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Ministry of Interior photo
Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah with Jordan's Director of the General Intelligence Directorate Maj. Gen. Ahmad Hosni. - See Page 2

Kuwait nips attack plot on vital facility

IS suspect trained in drone, explosives

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA):The Ministry of Interior on Wednesday foiled a terrorist plot targeting a vital facility in the country and arrested a Kuwaiti national affiliated with the so-called Islamic State (IS) before executing his plan, following intensive security monitoring and surveillance.

This came in a statement by the ministry saying that investigations revealed the suspect had received training related to the manufacture of explosives and drones and had built a drone with the intention of using it to carry out his terrorist plot and target a vital facility.

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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

On the government, Kuwait is always merciful to its people

KUWAIT is a merciful country to its people and to those residing on its land. Kuwait adopts a humanitarian approach to dealing with all cases wisely. Kuwait is careful not to cause harm to its people and treats them with compassion.

Consequently, approximately 509 families affected by the amendment to the "Those Who Sold Their Homes" law are awaiting the government's mercy.

These families will be in dire straits if the evictions are carried out within the specified timeframe without providing a humane alternative.

According to legal principles, laws are not applied retroactively and do not affect legal positions established under previous legislation. There are financial and social circumstances based on previous laws that have shaped the interests of individuals and families.

Therefore, the repeal of the "Those Who Sold Their Homes" law, particularly Article 29-bis of the 1993 law, has resulted in numerous social problems. These families have structured their lives for years based on the previous law, benefiting from the rights granted to them under that law and paying rent as stipulated in their contracts.

Thus, informing them that they must vacate their rented homes by September 1 will place them in a dire situation. The total number of those affected could reach 3,000 or 4,000, as each of the 509 families consists of five or more members.

When these families rented these homes from the state, they relied on the rental law, adhered to its provisions, and regularly paid the amounts stipulated in their contracts. Evicting them before providing alternative housing will create a multifaceted crisis, especially since many of them have made improvements to their units and made them their permanent residences. This makes the transition extremely difficult.

Therefore, the new law warrants reconsideration, particularly since the explanatory memorandum to the decree clarifies that the law targets a group that has benefited from the usufruct or rental law for more than ten years.

Any change to the current housing situation of these families will inevitably place them in a major predicament, especially without providing alternative housing.

Legal tradition grants those affected a period to find alternative housing. If a rent increase is required, or for any other reason, this does not justify harming these families, even unintentionally.

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Kuwait FM receives letter from Qatar PM



Ministry of Foreign Affairs photo
Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives a letter from the Qatari PM, delivered by the Ambassador of Qatar.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a written message from Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani concerning the strong bilateral ties between the two countries.

The Foreign Ministry said Wednesday that the message was delivered during Sheikh Jarrah's reception of Qatari Ambassador to Kuwait Ali bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud at the Ministry's headquarters.

29,060 citations as traffic net tightens

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: The Traffic and Operations Sector, represented by the General Traffic Department, continued its traffic and security campaigns in the country's governorates from August 3 to 9, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement, the department explained that the campaigns resulted in the issuance of 29,060 traffic citations, the detention of 21 individuals at traffic police stations, and the referral of nine juveniles to the Juvenile Prosecution. In addition, 341 vehicles and four motorcycles were impounded for committing serious traffic violations.

A total of 2,249 traffic reports were handled, including patrols responding to 859 traffic accidents, 141 of which resulted in injuries.

One person was arrested on suspicion of possessing drugs, while five individuals were apprehended for being under the influence of drugs. All five were referred to the Drug Control General Department.

Sixty-three individuals were arrested for expired residency permits, while four individuals were found without proper identification. Furthermore, 52 wanted individuals and 20 vehicles were apprehended.

All individuals and vehicles were transferred to the relevant authorities for legal action.

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Kuwait CSC declares Aug 27 public holiday

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): The Civil Service Commission announced Wednesday that ministries, government agencies, public authorities and institutions will be closed on Thursday, Aug 27, marking the Prophet's Birthday for 1448 AH.

In a press statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), the commission said the decision follows a Cabinet decision taken at its meeting Tuesday. Official working hours will resume Sunday, Aug 30.

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Kuwait and Chad give fresh impetus to bilateral relations

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for African Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Hayat commended the deep-rooted bilateral ties between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Chad across several key sectors.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the 66th Chadian Independence Day reception held at the embassy in Kuwait, Ambassador Hayat noted that relations dating back to the 1960s are defined by mutual respect, regular political consultations, and continuous economic cooperation.

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Photo by Samer Shajir
Chadian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Taher Khater with Kuwait's Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for African Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Hayat.

Food smuggling scheme unboxed

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Officers from Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) thwarted an attempt to smuggle huge quantities of various subsidized food supplies out of Kuwait through several trucks bound for Egypt.

In a press statement, KGAC revealed that the inspectors suspected many shipments, which they inspected thoroughly, leading to the discovery of large quantities of various food items.

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Kuwait Finance House concludes the third edition of KFH Academy



Ali Mutajara Real Estate profit rises 22.8% to KD 4.72 million

Alternative oil export routes weighed

Kuwait eyes strategic exit from Hormuz

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: With the escalation of geopolitical crises, the Strait of Hormuz has transformed from a natural waterway into a greater threat to the economic stability of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

As the region faces this critical situation, two experts told the newspaper about the need to expedite the expansion of land-based oil transport projects and the construction of massive pipeline networks in the territories of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman.

Economic expert and former advisor to the Minister of Finance Mohammad Ramadan affirmed that the GCC's geographical and logistic depth is rich with alternatives extending to the territories and coastlines of Saudi Arabia, UAE and Oman.

Ramadan explained that activating these alternatives will lead to a decline in the importance of the Strait of Hormuz as the sole path for global energy trade. He said this structural shift in export routes will deprive Tehran of its control over the Strait of Hormuz.

Workers cities poised to 'reshape' labor housing

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: According to experts, establishing integrated workers' cities is not limited to providing housing, but must also meet public health and safety requirements, including fire protection, as well as provide essential services, transportation, and necessary facilities.

Head of the National Integrity Center and former Municipal Council member, Hamoud Aqla Al-Enezi, affirmed that workers' cities represent one of the most important sustainable solutions for addressing informal housing and regulating the conditions of expatriate workers, provided that they are part of an integrated system for managing the labor sector rather than merely serving as housing facilities.

Speaking to the daily, Al-Enezi said the recent security campaigns led by the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with government agencies reflect the state's seriousness in addressing violations, praising the efforts made in this regard.

He pointed out that the issue of workers' cities had previously been discussed in the Municipal Council during his term, when sites were allocated for their construction following a series of meetings and workshops with the relevant authorities.

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HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

The man who fled death managed to found a state that lasted 800 years

The young Abd Al-Rahman ibn Mu'awiya fled from Syria

Abbasid soldiers pursued the Umayyad princes to eliminate them

His brother Yahya believed the safe passage he was given, so the soldiers killed him

Badr, a loyalist of Ibn Mu'awiya, raised an army and entered Andalusia

Abu Ja'far Al-Man-sur: This is the Falcon of Quraysh who built a state

The American ambassador in Paris fell in love with the widow of a philosopher

Your confession of your intention to remain alone until you kill your husband

Historians agree that it is the most amusing love letter in history

He concluded his letter by saying: Come, my dear, let us take revenge on them together

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:50	Asr	15:29
Sunrise ..	05:15	Maghrib ..	18:31
Zohr	11:53	Isha	19:56



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the meeting.

PM Diwan photo

PM reviews key KPC-approved energy projects

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired the 133rd Supreme Council for Petroleum

meeting to review key energy strategies and projects approved by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC).

During the session, the council officially

approved the final accounting statements of KPC and its subsidiary companies for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, successfully concluding all financial items on the meeting agenda.



Left: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah meets the Director of the General Intelligence Directorate of Kingdom of Jordan Maj. Gen. Ahmad Hosni. Kuwaiti and Jordanian delegations during the meeting (right).

