not really a big fan of that either.”

Her comments come in response to the Women’s

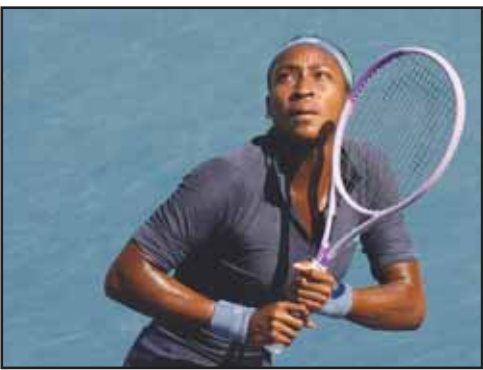
Tennis Association last month introducing one-off mandatory gene-testing for all players as a requirement to compete at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Players are being tested for the SRY gene, a segment of DNA typically found on the Y chromosome that initiates male sex development in utero and indicates the presence of testes.

It remained unclear how many, if any, transgender women are competing at the Olympic level, let alone the WTA Tour.

The WTA said the policy distinguishes between biological sex and gender identity, and that there is “no intent to disrespect or question the gender identity or the dignity of any person.”

The mandatory gender screening - already conducted by the governing bodies of track and field, skiing and boxing - has been criticized by human rights experts and activist groups.



United States’ Coco Gauff eyes a return ball to compatriot Kayla Day during a National Bank Open tennis game in Toronto. (AP)

Change Name

I, Zenab, W/O Hatim Sifuddin Daduka holder of Indian Passport No: P9958569, residing at Salmiya, Block 10, Yusuf Al Bader Street Kuwait and permanently residing at Husami Mohalla, Partapur Teh- Garhi, Banswara PIN: 327024, Rajasthan, India, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under : Given Name - ZENAB and Surname - PATRA for all future purposes.

BATON ROUGE, La., Aug 6, (AP): LSU completed a series of two meetings with top donors on Wednesday night to outline what university President Wade Rousee has billed as a “first of its kind” revenue-generating proposal for athletics.

The meetings hosted by Gov. Jeff Landry at the governor’s

mansion outlined the potential creation of an LSU-controlled limited liability corporation that could generate sustained revenues through targeted investments, a person familiar with the matter said.

The person spoke with The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the plan has not been made public and

is still being refined, as well as being reviewed by legal and tax analysts.

The plan attempts to address the growing costs of sponsoring Division I sports in the wake of a 2025 settlement that paved the way for colleges to pay athletes directly. Currently, major Division I college athletics programs can share up to

\$21.3 million in sports-related revenues with their athletes.

A meeting attendee who spoke on a Baton Rouge podcast said the meeting alleviated boosters’ concerns that the university might be eying a deal with private equity firms to raise capital.

“It’s not private equity,” Southern Regional Medical

Center president Charles Harvey, who attended Monday’s meeting, said on a Louisiana-sports.net podcast. “LSU will maintain control.

“Private equity eats everything up; they control everything,” Harvey added. “The governor comes in. The first thing he said was: ‘Private equity is not an option. ... We’re

not talking about private equity.”

Harvey said one of the speakers at the meetings this week included Greg Williams, a top executive from Acrisure, a Michigan-based financial technology and insurance company that has been developing supplemental revenue proposals for major college athletic programs.

# Pakistan routs Windies to break long overseas test losing streak

England recalls Lawrence, Carse, Pope, Cook for Pakistan tests

**PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, Aug 6, (AP):** Pakistan ended its eight-match losing streak away from home in cricket tests with a resounding eight-wicket victory over the West Indies on Wednesday to level the series.

First innings century-maker Abdullah Shafique and Babar Azam, in his first series since being reappointed as captain, reappointed as captain, led Pakistan to 77-2 with unbeaten knocks of 24 runs each as the visitors achieved victory shortly after lunch on Day 4 of the second test.

Babar knocked off the target by hitting back-to-back sixes against left-arm spinner Jonel Warrican, whose six-wicket haul in the first innings had limited Pakistan's lead to 43 runs.

West Indies won the first test by 90 runs at Tarouba. In the second test, spinners Sajid Khan and Ali Usman utilized favorable conditions on a wearing wicket of Queen's Park Oval to ensure Pakistan remained unbeaten in a test series against the West Indies since 2000.

Pakistan lost the wickets of Imam-ul-Haq, brilliantly snapped up by Justin Greaves in the slips cordon for 9 in Jayden Seales' first over Wednesday, and Azan Awais was bowled by Shamar Joseph for 18 before Shafique and Babar sealed the win inside four days.

Earlier, West Indies had set up a modest target of 75 runs after it got bowled out for 117 with off-break bowler Sajid (4-32) and left-arm spinner Usman (4-39) sharing eight wickets between them.

Opening batter Brandon King couldn't bat in West Indies' second innings due to a back injury sustained on Day 3 when he ran out Babar with a spectacular direct throw from short cover.

Resuming on 106-3 - only 60 runs ahead - the resistance of



Pakistan's Abdullah Shafique bats during test cricket match. (AP)



England's Dan Lawrence bats against West Indies during day five of their second cricket Test match at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados. (AP)

West Indies' tailenders ended quickly with Usman picking up the wickets of Kumar Roach and Joseph. Greaves, the last recognized batter, played on to seamer Mohammad Ali's delivery back onto his stumps after adding just two runs to his total as he attempted a cross batted shot, but got a big inside edge.

Pakistan's last test win away from home came against Sri Lanka in 2023 during Babar's first tenure as captain, before Shan Masood led the side for nearly three years during which Pakistan lost 3-0 in Australia; 2-0 in South Africa; and 2-0 in Bangladesh.

Masood was eventually relieved of the captaincy after Pakistan's dismal run in red-ball cricket, but the return of Babar as skipper saw Pakistan losing the first test at Tarouba last week for Pakistan's eighth loss away from home in three years.

Dan Lawrence was recalled by England after two years on Thursday to play in the first test against Pakistan and Jacob Bethell was ruled out of the three-match series by a right knee injury.

The post-Ben Stokes era starts in Leeds on Aug. 19 and Surrey batting allrounder Lawrence will have the first crack at trying to fill the prodigious shoes of the former test captain.

He is set to bat at No. 6 with wicketkeeper Jamie Smith likely to slot in one place lower down, while Bethell being sidelined has opened the door for Jordan Cox at first drop in the batting order.

Cox's own injury misfortune meant he made his test debut only in June against New Zealand at The Oval, where he was down at No. 7.

Fast bowler Brydon Carse missed the 2-1 loss against the Black Caps because of an injury to his right hand but he was named in England's 16-man squad for the first two tests under returning captain Joe Root, with Marcus Trescothick interim coach in the absence of the newly appointed Stephen Fleming, who had a say in selection.

Former vice-captain Ollie Pope was back after being discarded during the Ashes series in Australia where he averaged 20.83 before making way for Bethell. Seamer Sam Cook was also in, after his lone test appearance against Zimbabwe in May 2025.

Off-spinner Shoaib Bashir was retained although it remained to be seen if he keeps his spot in the XI after confirmation that Lawrence, who bowls off-spin, will definitely be in the team.

Lawrence has been in the international wilderness since the last of his 14 test appearances in September 2024, having struggled batting out of position as an opener against Sri Lanka.

He has, though, been in a rich vein of form in division one of the County Championship, averaging 65.66 with five centuries in eight outings this season.

Bowling allrounders Sam Curran and Rehan Ahmed were the other options to try to balance the side in the absence of Stokes, who ended his storied England career following the series defeat by the Kiwis after 7,273 runs and 252 wickets in tests.

England has lost seven of its last nine tests and not won a series since December 2024. It also plays Pakistan at Lord's and Birmingham.

## ‘Welcome to Turkey, Salah’

By Hamad Al-Shammari

Mohamed Salah's move to Turkish club Trabzonspor after ending his remarkable spell with Liverpool has sparked plenty of debate among fans and football observers. Some critics believe the destination does not reflect the status of a player who has established himself among the world's best, arguing that the club is not among Europe's traditional giants. However, many have overlooked a key factor behind the decision — the significant financial package offered by the Turkish side.