Kuwait, Jordan mull ways to up security relations

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah discussed on Wednesday with Director of the General Intelligence Directorate of Kingdom of Jordan Maj. Gen. Ahmad Hosni ways to enhance security cooperation and joint action between the two brotherly countries.

The Ministry of Interior said in a statement that Sheikh Fahad Al-Yusuf met with Maj. Gen. Hosni and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace, where they discussed ways to develop coordination and exchange expertise between the security agencies on matters of common interest, contributing to supporting security and stability. The meeting also reviewed

the deep-rooted fraternal relations between Kuwait and Jordan, the ministry noted.

Both sides stressed the importance of continuing joint coordination and expanding areas of cooperation in a manner that serves their common interests and enhances the efficiency of security work in the two brotherly countries, it added.

Kuwait strives to promote integrity in sports: Nazaha

‘Combating corruption is shared responsibility’

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: The State of Kuwait, represented by Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority “Nazaha,” participated in the 2026 annual event of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) entitled “International Experiences in Promoting Transparency and Combating Corruption in the Sports Sector.” The event was held virtually via video conference on Wednesday 12 August 2026, organized by the GCC General Secretariat in coordination with the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption and Electronic Security at the Ministry of Interior in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The event brought together representatives of anti-corruption agencies in the GCC countries, alongside professionals in the sports sector from federations and clubs, as part of joint efforts to enhance cooperation among Gulf entities concerned with combating



KUNA photo

Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority “Nazaha,” participated in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) event entitled “International Experiences in Promoting Transparency and Combating Corruption in the Sports Sector “ via video-conference.

sports corruption. It aimed to raise awareness of the risks of corruption in this sector and ways to prevent it by reviewing the best relevant regional and international practices and experiences.

During the event, Mr. Abdulrahman Khaled Al-Wazzan, a Senior Professional in the International Cooperation Department at Nazaha,

delivered a presentation entitled “The Experience of the State of Kuwait in Promoting Integrity and Transparency in the Sports Sector.” The presentation addressed the legislative and institutional framework for sports and anti-corruption in the State of Kuwait, as well as the role of sports as a pillar for building a culture of integrity in society. He reviewed several practical models demonstrating the State of Kuwait’s dedication to implementing initiatives aimed at promoting integrity and combating corruption in the sports sector.

The presentation concluded that the State of Kuwait’s experience embodies an integrated approach that combines deterrent legislation, community awareness-building, and institutional governance and oversight to safeguard integrity and transparency in the sports sector, emphasizing that combating corruption is a shared responsibility between the state and society.

This participation comes as part of Nazaha’s dedication to enhancing cooperation with Gulf and international anti-corruption agencies and exchanging expertise in priority areas, reflecting the State of Kuwait’s commitment to consolidating the principles of integrity and transparency across various sectors, including the sports sector.

Kuwait eyes S.Korean expertise AI, technology

TOKYO, Aug 12, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Ambassador to the Republic of Korea Azzam Abdulmohsen Al-Asfoor has affirmed the importance of enhancing academic cooperation between Kuwaiti and South Korean universities in AI and advanced technologies fields.

This helps prepare national cadres to keep pace with the requirements of future and boost partnership between the two friendly countries, Al-Asfoor said in a statement received by KUNA from the Embassy of Kuwait early Wednesday while receiving a 20-student Kuwaiti delegation.

The delegation is participating in the STEAM Initiative Program of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS).

Al-Asfoor briefed the Kuwaiti students on the remarkable technological progress made by the Republic of Korea.

He stressed the importance of gain-

ing benefits from Korea’s experience and transferring relevant expertise to Kuwait.

In addition, the ambassador shed light on the progress made by Korean universities in fields pertaining to artificial intelligence technologies, underlining the importance of strengthening academic cooperation between Kuwaiti and Korean universities.

Such cooperation aims to prepare qualified national cadres capable of keeping pace with future developments in artificial intelligence technology and enhancing the prospects for partnership between Kuwait and Korea in this field.

Al-Asfoor expressed hope for an increase in the number of Kuwaiti students enrolling Korean universities to pursue studies in artificial intelligence technology, electronic engineering, and cybersecurity.

He further stressed that the Embassy and all its staff would provide necessary assistance and support to the delegation through-

out their stay in the Republic of Korea.

The delegation came to the Republic of Korea to participate in a one-week academic program at Korea University in the field of Artificial Intelligence Technology (AIT).

The delegation further visited some Korean companies and institutions specialized in artificial intelligence.

Established in 1976, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences adopted the STEAM initiative in 2025 as part of its 2025-2029 strategy.

The initiative aims to develop science, technology, engineering and mathematics curricula, enhance Kuwaiti students and teachers’ skills, and prepare a generation equipped with skills needed to meet the demands of the future and the labor market.

This aligns with Kuwait’s vision of supporting innovation and a knowledge-based economy.

Kuwait, UK seek boost in ties, discuss region developments

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan received a phone call on Tuesday from UK Minister of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Stephen Dough-

ty. During the call, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations between Kuwait and the United Kingdom and ways to strengthen and develop cooperation across various fields.

They also discussed the latest regional developments and exchanged views on efforts aimed at addressing the current situation.



Hamad Al-Mashaan

GCC, OIC condemn move

Kuwait slams Colombia’s nod on Israel Golan hold

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Kuwait condemned and denounced the Colombian government’s recognition of Israeli occupation sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, stressing its rejection of the move as a violation of international law and international legitimacy resolutions.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the Colombian decision contravenes UN Security Council Resolution 497 of 1981, which deemed Israel’s imposition of its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan “null and void without international legal effect.”

The ministry reaffirmed Kuwait’s firm position that the Syrian Golan is occupied Syrian Arab territory and rejected any decisions aimed at perpetuating the occupation or granting it legitimacy.

It stressed the principle that territory may not be acquired by force, in accordance with the UN Charter and principles of international law.

The ministry also reaffirmed Kuwait’s support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, calling on the international community, particularly the UN Security Council, to fulfill its responsibilities in ensuring respect for international law and the UN Charter. It further called for obliging Israeli occupation forces to withdraw from all occupied Arab territories.



Al-Budaiwi

Oman

Oman on Wednesday condemned Colombia’s decision to recognize Israeli occupation sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan, stressing that the decision violates international law and contradicts international legitimacy resolutions, including UN Security Council Resolution 497 of 1981.

In a statement, Oman’s Ministry reaffirmed the Sultanate’s position that the Golan is occupied Syrian territory, supported Syria’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and urged all states to uphold the UN Charter, international law and relevant resolutions.

GCC

GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi strongly condemned the Colombian government’s recognition of Israeli occupation forces’ sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

In a statement, Al-Budaiwi said the recognition contravenes international laws and treaties that affirm the Golan Heights is occupied Syrian Arab territory under Israeli occupation.

He reaffirmed that any decisions or rec-

ognitions that disregard reality and facts based on international and UN resolutions are unacceptable and undermine efforts to promote peace and security in the region.

Al-Budaiwi called on the Colombian government to withdraw the recognition, stressing the need for the Israeli occupation to comply with international legitimacy resolutions and withdraw from all occupied Arab territories, including the Golan Heights.

He also reiterated the GCC countries’ firm support for the Syrian Arab Republic and their commitment to safeguarding its sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, including the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

He stressed the GCC’s categorical rejection of any measures or violations that could undermine Syria’s sovereignty or territorial integrity.

Arab League

The Arab League on Tuesday rejected Colombia’s recognition of the Israeli Occupation’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights, a plateau that was part of Syrian territory before it was captured and later annexed by the Israeli Occupation.

Slamming the notion of Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights as legally “null and void,” the Cairo-based bloc’s chief Nabil Fahmi said that the plateau remains Syrian territory regardless of political trends, citing UN Security Council resolution 497 that renders the acquisition of territory by force as lacking any legal validity.