Hamad Al-Shammari

In my view, Salah's choice is both understandable and carefully considered. A reported annual salary of more than €17 million provides valuable financial security for the Egyptian star and his family, particularly as he enters the later stages of his career at the age of 34. At

this point, career decisions are not measured solely by sporting ambition, but also by stability, long-term planning, and personal priorities.

Beyond football, Trabzon offers a different lifestyle. The Turkish city is renowned for its natural beauty, peaceful surroundings, and comfortable living conditions, factors that may have played a role in Salah's decision.

From a sporting perspective, Trabzonspor deserves more respect than some critics have given it. The club enjoyed a strong previous season, finishing third in the Turkish league, securing qualification for the Europa League, and lifting the Turkish Cup. With a competitive squad and ambitious goals, the arrival of a global star like Salah would provide a significant boost both on the pitch and commercially.

Ultimately, Mohamed Salah has earned the right to choose the next chapter of his career. After years of remarkable achievements at the highest level, he is the person best placed to decide what suits him and his family at this stage.

Turkey welcomes you, Salah.

## Messi scores first 2 goals since WC as Inter Miami edges San Luis 4-2

MIAMI, Aug 6, (AP): Lionel Messi scored his first two goals since the World Cup and took the career scoring lead in the Leagues Cup as Inter Miami overcame an early deficit to beat Atlético San Luis 4-2 on a rainy Wednesday night.

The match at Nu Stadium was delayed 30 minutes in the second half because of lightning in the area.

Messi scored in the 11th and the 44th minutes. He has 14 goals in 12 Leagues Cup matches - one ahead of Los Angeles FC's Denis Bouanga for most in the tournament's four-year history.

Telasco Segovia and defender Micael also scored, and Noah Allen had three assists as Inter Miami extended its unbeaten streak to eight matches.

Messi returned to Miami's starting lineup in his second match since the World Cup, where he led Argentina to its second straight final appearance before La Albiceleste lost 1-0 to Spain. The 39-year-old played 37 minutes as a substitute in a 2-2 draw with the Columbus Crew

on Saturday.

After being held off the scoresheet against Columbus, it didn't take Messi long to make an impact on Wednesday. He fired a long cross from Allen past Andrés Sánchez to equalize after David Rodríguez put San Luis ahead with a header four minutes into the match. Messi finished from close range later in the first half and assisted on Micael's header in stoppage time.

Rafa Llorente also scored for San Luis.

Messi led Miami to the Leagues Cup title in 2023 shortly after his arrival with the club. Inter Miami reached the final again last year, losing 3-0 to Seattle in a match that ended with a brawl involving Luis Suárez. The veteran forward appeared to spit toward a member of the Sounders' staff and grabbed at least one Seattle player by the neck during the melee, resulting in a six-match tournament suspension.

That means Suárez, who has seven goals in the past four matches, was not available Wednesday and will not play in this year's tournament.



Inter Miami forward Daniel Pinter, left, vies with Atletico de San Luis defender Benjamín Galindo during the first half of a Leagues Cup soccer match in Miami. (AP)

# Bahrain U-17 handball team trains in Kuwait ahead of Asian Championship

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
KUWAIT CITY, Aug 6: The Bahrain U-17 national handball team has opened a one-week training camp in Kuwait as it enters the final stage of preparations for the Asian Men's Youth Handball Championship, which will be held in Jordan from August 21-30 and serves as a qualifier for the FIH/IHF World Championship.

As part of the camp, Bahrain will play two friendly matches against Kuwait's U-17 national team, giving both sides an opportunity to sharpen their form ahead of the continental tournament. The matches will allow



Kuwait Handball Association logo.

the coaching staffs to evaluate the players' technical and physical readiness before finalizing their squads.

Bahrain is considered one of the



Bahrain Handball Association logo.

favorites to challenge for the Asian title, while Kuwait is continuing its build-up under Croatian head coach Ivan Dragic and national assistant coach Khaled Al-Mulla.

The Kuwaiti team recently concluded a training camp in Slovenia and Croatia, where it gained valuable experience through a series of friendly matches.

The tournament draw placed Kuwait in Group B alongside South Korea, hosts Jordan, Syria, India, and Iran. Bahrain will compete in Group A with Japan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Uzbekistan, and Chinese Taipei.

The two warm-up fixtures in Kuwait are expected to play a key role in helping both teams assess their progress, refine their tactical approach, and complete their preparations before traveling to Jordan for the Asian championship.

O'Neill undergoes 'small procedure' and remains hospitalized

## Newcastle confirms hiring of Jaissle as coach to replace Howe

LA MANGA, Spain, Aug 6, (AP): Newcastle confirmed the hiring of 38-year-old Matthias Jaissle as coach to replace Eddie Howe, who stepped down after nearly five years in charge.

Jaissle will immediately take charge of the Magpies in Spain at their preseason training camp, which concludes Saturday with a friendly match against Valencia at Mestalla Stadium.

"My teams are built on togetherness, hard work, intensity and a passion to improve every single day," said Jaissle, who signed a four-year contract in becoming Newcastle's first-ever German manager.

Jaissle led Saudi club Al-Ahli to back-to-back Asian Champions League Elite titles. He joined Al-Ahli in 2023 after leading Salzburg to consecutive Austrian league titles.

Newcastle opens its Premier League season on Sunday, Aug. 23 at home against Liverpool.

Since Jaissle was still under contract at Al-Ahli, Newcastle had to pay a reported \$12 million release clause.

Howe, who confirmed last Friday that he stepped down, twice led Saudi-backed Newcastle to Champions League qualification and won the English League Cup in 2025 to end the club's 70-year wait for a major domestic trophy.

But star players Anthony Gordon and Sandro Tonali have left during this transfer window and it's expected that captain Bruno Guimarães will follow. Last year, Newcastle

sold top scorer Alexander Isak and finished 12th.

"I believe there is enormous potential within this squad and throughout the football club," Jaissle said.

He added: "I am incredibly excited about the future. I fully and unreservedly believe in this project, the ambition and the direction the club is taking."

Newcastle CEO David Hopkinson described Jaissle as "one of the most exciting and highly regarded young coaches in football."

"His track record of success, leadership qualities and relentless drive to improve



In this file photo, Salzburg's head coach Matthias Jaissle gives instructions to his players during the Champions League group E soccer match between RB Salzburg and AC Milan at the Salzburg stadium in Salzburg, Austria. (AP)

make him an exceptional fit for Newcastle United," Hopkinson said.

□ □ □

Celtic manager Martin O'Neill has undergone a "small procedure" in the hospital, the Scottish champions said.

The 74-year-old O'Neill, who signed a one-year contract extension in June, remained hospitalized but was expected to be released this week.

"In response to speculation, we can confirm that Martin O'Neill has undergone a small procedure in hospital," Celtic said in a statement without providing further details on the nature of the procedure.

"We would envisage Martin being released from hospital in the next day or two," the club added, "and on behalf of Martin we would like to thank supporters for their kind wishes."

O'Neill led Celtic to the Scottish league-and-cup double last season. He had two interim spells during the last campaign, the second of which ended with a winning run in the Scottish Premiership that saw Celtic snatch the trophy from the grasp of Hearts. A week later, Celtic beat Dunfermline to win the Scottish Cup final.

O'Neill's contract includes the option of a further year.

The Northern Irishman was also Celtic manager from 2000-05, leading the team to three league titles and three Scottish Cups - and a domestic treble in 2001.

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NEWS



Philippines' Alexandra Eala celebrates a point against United States' Alycia Parks during the National Bank Open tennis tournament in Toronto. (AP)

# Sports

Al-Salmiya to face Al-Khaldiya in final Turkey friendly

## Al-Arabi arrives in Kolkata ahead of AFC Champions League Two playoff

By Hassan Mosa  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KOLKATA, Aug 6: Al-Arabi will leave today for Kolkata, India, as the club steps up preparations for its decisive clash against East Bengal on August 12 in the playoff round for a place in the group stage of the AFC Champions League Two.