He urged Colombia to backtrack on such a measure, saying that Bogota should “rectify” its stance in line with relevant international laws and principles that firmly back Syrian sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

The Israeli Occupation captured the Golan Heights during the 1967 Six Day War, later annexing the plateau in 1981.

OIC

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)’s Secretary-General Hissein Taha strongly condemned on Tuesday the Colombian government’s decision to recognize Israeli occupation sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

In an official statement, Taha stated that the step attempts to cement the status quo and legitimize the Israeli occupation, framing it as a flagrant breach of international law and relevant UN resolutions-most notably UN Security Council Resolution 497 (1981).

Taha stressed that Bogota’s decision cannot alter the established legal status of the Golan Heights as occupied Syrian Arab land under international law.

The Secretary-General urged the Colombian government to rescind its illegal recognition, reiterating the OIC’s firm stance in support of Syria’s sovereignty, security, stability, and territorial integrity.

Farmers grateful to governor for his ‘agricultural support’

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with Supervisor of Abdally farmers Faisal Abdullah Al-Zaabi, and farmers Mu’taz Al-Omani and Saleh Bader Al-Dhabib.

During the meeting, the farmers invited the Governor to the Dates and Figs Festival, which will be held at the Livestock Transport and Trading Company Hall soon. They discussed the objectives of the festival and its role in supporting local agricultural products, motivating farmers, and showcasing the

quality and diversity of Kuwaiti farm production.

On the other hand, the farmers expressed their gratitude to the Governor for his warm reception, his interest in the agricultural sector, and his support for farmers and local produce.

The Governor affirmed the importance of holding such agricultural festivals, given their role in supporting the farmers, marketing their products, and enhancing the standing of local produce. He also commended the efforts exerted in organizing the festival.



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah with the local farmers leaders.

Kuwait reinforces role in humanitarian work, law

KRCS contributes over \$2m for Sudan operations



Left: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Chairman Khaled Al-Maghams and participants of the workshop organized by the KRCS (right).

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Chairman Khaled Al-Maghams affirmed Wednesday that Kuwait has consolidated its leading regional and international status in supporting humanitarian work and promoting respect for International Humanitarian Law worldwide.

Al-Maghams made the statement to KUNA following the opening of a specialized workshop organized by KRCS focusing on the four Geneva Conventions and the protection of civilians and aid workers during armed conflicts.

He explained that the workshop aims to

highlight the conventions as the essential legal framework for protecting conflict victims, while addressing current enforcement challenges and building national capabilities through specialized training programs and workshops.

He added that Kuwait plays a pivotal role in disseminating humanitarian principles, expressing hope that the workshop yields practical recommendations to strengthen cooperation among relevant authorities and safeguard human dignity in conflict zones globally.

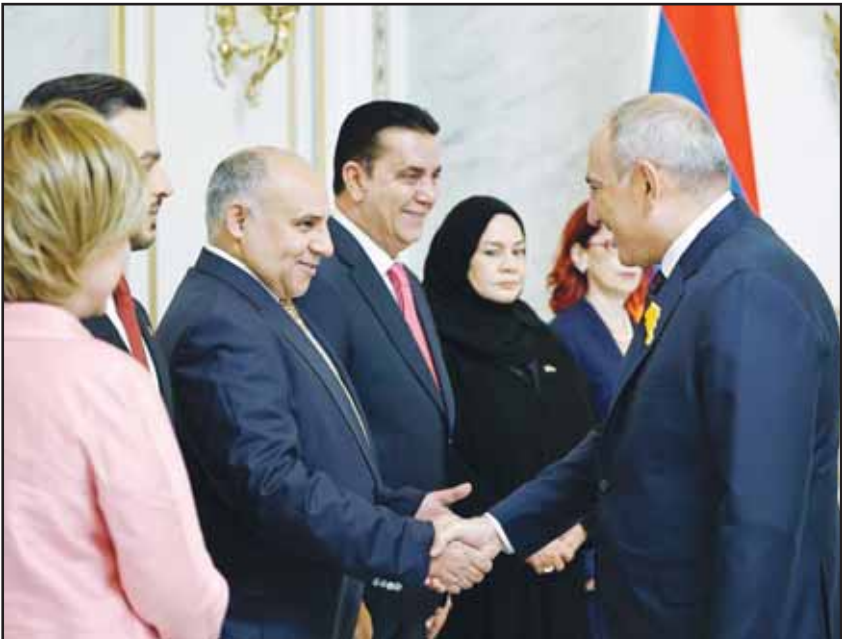
For his part, General Legal Counsel and Head of the Legal Division at Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) Dr. Nawaf Al-Shuraian detailed how the four 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols protect wounded combatants, prisoners of war, and civilians during international and non-international armed conflicts.

Al-Shuraian praised Kuwait's unwavering

commitment to upholding these international legal standards during both peace and war, highlighting the nation's significant emergency relief contributions, particularly its continuous humanitarian aid delivered to Palestinians in Gaza.

Meanwhile, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Program Officer Ali Al-Housh praised Kuwait's pioneering role in promoting International Humanitarian Law through legislation and initiatives that safeguard humans and aid workers, while highlighting KRCS hosting this workshop as a Movement component.

He emphasized that field cooperation between ICRC and KRCS extends to major projects, noting KRCS provided over two million dollars for Sudan operations alongside adopting advanced legislation protecting emblem usage and supporting missing persons initiatives.



KUNA photo
Kuwait Ambassador to Armenia Mohammad Al-Arifan meets the Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Kuwait, Armenia stress boost in AI, tech, transport sectors

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Kuwait is keen to broaden its cooperation with Armenia by capitalizing on emerging opportunities in technology, artificial intelligence, transport and regional connectivity, Kuwait Ambassador to Armenia Mohammad Al-Arifan said Tuesday.

The remarks came in a statement issued by the Kuwaiti Embassy in Yerevan following a meeting between Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and ambassadors of Arab countries accredited to Armenia on his reappointment as Prime Minister.

Al-Arifan congratulated Pashinyan on the occasion, conveying the congratulations of the Kuwaiti leadership and wishing him success in continuing to perform

his duties, as well as Armenia and its friendly people continued security, stability, development and prosperity.

The ambassador stressed the importance of capitalizing on available opportunities to enhance bilateral cooperation and exploring prospects in various fields.

In turn, Pashinyan highlighted the importance of strengthening Armenian-Arab relations and expanding areas of cooperation with Arab countries.

He also referred to preparations underway for Armenia to host the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP17) next October, describing it as an opportunity to enhance international cooperation in the fields of environment, climate and sustainable development.

PAMA contributes \$1million to Emergency Response Fund: KFD

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: The Kuwait Fund for Development (KFD) announced that the Public Authority for Minors' Affairs has contributed US\$1 million to the Kuwait Emergency Response Fund, becoming the first government entity to contribute to the Fund since its launch on 5 July, in a step that reflects the widening scope of national participation in support of the initiative aimed at strengthening the State of Kuwait's preparedness and raising the efficiency of its emergency response system.

The contribution of the Public Authority for Minors' Affairs represents a significant addition to the Fund's progress and opens the way for broader institutional participation in support of its objectives, strengthening the integration of national efforts and the direction of resources toward priority interventions and projects.

The addition of the first government entity to the list of contributors reflects the growing momentum the initiative has witnessed since its launch and underscores the importance of joining the efforts of state institutions and the private sector in building a national system that is more

prepared and resilient in dealing with a wide range of emergency conditions and challenges.

The Public Authority for Minors' Affairs is one of Kuwait's longstanding national institutions with a humanitarian and social mission. Established in 1939, it safeguards the interests of those under its guardianship, protecting, preserving, and managing their funds and property in accordance with the responsibilities defined by law. The Authority's role also extends to serving the community and supporting initiatives of a humanitarian and social nature, in keeping with its mission rooted in the values of care, solidarity, and social responsibility.