The Green Devils wrapped up their training camp in Erzurum, Turkey, after playing four friendly

matches as part of their preparations. They suffered defeats against Egyptian side Pyramids FC (3-1) and Erzurumspor (3-1), drew 1-1 with Van Spor, and ended the camp on a positive note with a 4-0 win over Amedspor's reserve team.

Al-Arabi will begin training in India tomorrow under Croatian coach Goran Tomic, with the squad focused on reaching peak readiness ahead of the Asian playoff.

Al-Salmiya has confirmed its

fourth and final friendly match during their training camp in Izmit, Turkey, against Bahrain's Al-Khaldiya next Thursday.

The Sky Blues began their series of warm-up games with a 3-0 loss to Egyptian club ZED FC, before facing Qatar's Al-Markhiya yesterday. They are scheduled to meet Algerian side Olympique Chlef next Monday in their third preparatory fixture.

The team will conclude its camp and return to Kuwait on August 17.

Kuwait club resumed training yesterday in London under Portuguese head coach Alexander Santos as part of its preparations for the new season.

The defending league champion was beaten 2-0 by English club Portsmouth in its second friendly match, which marked the debut of new Brazilian forward Carlinhos Vinicius.

Kuwait Club previously lost 1-0 to Milton Keynes and will play its third friendly against Barnet next Sunday.

Kuwait Club is preparing for the defense of their Premier League title, which kicks off on August 25, as well as upcoming campaign in the AFC Champions League Two.

Al-Qadsia is looking to arrange a third friendly match during their ongoing camp in Turkey before returning home at the end of next week.

The Yellow Castle secured a 3-1 victory over Saudi side Al-Orouba in their latest friendly after opening the camp with a 1-1 draw against Al-Zulf.

The team is using the camp to prepare for the domestic league season and its upcoming participation in the AFC Challenge League.



Kuwait Club new Brazilian forward Carlinhos Vinicius.

## Kuwait U-17 volleyball team heads to Bahrain for Arab Championship



Kuwait U-17 volleyball team.

By Khaled Al-Enezi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

CAIRO, Aug 6: The Kuwait U-17 national volleyball team left Cairo on Wednesday for Manama, Bahrain, where it will compete in the 2nd Arab U-17 Volleyball Championship, scheduled from August 7 to 17.

Six teams will contest the tournament — Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and Algeria — with the competition following a single round-robin format. The top four teams at the end of the preliminary stage will advance to the semifinals.

Kuwait wrapped up its preparations with a training camp in Cairo after beginning its domestic program in early July. During the camp, the team played four friendly matches to fine-tune its preparations, concluding with a 3-1 loss to host nation Egypt.

The young Blue squad will begin its campaign against Saudi Arabia on Sunday before facing Egypt a day later. It

will then meet Bahrain, Jordan, and Algeria in its remaining group-stage matches as it seeks a place in the last four.

Delegation head and Kuwait Volleyball Association board member Naif Al-Failakawi said the Cairo camp fulfilled its technical objectives and helped raise the players' level through intensive training sessions and valuable match experience.

"The players have shown great determination and commitment throughout the preparation period," Al-Failakawi said. "They are eager to represent Kuwait volleyball in the best possible way and compete strongly in the Arab Championship."

He also praised the Kuwait Volleyball Association's Board of Directors for its full support, noting that the federation ensured the success of the Cairo camp by providing the necessary resources, removing logistical obstacles, and creating an ideal environment for the team's preparations.

## UEFA 'maintains' World Cup boycott threat after Infantino's crisis meeting

Swiss gets internal support to remain as FIFA president

NYON, Switzerland, Aug 6, (AP): European soccer's governing body has retained its threat to boycott FIFA competitions despite FIFA apologizing for its failed plan to sell stakes in the World Cup.

UEFA on Thursday reiterated that it had lost confidence in FIFA president Gianni Infantino and said conditions to withdraw its boycott threat had not been met.

"UEFA's associations were very clear about the conditions attached to the non participation in FIFA competitions," it said in a statement. "First, the proposals to sell off the major competitions had to be withdrawn and secondly, assurances have to be made that such attempts to disfigure the game in this way will never be made again."