The Kuwait Emergency Response Fund was established under an initiative put forward by the Kuwait Fund for Development and approved by the Council of Ministers, with the Kuwait Fund assuming its management and supervision of its operations, with the aim of enhancing institutional flexibility, raising the efficiency of national response, and enabling the authorities concerned to confront emergencies efficiently and effectively.

New regulations to streamline pharmacies in 'private sector'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi issued Wednesday a ministerial decision on regulations and procedures for licensing private-sector pharmacies and the circulation of medicines and medical products therein.

The Ministry of Health said in a press statement that the decision provides a comprehensive regulatory framework covering various stages of licensing and operating private pharmacies, as well as mechanisms for the circulation, dispensing, storage and delivery of medicines, in addition to regulating the professional and supervisory responsibilities of pharmacy staff.

It explained that the decision sets specific regulations for licensing private pharmacies operated by Kuwaiti phar-

macists, cooperative societies and private hospitals. It also stipulates that a private pharmacy license is valid for four years and regulates procedures for issuing and renewing licenses, changing the location or area of a pharmacy, adding storage facilities, temporarily or permanently closing a pharmacy, reopening it, and related requirements, inspections and approvals by competent authorities.

The ministry added that the decision requires a minimum distance of 1,000 meters in all directions between a pharmacy seeking a license and the nearest pharmacy, according to a specified measurement mechanism, with exceptions for certain locations and facilities stipulated in the decision.

Improper care can ignite fire

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) has warned of the dangers of improper handling of kitchen fires, emphasizing the importance of following proper safety measures when a fire breaks out due to cooking oil ignition or a gas leak, reports Al-Anba daily.

The warning was issued in an awareness video published by KFF on its official social media accounts. It included a set of guidelines aimed at minimizing the risks of kitchen fires and ensuring safe handling until firefighters arrive.

KFF explained that water should never be used to extinguish a cooking oil fire. The safest method is to use a fire blanket or cover the source of the flames with a wet blanket. It also important to avoid intervening if the fire is out of control.

وزارة التجارة والصناعة
Ministry of Commerce & Industry
مجلس الوزراء
State of Kuwait

RECALL INFORMATION

Vehicle Recall Affected Vehicles
DBX model years 2020-2025
DBX707 model years 2020-2025
DBX S model years 2020-2025
DBX Straight Six model years 2020-2025
Total number of vehicles: 40

RECALL REASON

There may be a defect in the lower rear suspension arm bolt, which could lead to premature corrosion and affect the performance of the rear suspension and rear brakes, potentially increasing the risk of an accident.

REMEDY

The rear suspension arm will be inspected, and the rear wheel hub fixing bolts will be replaced with others that meet the updated specifications. The suspension arm will also be replaced if necessary, at no cost to the customer.

CONTACT

Owners of vehicles affected by this recall are kindly requested to contact Premier International Motor Group at 1824242.

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42,43,44,45,46,47 and48)of no.(27/2015) issuing the executive by laws no.(39/2014)on Consumer Protection

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Hotel & Resort
مفوضية بنادر

Room Description	Price
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One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast	BD 119.173 / Net

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‘Secret Service and military wanted me on a different plane’

Trump confirms switch from Air Force One in Turkiye due to threat

WASHINGTON, Aug 12, (AP): US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he slipped away from Air Force One after a trip last month in Turkiye because the Secret Service and military wanted him on a “different plane” due to a threat that he insisted didn’t scare him.

Trump downplayed the extraordinary nature of the subterfuge involved in his flight, which saw him stow away in an airport catering container to sneak onto another plane while Air Force One was sent into the sky, essentially as a decoy.

He also downplayed the risk to the people - White House officials, security and support staff, and reporters - he left on the plane.

“They wanted me to go on a different flight, different plane,” Trump told reporters after returning from an event in Ohio, saying he had little choice in the matter.

“I guess there was a threat out there. I didn’t really ask too much about it,” he said. “I get a lot of threats.”

His comments confirmed a report that first appeared in The Washington Post saying that Trump, following a NATO summit last month, was spir-

ited onto a different plane because of a credible threat from Iran. The action was kept secret for weeks, until the newspaper’s story.

“I think actually the plane that I flew on was at greater risk,” Trump said Tuesday, who did not provide many details about the action. But he said the incident did not scare him.

“I don’t worry about anything, to be honest,” Trump said. “Whatever it is. You know my attitude? Whatever!”

Commanders in chief have sometimes kept overseas trips covert for security reasons, with schedules and logistics kept classified until after for safety reasons. But the fact that Trump’s whereabouts were concealed at the time and for weeks afterward is believed to be unprecedented.

“We have absolutely seen the president fly on unmarked or decoy planes before, into Iraq, Afghanistan, other war-zone-like places,” said Garrett M. Graff, author of “Raven Rock: The Story of the U.S. Government’s Secret Plan to Save Itself - While the Rest of Us Die.”

“But this was an ongoing secret that I don’t think we’ve ever seen



Surrounded by security, US President Donald Trump switches planes at US Air Force Base, RAF Mildenhall in Suffolk Eastern England, on his way back to Washington from the NATO summit in Ankara, Turkiye on July 8. (AP)

before.”

After hiding in the catering vehicle and being moved to the other plane, Trump stopped in Britain, sneaked back aboard the presidential plane undetected, and even later scoffed when asked about potential danger.

“If I go, you go. Right?” he told

reporters then - gliding past the fact that if the plane had been shot down, the president wouldn’t have been aboard.

The president’s flight out of Turkiye made headlines at the time because he had arrived aboard a luxury jet gifted by Qatar, which was not

equipped with some of the same missile detection and countermeasure systems found on older presidential jets.

Trump ended up traveling in a smaller government aircraft from Turkey to the United Kingdom, only to secretly reboard the decoy jet, then descend from it and climb back aboard the Qatari plane.

Presidents have regularly tested the confines of their office, pushing their security advisers to visit war zones as a show of American presence and their own leadership. Usually, this happens in the form of trips that aren’t announced until the president is deemed to be out of harm’s way.

What’s different this time is that Trump was covertly separated from the rest of his travelers - including the press pool meant to provide independent coverage of the president and his actions - and, instead of informing the public about what occurred once the risk had passed, the White House still hasn’t fully revealed what took place.

Graff said the presence of the White House press corps is as much about protecting “the presidency and

democracy” as it is about covering the story.

“This shows that the White House just fundamentally doesn’t understand how important that role is,” he said.

In 2023, a motorcade pulled away from the White House around 3:30 a.m. on a Sunday, and President Joe Biden later boarded an Air Force C-32, a modified Boeing 757 normally used for domestic trips to smaller airports, and flew to Poland. Biden then took a secret, 10-hour overnight train ride to Kyiv meant to show solidarity with Ukraine after Russia’s invasion.

A press pool at the White House had been expecting a quiet Sunday for Biden in Washington. However, two journalists went to Ukraine with him and documented the trip, capturing images of Biden and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy walking together.

In Trump’s first term, he made a secret Thanksgiving trip to Afghanistan in 2019, when officials kept a separate press pool and decoy plane in Florida to maintain the illusion that the president was spending the holiday at his Mar-a-Lago estate.

Severe weather knocks out power in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio

CHICAGO, Aug 12, (AP): Severe weather cut power to more than half a million people in the Chicago area and northwestern Indiana as perilous thunderstorms and tornadoes pummeled the region Tuesday, causing widespread damage and bringing lightning that injured people at an Ohio prison.

Tornado warning sirens howled as the skies darkened. All flights were temporarily stopped at Chicago’s two major airports, and officials warned of delays as the backlog was cleared. In Ohio, power outages swept the state capital region, and at least one death was reported.



A home is damaged after a storm in Tinley Park, Illinois on Aug 11. (AP)

Sixteen incarcerated people were hospitalized, including one who was transported by helicopter, after lightning struck at a prison complex southwest of Cleveland, according to the Ohio Department of Corrections. The victims were injured as they returned from an evening meal at Grafton Reintegration Center, department spokesperson JoEllen Smith said in an email Tuesday evening. Their conditions weren’t immediately known.