"These conditions have not been met. In addition, UEFA made it abundantly clear in its statement on Saturday that it has lost confidence in Gianni Infantino's presidency. That position holds."

FIFA and Infantino tried to present a united front following a high-level summit in Morocco on Wednesday when it announced the president had the full support of top staff in attendance.

The world governing body also apologized for errors made over its controversial plan to sell profits in the World Cup through a commercial subsidiary and committed to "ensure they do not happen again."

FIFA said it hoped its meeting would "help restore confidence" in the organization after the turbulence created by Infantino's now abandoned project, which provoked wide-



FIFA president Gianni Infantino and president of Moroccan Royal Football Federation Fouzi Lekjaa attend a Women's AFCON 2026 soccer match between Malawi and Zambia, in Rabat, Morocco. (AP)

spread condemnation.

UEFA voted to abandon FIFA competitions if it went ahead. And even after Infantino's hasty climb-down, Europe's governing body said it had lost confidence in FIFA's leadership - paving the way for a challenge to his presidency.

In its defiant statement, UEFA made it clear its position still held.

"Yesterday's announcement that some people employed by the FIFA president (and whose careers depend on his favor) agree with him changes nothing," it said.

FIFA said it had apologized for errors made over Infantino's failed plan to sell stakes in the World Cup and that senior staff in attendance at a crisis meeting in Morocco "reaffirmed their full support" for his presidency.

World soccer's governing body attempted to present a unified front amid the turbulence caused by Infantino's controversial plans, with calls for him to step down.

In a statement, FIFA said Secretary-General Mattias Grafström and members of the management board in attendance in Rabat had given their support to the embattled president.

Referring to the plans to sell profits in the World Cup through a commercial subsidiary called FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE), the statement said "mistakes made were acknowledged" and that the "process should have been handled differently."

FIFA said a letter had been sent to FIFA Council and member associations apologizing for errors and committed to "ensure they do not happen again."

Grafström's stated support was notable after he distanced himself from Infantino's now abandoned plans in an email to all FIFA staff calling the last week a "sad and reproachable series of events."

FIFA said Infantino had also reaffirmed his support for his secretary general.

World soccer's governing body said the FFE proposal was "now off the table."

"There are always lessons to be learned, and FIFA will continue to improve its processes in light of this experience," it said.

Earlier Wednesday, the association of European soccer leagues - including the Premier League, La Liga and Serie A - called for governance reform of FIFA. It described the FFE proposal as "dangerous" and said it pointed to deeper concerns about how the governing body operates.

It said it raised "serious questions about FIFA's governance, internal culture and decision-making."

"Now more than ever, FIFA requires governance reform that ensures that all relevant stakeholders have a formal role in decisions that shape the future of our game."

In the statement, European Leagues hit out at the possibility of further expanding the World Cup to 64 teams and said "FIFA must not be allowed to continue taking unilaterally disruptive decisions."

It said that until there was reform it would reject the "expansion or creation" of FIFA competitions.

Portugal and Real Madrid great Luis Figo also called for Infantino to step down, saying he had "debased the office."

FIFA denied a British media report suggesting Infantino, in seeking support for his presidency, had offered Morocco the hosting of the final at the 2030 World Cup. Spain, Portugal and Morocco are the main co-hosts for the 2030 edition. Morocco hopes to host the final at the planned 115,000-seat King Hassan II Stadium near Casablanca; Spain has at least two contenders - the home stadiums of Real Madrid and Barcelona.

## Madrid seals 7-yr deal for Diomande

MADRID, Aug 6, (AP): Real Madrid has reached a deal with Leipzig for the transfer of young Ivory Coast international Yan Diomande.

The Spanish powerhouse said Thursday that the 19-year-old forward will be linked to the club for the next seven seasons.

Diomande had an outstanding World Cup, and some Premier League teams were reportedly interested in signing him. Leipzig had been saying he was not for sale.

Ivory Coast was eliminated by Norway in the World Cup round of 32.