Two tornadoes touched down just south of Chicago, the National Weather Service said Tuesday night. Photos posted on social media from the Chicago area, and across the state line in Indiana, showed flooded roads, trees tangled in power lines and homes

with gashes in their roofs.

“No power. It was very scary. We were down in the basement,” said Javid Jenkins of Homewood, a Chicago suburb. “We’re built for snow. We’re built for cold. We’re not built for this.”

Jenkins, 54, said he was driving around for gas to fire up a generator to preserve food in his refrigerator.

Forecasters said a wind gust of 99 mph (159 kph) was recorded in Gary, Indiana. Elsewhere there were numerous reports of gusts of 80 mph (128 kph) or more at personal weather stations.

Preliminary information indicated that the intense system that swept from Iowa into Indiana over several hours qualified

as a derecho, the weather service’s Storm Prediction Center said Tuesday evening. Derechos are prolonged straight-line wind events that unleash heavy rainfall and travel far distances. The damage they cause is sometimes comparable to the destructive forces of tornadoes or hurricanes.

The weather service bluntly warned earlier in the day: “These are dangerous storms!”

More than 600,000 customers lost electricity in Illinois and Indiana, according to poweroutage.us. Lake and Porter counties in Indiana and Will County, south of Chicago, were especially hard hit. Farther east in Ohio, at least 250,000 customers were without power.

Sen Graham, Rep Norman advance to GOP runoff for US Senate in S.Carolina

COLUMBIA, SC, Aug 12, (AP): Sen Darline Graham and US Rep Ralph Norman have advanced to a runoff in South Carolina’s special Republican primary to replace the late Lindsey Graham in the U.S. Senate, one month after his sudden death.

A first-time candidate who was always close to her brother’s political orbit, Darline Graham overcame skepticism about her lack of experience in her campaign to replace him, as she moved forward Tuesday as the top vote-getter to runner-up Norman from a 10-way field en route to an Aug. 25 runoff. Lindsey Graham died July 11, triggering a whirlwind special election season.



US Sen Darline Graham speaks with reporters after advancing to a special GOP Senate primary runoff to replace Sen. Lindsey Graham, on Aug 11, in Columbia, SC. (AP)

Gov. Henry McMaster had appointed Darline Graham to serve the waning months of her late brother’s term. She picked up President Donald Trump’s swift backing, but the rare open Senate seat attracted a broad field, including some of the state’s top Republicans, setting up the latest test of the president’s command over the GOP base.

Darline Graham addressed reporters Tuesday evening flanked by her family and introduced herself anew to the state’s Republicans voters. She boasted of her work with Trump in her first three weeks in the Senate and took a veiled swipe at her opponent, saying she was “guilty as charged” of not being a politician.

“I will spend the next two weeks of this runoff meeting with voters and unlike some politicians listening to their concerns - yes, listening to their concerns,” Graham said, not mentioning Norman by name. “This seat belongs to the people of South

Carolina and I will work hard to earn, earn your vote.”

Trump told reporters Tuesday evening that Graham called him after making the runoff to thank him for his support. Trump responded “I think so” when asked if he would campaign for her, but noted he also liked Norman and other candidates in the race, saying, “I mean, they’re all Trumpers.”

Also:

MADISON, Wis: Moderate Democrat **David Crowley** won the Wisconsin primary for governor, defeating a democratic socialist who fell short of trying to deliver another win for progressives in a battleground state.

Crowley, who is vying to become Wisconsin’s first Black governor, pitched himself as the candidate

best positioned to win in November against Republican **US Rep Tom Tiffany**, who is endorsed by President **Donald Trump**.

Crowley narrowly defeated democratic socialist Francesca Hong, who was hoping to ride the wave of recent victories by progressive candidates, including **Abdul El-Sayed** in neighboring Michigan’s U.S. Senate race last week.

His win was the movement’s first major success in a purple state. It also fed fears in the party’s leaders that such candidates, farther afield and often carrying political baggage of past stances such as defunding the police, would struggle to beat Republicans and imperil the party’s hopes of recapturing control of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House.



President-elect and former Supreme Court president Andras Baka delivers a speech after being elected President of the Republic during the extraordinary plenary session of the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest, Hungary on Aug 11. (AP)

Hungary’s Parliament taps András Baka as president as part of Orbán-era purge

BUDAPEST, Hungary, Aug 12, (AP): Hungary’s Parliament elected former Supreme Court chief justice András Baka as president on Tuesday as the country’s new government dismantles power structures left behind by former Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

Lawmakers with the governing Fidesz party elected Baka in a secret ballot with 140 votes for and six votes against with no abstentions, while Orbán’s far-right Fidesz party boycotted the vote.

Baka is expected to be sworn in on Aug 19. The role of president in Hungary is largely ceremonial, though the president does have the power to send bills back to lawmakers or to the Constitutional Court for review.

Prime Minister Peter Magyar’s government has argued that the purge of officials appointed during Orbán’s time in office is necessary to restore democratic norms and institutional integrity that were eroded during his tenure.

Orbán and Fidesz have accused the new government of “tyrannical” policies, which Magyar and Tisza deny.

In comments in Parliament following his election, Baka criticized the performance of Orbán’s four successive governments and said one of the biggest challenges facing Hungary was the deep social and political polarization during the former leader’s 16 years in power.

Baka added that while past legal and financial abuses must be investigated and prosecuted and democratic institutions restored, political change in Hungary should not come through “revenge.”

“This country cannot build a common future while its citizens see each other as enemies,” he said. “Political change should not mean that from now on people will have to be afraid, be silent, or feel like outsiders in their own country.”

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

The new government has suspended the news service of Hungary’s public television and radio - which Magyar has argued served as a “propaganda factory” for Orbán’s party - and closed Hungary’s Sovereignty Protection Office, an authority seen by Orbán’s opponents as a tool for intimidating critics and silencing independent media.

It has also made judicial reforms, set up an office aimed at investigating financial abuses under the Orbán government and imposed a 12-year term limit on lawmakers and an 8-year limit for prime ministers.

Nighttime blitz damages Russia’s Black Sea naval stronghold: Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine, Aug 12, (AP): Ukrainian anti-ship missiles, jet-powered aerial drones and sea drones blitzed a major Russian naval base on the Black Sea coast in a “unique” nighttime operation, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Wednesday.



Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, and Russian Pacific Fleet Commander-in-Chief Admiral Viktor Liina attend a meeting with navy officers on board of the Varyag missile cruiser of the Pacific Fleet during a military exercise near Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, on Sakhalin Island, Russia on Aug 12. (AP)

Cutting-edge drones developed by Kyiv since Russia invaded more than four years ago have repeatedly targeted Russian ships in the Black Sea, including warships and oil tankers. Both countries have Black Sea shorelines.

Ukraine’s uncrewed fleet has succeeded in limiting the movements of Russia’s once-dominant Black Sea navy, Kyiv officials say, in one of the country’s biggest accomplishments of the war.

But Ukrainian officials reckon that Russian President Vladimir Putin is bent on prosecuting the invasion, despite his bigger army’s slow and costly progress on the battlefield and U.S. diplomatic efforts to find a settlement.

Putin is planning “an additional rapid mobilization of several hundred thousand Russians by the end of the year,” Zelenskyy said on social media late Tuesday, citing Ukrainian intelligence reports.

Those reports have also said recently that Russia is expanding production of ballistic missiles and jet-powered drones, both of which are hard for Ukrainian air defenses to counter.

Meanwhile, Ukraine is also trying to scale up its weapons manufacturing through agreements with partner countries, as both countries apparently plan to fight on.

The Ukrainian military “carried out a unique operation targeting the naval base in Novorossiysk - the last major stronghold of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea,” Zelenskyy said in a social media post Wednesday.