Leipzig sporting director Marcel Schäfer said Diomande "impressed us with his carefree attitude, willingness to learn, and courage from day one."

"He quickly established himself at the highest level with us, showcasing his speed, dribbling skills, and goal-scoring threat."

He said the club was proud that Diomande's performances "garnered significant international attention."

Paris Saint-Germain also was reportedly interested in signing the young forward.

It was not yet clear if Diomande would initially be registered with Madrid's B squad.

Madrid's main team has been revamped since a disappointing end to



In this file photo, Ivory Coast's Yan Diomande (11) moves the ball during the World Cup round of 32 soccer match between Ivory Coast and Norway in Arlington, Texas. (AP)

last season. The new signings who will be coached by José Mourinho include playmaker Bernardo Silva, center back Ibrahima Konaté, right back Denzel Dumfries and left back Marc Cucurella.

## Reusser retains overall lead

## Le Court-Pienaar wins Stage 6 of Tour

TOURNON-SUR-RHONE, France, Aug 6, (AP): Mauritian rider Kim Le Court-Pienaar won the sixth stage of the Women's Tour de France in a sprint to the line on Thursday, while Marlen Reusser kept the race leader's yellow jersey.

Le Court-Pienaar attacked from 300 meters out and held off Frenchwoman Cedrine Kerbaol and Dutchwoman Puck Pieterse, who was third. Le Court-Pienaar lay on her back in a mixture of exhaustion and elation as she savored her victory after winning in about four hours.

"It was a crazy day. I had a mechanical problem and had to change my bike," Le Court-Pienaar said. "It was 50 kilometers from the end and it was very stressful. It was very hard to get back and I used up a lot of energy."

The Swiss rider Reusser maintained her overall lead of 12 seconds from Dutchwoman Demi Vollering, with Poland's Katarzyna Niewiadoma-Phinney, 1 minute and 17 seconds behind in third.

Two-time Giro d'Italia winner Elisa Longo Borghini jumped up a couple of places to fourth overall to move into outside contention for the

title at 2:28 back. Le Court-Pienaar was ninth at 3:26 behind while defending champion Pauline Ferrand-Prévot of France was 15th.

Stage six took riders on a 153-kilometer (95-mile) route featuring five modest climbs and one tricky category 2-level climb - the third-hardest category in the race - before a downhill dash to Tournon-sur-Rhône in the Ardèche region of south-central France.

A three-rider breakaway formed early on. But they were soon caught heading up the Cat. 2 Col de Lalouvesc, a grind of nearly 9 kilometers.

Another breakaway formed shortly after, with two-time Olympic road race bronze medalist Longo Borghini among them. Following the day's last climb up Cote de Boucieu-le-Roi they were joined by Le Court-Pienaar, winner of the Liège-Bastogne-Liège classic last year.

Behind them, 2023 Tour champion Vollering upped the pace but the peloton could not get to within 15 seconds of the leading eight riders, who contested the stage win. Le Court-Pienaar's extra power made the difference as she attacked from deep.

## Spain confident it will host the 2030 World Cup final

MADRID, Aug 6, (AP): The Spanish government remained confident the final of the 2030 World Cup will be in Spain.

Speaking after a report that FIFA allegedly awarded the final to co-host Morocco, sports minister Milagros Tolón said Spain "deserved" to host the title game.

"We are the reigning men's and women's World Cup champions, and Spain and Portugal spearheaded the bid for the 2030 World Cup, which Morocco later joined," Tolón told Cadena Ser late Wednesday. "We have many advantages and strengths as a country."

Spain, Portugal and Morocco are the main 2030 co-hosts. Morocco hopes

to host the final at the planned 115,000-seat King Hassan II Stadium near Casablanca. Spain has at least two contenders - Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu Stadium and Barcelona's Camp Nou.

Tolón said the Spanish government was "surprised" about the report that FIFA gave the final to Morocco.

"The most important thing is that FIFA has already denied it," she said. "We are working with FIFA, and we have our next meeting in September. They have been very clear and emphatic in denying this news. We will continue working because we want, and it has to be, that the World Cup final is in Spain."