The attack struck air defenses, piers and other port infrastructure in

the Krasnodar region city, he added.

Krasnodar region Gov. Veniamin Kondratyev said that hundreds of Ukrainian drones attacked Novorossiysk, Anapa and Gelendzhik and the Temryuk district of the region overnight.

Russian air defenses downed more than 500 Ukrainian drones, the Defense Ministry in Moscow said.

In Novorossiysk, an eight-year old child was killed in the attack, and a person wounded when his house in the Temryuk region was hit later died in hospital, Kondratyev said. He added that 12 other people in the region were wounded.

Debris from downed drones fell on the territory of four industrial plants and 21 residential buildings, according to Kondratyev, but officials gave no details of any damage.

Novorossiysk is also home to a key international oil terminal. The Grushovaya oil transshipment complex near Novorossiysk is one of the largest transshipment hubs in southern Russia for oil and petroleum products.

Last February, the US State Department expressed its displeasure

about Ukraine’s attacks on Novorossiysk, saying they have impacted US oil interests in Kazakhstan.

Also:

MOSCOW: Russian President **Vladimir Putin** on Wednesday threatened retaliation for Russian seizures of its commercial vessels, describing them as “piracy.”

Speaking on a visit to a Russian warship that was taking part in a naval exercise in the Pacific, Putin described the Western moves to detain vessels linked to Russia as a breach of international maritime law.

“It’s nothing but piracy and robbery,” Putin said. “If this is done, we will be forced to respond in kind.”

He added that the Russian response wouldn’t necessarily come in the waters where the Russian ships were seized, noting that Moscow could retaliate “in any area where we see it as necessary and appropriate,” including in the Pacific.

The Pacific Fleet chief, Adm. **Viktor Liina**, reported to Putin that the navy was ready to start inspections of the commercial ships serving the “unfriendly nations.”

Asia

Indonesia ferry fire evacuates dozens, 1 dead: Crews rescued 172 people and recovered the body of a passenger from a ferry that caught fire in rough seas Wednesday near the Indonesian tourist island of Bali, authorities said.

The fire started about 4:15 am while the Putri Yasmin ferry was en route from Padang Bai port in Bali to Lembar port on the neighboring island of Lombok in West Nusa Tenggara province, according to the search and rescue office in Mataram, the provincial capital.

The agency received an emergency report almost half an hour later and immediately deployed personnel and rescue vessels.

“Our top priority is the safety of all passengers and crew members,” said Muhammad Hariyadi, who heads the Mataram Search and Rescue Office. (AP)



Tropical storm weakens, departs Japan: Business in the greater Tokyo area was almost back to normal Wednesday after a tropical storm weakened to a depression and left Japan, with transportation operating normally and power restored to most homes.

Before becoming a depression, Tropical Storm Chanchom made landfall in southern Ibaraki prefecture late Tuesday. It was off the northern coast of Kyoto late morning Wednesday while moving away from the country, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

The tropical storm hit Japan days after Typhoon Dolphin created havoc in parts of southern Japan, paralyzing traffic and sending hundreds to take shelter.

After weakening to a tropical storm, Dolphin killed 10 people in the Philippines and caused flooding in China, forcing hundreds of thousands of people to relocate. (AP)



In this photo made from video released by the Indonesian National Search and Rescue Agency (BASARNAS), smoke billows from a passenger ferry Putri Yasmin after it caught fire while traveling from the tourist island of Bali to neighboring island of Lombok, in the waters of Lombok Strait, Indonesia on Aug 12. (AP)

Thai govt orders gun control review: The Thai government on Wednesday pledged to tighten gun controls and crack down on illegal firearms after two deadly shootings near Bangkok in less than a week renewed pressure on authorities to curb gun violence.

The country has one of the highest rates of gun ownership in Asia despite its fairly restrictive gun laws. The two recent shootings, both in Nonthaburi province northwest of the capital Bangkok, have intensified calls for tougher enforcement and tighter controls on firearms.

A student opened fire at his high school and family home on Friday, killing at least eight people and injuring more than 20 before apparently taking his own life, according to police. Three days later, a former lawmaker was arrested after a shooting at a government office that killed one person and injured another. (AP)

Ex-Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, architect of growth, dies at 97

BEIJING, Aug 12, (AP): Former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji who helped ignite China’s explosive economic boom by forcing wrenching change on state industry in the 1990s and leading the country into the World Trade Organization, has died of illness, state media reported Wednesday. He was 97.

Zhu died in Beijing at around 11 am on Wednesday, the official news agency Xinhua reported.

Once sent into rural exile to do manual labor for praising reforms in other communist countries, Zhu pushed through a dizzying array of changes as premier, China’s top economic post, from 1998 to 2003 under former President Jiang Zemin.

Zhu clashed with Communist Party conservatives and state industry bosses as he pushed state-owned companies to become efficient and profitable. That cost millions of layoffs, but helped propel China to overtake Japan as the second-largest economy behind the United States in 2010.

Building on former leader Deng Xiaoping’s 1979 reforms, Zhu is credited with supplying the resourcefulness and tenacity



Former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji stands during a parade commemorating the 70th anniversary of Japan’s surrender during World War II held in front of Tiananmen Gate in Beijing on Sept. 3, 2015. (AP)

to push through history-making changes such as China’s WTO membership, which helped to transform China into the world’s biggest exporter.

Those changes helped to keep economic growth above 8% a year from 2000 to 2010, peaking at 14.2% in 2007.

Named premier in 1998 at age 69. His demanding style earned him the nicknames Boss and Zhu Fengzi, or Madman Zhu.

NZ Premier Luxon survives another leadership vote

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Aug 12, (AP): New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said Wednesday that he survived a leadership vote prompted by a challenge from his defense minister less than three months before an election.

The vote took place during a hastily convened meeting of Luxon’s center-right National Party lawmakers at Parliament in Wellington, which was held behind closed doors and ran for more than three hours. Luxon then emerged flanked by his lawmakers to give a brief statement and departed without taking any questions from reporters.

“There was a confidence vote in my leadership this morning at our caucus meeting,” he said. “I had the full support of our caucus and our caucus is united and it is determined to win this election.”

Luxon didn’t say how many lawmakers had voted for him to continue in the job, although such ballots are usually a secret.

Hours later, he said in a statement that the vote was prompted by a leadership challenge from his defense minister, Chris Penk, adding that he had removed Penk from his ministerial portfolios. On Wednesday night, Luxon’s office distributed a statement from Penk, in which the challenger said he would quit Parlia-

N.Korea launches missile toward sea ahead of US-S.Korea army drills

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug 12, (AP): North Korea on Wednesday performed its second ballistic missile test in less than a week, its neighbors said, a likely protest of the upcoming South Korea-U.S. military drills that North Korea views as an invasion rehearsal.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said a ballistic missile fired from the North’s eastern coastal Wonsan area around 6 a.m. flew more than 700 kilometers (435 miles). The Japanese Defense Ministry also detected the launch, saying the weapon landed in waters outside its exclusive economic zone, between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

The launches, within days of each other, were seen as part of North Korea’s extended run of weapons tests as the country has refused to return to talks with the U.S. and South Korea for years. Experts say North Korea often uses its rivals’ military training as a pretext to boost its own testing activities.

South Korea’s military said it remains ready to repel any provocation by Pyongyang in cooperation with the United States. South Korea’s national security council called North Korean ballistic missile launches “acts of provocation” and urged the North to halt them immediately.

Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi told reporters that Japan



A TV screen shows a file image of North Korea’s missile launch during a news program at Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea on Aug 12. (AP)

strongly protested the North Korean launch through their embassies in Beijing. “It’s a serious problem that affects the safety of the Japanese people,” he said. The latest launch came two days after South Korea and the United States announced they will kick off their annual large-scale military drills on Aug. 17 to beef up readiness against North Korean threats. North Korea has previously re-

sponded to the Ulchi Freedom Shield training and other major South Korea-US military exercises with provocative weapons tests and harsh rhetoric. The U.S. and South Korea have repeatedly said their training is defensive in nature.

After last year’s Ulchi Freedom Shield training exercises began, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said the drills showed the US and South Korea’s “will to ignite a war” and claimed they have grown more provocative than before, which has prompted North Korea to respond with “proactive and overwhelming” countermeasures.

On Aug. 6, South Korea, the US and Japan detected the launch of a short-range ballistic missile from North Korea in what was the North’s first ballistic weapons testing activity since late June. North Korea didn’t confirm the reported launch, though it usually releases details of weapons tests a day later.

Multiple UN Security Council resolutions ban North Korea from launching ballistic missiles. But North Korea has ramped up ballistic and other weapons testing activities to expand its nuclear and missile arsenals since Kim’s high-stakes diplomacy with US President Donald Trump fell apart in 2019.

‘I had the full support of our caucus’



New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, (center), speaks to reporters at Parliament in Wellington, New Zealand, on Wednesday, Aug. 12 2026, after a leadership vote among his own party’s lawmakers. (AP)

ment altogether.

The vote was the second Luxon had called about his own leadership since April and leaves lingering questions coming so close to the election scheduled for Nov 7.

The April vote followed drops in polling for National, while this week’s followed recent public remarks Luxon had made on various issues that some in his party saw as gaffes.

On Tuesday, the leader took the rare step of disclosing on social me-

dia that he faced renewed rumblings about his leadership, and announcing he would call a meeting of his lawmakers Wednesday to resolve it.

“It is my firm belief that division and disunity are a major distraction only 90 days out from the election,” he wrote on X. “I also believe this distraction is unfair to the New Zealand people, and dedicated National Party candidates, supporters and volunteers, when there is so much at stake.”

National has led a right-wing coali-

tion government since New Zealand’s 2023 election. Luxon, a former airline executive who entered Parliament in 2020, had led the party since 2021.

Details of who had prompted the leadership rumblings at first remained a mystery.

Nobody publicly confirmed plans for a leadership bid or expressed intentions to oust their leader, and those whose names were reported speculatively by news outlets denied it.

Several hours after the vote, Luxon named Penk as his challenger and said his now former minister’s position was “untenable.”

Penk, 47, was also the minister for building and construction, and responsible for the security services and space portfolios. A former lawyer who served in Australia’s navy, Penk entered Parliament in 2017.

He didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment on Wednesday, but in the statement Luxon’s office attributed to him, Penk said he had “reflected on my political future with my family tonight” and would not seek reelection in November, effectively ending his political career.

“I am proud of the progress I have contributed to as a Minister this term,” Penk’s statement said. “However, I have decided it is the time for me to seek other opportunities to serve New Zealand.”

Quake response strains Colombia’s new government and rescuers

PEREIRA, Colombia, Aug 12, (AP): The search for survivors in the rubble of Colombia’s powerful earthquake grew more desperate on Wednesday, two days after the quake brought down buildings, buckled roads and crushed cars.

The devastation has tested Colombia’s new President Abelardo de la Espriella and his government as it scrambles to respond to the natural disaster and civil society as it pushes to provide aid to the vulnerable communities most affected by the quake.

By Tuesday, de la Espriella said the 7.4 magnitude earthquake had killed at least 181 people and left 2,595 more injured in the west of the country. He said at least 195 remained missing, but civilian-run databases put that number closer to 4,000.

Teams continued to pick through the rubble overnight in the hardest-hit cities of Cali, Pereira, Manizales and Quibdo, as time ticked away for victims to be found - and rescued - alive.

Aid agencies consider the first 48 to 72 hours crucial for retrieving survivors, though that threshold can be



Rescue workers carry a survivor Daniela Largo after pulling her from the rubble the day after an earthquake struck Pereira, Colombia on Aug 11. (AP)

extended if they have access to food and water. There have been scenes of joy amid the devastation: rescuers pulling a dust-covered baby through a crack in a concrete wall, and on-lookers cheering as teams lifted a

woman onto a stretcher.

In many areas, the official response to the devastation has been complicated by the ongoing crises of deep poverty and civil warfare that has forced displacement for decades.

Landslide in Mumbai kills six, injures four

MUMBAI, India, Aug 12, (AP): Heavy monsoon rains triggered a landslide in a densely populated neighborhood in India’s financial capital, Mumbai, early Wednesday, killing at least six people and injuring four others, authorities said.

The landslide struck before dawn when a section of hillside collapsed onto two or three homes in a tightly packed cluster of houses in Mumbai’s suburb of Ghatkopar, said Tanaji Kambl, a civic official.

Authorities immediately launched a rescue operation involving firefighters, police, the National Disaster Response Force and civic officials but efforts were hampered by narrow access lanes that prevented the use of heavy machinery, officials said.

Rescue teams pulled at least 10 people from the debris and rushed them to a government hospital. Six people, including two children and two teenagers, were declared dead on arrival, Tanaji said.

Africa

44 dead as ferry capsizes in Zimbabwe: The death toll has risen to 44 a day after an overloaded ferry capsized on Lake Kariba in Zimbabwe, police said Wednesday.

Police said on X that the bodies had been retrieved from the lake that forms part of the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia. But police did not update how many people were injured or missing after Tuesday’s disaster involving a ferry operated by a government agency.

The ferry capsized while carrying at least 114 adult passengers and five crew members, according to Zimbabwe’s disaster management agency. The agency said Tuesday that 77 people had been rescued. (AP)



10 Nigerian police officers killed: A gunbattle between rebels and Nigerian security forces has left 10 police officers dead in a remote part of the country’s conflict-battered north, authorities said Tuesday.

The clash, which occurred on Monday in the Sakaba council area of Kebbi state, also left two civilians and 17 of the rebels dead, police spokesperson Bashir Usman said in a statement.



Nigerian soldiers ride on an armored personnel carrier during Eid al-Fitr celebrations in Maiduguri, in Borno state, Nigeria on Aug 8, 2013. (AP)

The rebels were heavily armed and riding on motorcycles when they were intercepted by security forces, said Usman. They were seen close to the border with Zamfara state, where armed gangs who frequently raid Nigerian towns and villages are concentrated.

“Tragically, we lost 10 gallant police personnel in the engagement, while two others sustained injuries and are receiving medical attention,” the police spokesman said. (AP)

Candlelight vigil in Islamabad honors 10 climbers killed on Broad Peak

ISLAMABAD, Aug 12, (AP): Mountaineers, diplomats and members of civil society gathered in Pakistan’s capital Tuesday evening for a candlelight vigil honoring 10 climbers killed in an avalanche on Broad Peak, as rescuers described an arduous mission to bring their fellow climbers down from one of the world’s highest mountains.

Rain fell as mourners lit candles and prayed for the dead, shielding the flickering flames from the downpour as they gathered on the open lawns of a sports complex in Islamabad to remember the climbers who never returned from the mountain.

The vigil came days after search teams ended an operation that recovered the remains of eight climbers. Two bodies have not yet been recovered.

Among the dead was renowned British-Nepali mountaineer Nirmal Purja. Nepal lost six climbers in the July 30 disaster, when a massive avalanche struck an international expedition.

Nepal’s ambassador to Pakistan, Rita Dhital, joined the vigil and paid tribute to the climbers as candles



Candles burn next to pictures of climbers who lost their lives on Broad Peak during a candlelight vigil in their memory, in Islamabad, Pakistan on Aug 11. (AP)

were lit in their memory. She recalled meeting Purja at her Islamabad home before the expedition and said he would often tell her, “Giving up is not in my blood.”

She thanked Pakistani climbers and rescuers who went onto the mountain in dangerous weather to

search for the missing climbers and recover their bodies. Dhital particularly praised renowned Pakistani mountaineer Sirbaz Khan, who led the recovery team, as well as the Alpine Club of Pakistan, the military and government officials involved in the operation.



Residents of a slum affected by a landslide gather behind rescue workers in Mumbai, India on Aug 12. (AP)

Oil price up by \$8.79 to \$84.06 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Price of Kuwaiti oil rose by USD 8.79 to reach USD 84.06 per barrel (pb) in Tuesday's trading, compared with USD 75.27 in Friday's trading, according to Kuwait Petroleum Corpo-

ration (KPC) on Wednesday.

In global markets, Brent crude rose by 95 cents to reach USD 88.67 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate increased by USD 1.04 to reach USD 83.17 pb.

Business

Net profit rises 19% to KD 24.2 million in the first half of 2026

Warba Bank continues growth trajectory & announces H1 2026 financial results

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Warba Bank announced its financial results for the first half of 2026, continuing to deliver strong financial and operational performance that reflects the success of its long-term strategy to strengthen its position as a leading Islamic financial institution capable of achieving sustainable growth and delivering value to customers, shareholders, and other stakeholders.

The results come as the bank continues to implement its strategic plans focused on innovation, digital transformation, product and service development, and operational efficiency, while keeping pace with rapid developments in the banking sector and responding to the evolving needs and expectations of customers.

Warba Bank recorded net profit of KD 24.2 million in the first half of 2026, compared with KD 20.3 million in the same period last year, representing a 19% increase. Earnings per share (EPS) reached 4.29 fils. Net operating income increased by 21% to KD 59.2 million, compared with KD 48.9 million in the same period last year.

The bank also recorded growth across key financial indicators. Total assets reached KD 6.2 billion, depositors' accounts stood at KD 3.6 billion, financing receivables increased by 9% to KD 4.3 billion compared with the same period last year, while total equity attributable to shareholders reached KD 820.3 million.

These results reflect the bank's continued implementation of its strategy and its ability to balance growth with operational efficiency while maintaining asset quality and financial strength.

Al-Sayer: Results Reflect a Clear Vision and Continued Effort

Hamad Mosaed Al-Sayer, Chairman of Warba Bank, said: "The results for the first half of 2026 reflect the success of the approach adopted by the bank over recent years, based on building a modern Islamic financial institution that combines innovation, operational efficiency, and adherence to best banking practices."

He added: "During the past period, Warba Bank continued to make tangible progress across several areas, including financial performance, service development, and enhancement of the customer banking experience. This progress was positively reflected in the bank's results and market position."

Al-Sayer emphasized that the bank continues to focus on achieving sustainable growth that responds to economic shifts and enhances its ability to create long-term value for shareholders and customers. He noted that the strength of the bank's financial position provides a solid foundation for further progress in the coming period, particularly as the bank continues to enhance operational efficiency and develop its products and services.

He concluded: "We look to the future with confidence, supported by a distinguished team, a broad customer base, and a clear strategy focused on innovation, sustainability, and responsible growth."

Digital Transformation and Innovation at the Core of the Strategy

During the first half of 2026, Warba Bank continued to increase its investments in financial technology and digital transformation as part of its vision to provide a seamless and integrated banking experience that meets customer expectations.

The period saw the launch and development of a range of digital solu-



Hamad Al-Sayer



Shaheen Al-Ghanem

Hamad Mosaed Al-Sayer:

"We remain committed to building a modern Islamic financial institution that combines innovation, operational efficiency, and adherence to best banking practices."

"The bank continues to focus on achieving sustainable growth that keeps pace with economic changes and enhances its ability to create long-term value for shareholders and customers."

Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem:

"The H1 2026 results reflect the success of the bank's strategy in achieving balanced and sustainable growth."

"We continue to invest in innovation, digital transformation, national talent development, and strengthening our operational capabilities."

"We continue to focus on improving the quality of banking services, developing innovative products, and enhancing the customer experience, reinforcing Warba Bank's position as one of the leading Islamic banks in Kuwait and the region."

tions and services designed to facilitate access to banking services and enable customers to complete transactions efficiently, quickly, and securely.

The bank also continued to upgrade its technology infrastructure and strengthen its digital capabilities to keep pace with rapid developments in the financial sector and ensure readiness to capitalize on future opportunities. These efforts contributed to strengthening the bank's position as an innovative financial institution while supporting the continued development of services that enhance the customer experience with greater flexibility and convenience.

Diversifying Revenue Streams and Strengthening Investment Activities

During H1 2026, Warba Bank continued to implement its strategy to diver-

sify revenue sources and increase the contribution of banking and investment activities to sustainable growth.

The bank focused on capitalizing on available opportunities in local and regional markets while maintaining a balanced approach to risk management and achieving optimal returns. The period also witnessed continued development of the bank's investment portfolio and expansion of the financing and investment solutions offered to clients.

These efforts reflect the bank's progress in building an integrated business model capable of balancing growth and sustainability while strengthening long-term competitiveness.

Sustainability and Social Responsibility: An Ongoing Commitment

During the first half of 2026, Warba Bank continued to implement a range of sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, driven by its belief in its role as an active partner in supporting society and contributing to sustainable development.

The bank's efforts included supporting educational, youth, and environmental programs, as well as initiatives aimed at promoting financial literacy and banking awareness across different segments of society.

The bank also continued to integrate sustainability principles into its operations, strengthening its positive impact on society and the environment while supporting long-term development objectives. These efforts align with the bank's vision of balancing financial performance with social responsibility and contributing to a better future for coming generations.

Al-Ghanem: Continuing to Invest in the Future and Operational Excellence

Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank, said: "The results for the first half of 2026 reflect the success of the bank's strategy in achieving balanced and sustainable growth, supported by the strong performance of its core business lines and the continued development of banking services and solutions provided to our clients."

Al-Ghanem added: "We continue to invest in innovation, digital transformation, national talent development, and operational capabilities to support our strategic objectives and enable us to maintain growth in the coming years."

He reaffirmed that the bank will continue to focus on improving service quality, developing innovative products, and enhancing the customer experience to strengthen its position as a leading Islamic bank in Kuwait and the region.

He concluded: "We look to the future with optimism and confidence, supported by a strong financial position, a clear vision, and an outstanding team. We reiterate our commitment to continuing our journey of growth and excellence, delivering sustainable value to our clients and shareholders while supporting the Kuwaiti economy."

Key Operational Indicators Compared with H1 2025

Net Profit: Up 19% to KD 24.2 million.

Financing Receivables: Up 9% to KD 4.3 billion.

Depositors' Accounts: Up 4% to KD 3.6 billion.

Total Assets: Up 2% to KD 6.2 billion.

30 trainees completed training across 22 Zain stores

Zain Summer Program wraps up 5-week journey of learning, innovation, and youth empowerment

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Zain Kuwait wrapped-up the seventh season of its Summer Program, following a five-week internship experience that brought together 30 trainees, including university students and fresh graduates, across 22 Zain stores. The 2026 season further reinforced the program's position as one of the leading internship platforms in Kuwait's private sector, offering a blend of hands-on work, innovation experiences, and youth empowerment skills.

Zain held a closing ceremony at its HQ in Shuwaikh to celebrate all participants in recognition of their efforts and commitment throughout the program. The ceremony also honored outstanding trainees across several categories, including top performers in sales, along with other categories that reflected initiative, dedication, and excellence during the training experience.

In its seventh year, the program offered a comprehensive field-training journey across Zain stores in different areas of Kuwait. Trainees worked side by side with the company's customer-facing employees, giving them the opportunity to gain first-hand insight into the work of different departments and practice a range of skills, including customer engagement, understanding customer needs, and marketing products.

The 2026 season was one of the program's most successful to date, attracting strong interest during the registration phase with more than 2,400 youngsters applying. More than 600 eligible applicants were interviewed, before the final group of trainees was selected to take part in the experience in line with the program's objectives and the nature of field training inside Zain stores.

Throughout the program, trainees gained practical experience in sales, marketing, customer service, professional communication, and teamwork. They also developed skills in discipline, responsibility, self-confidence, and problem-solving in everyday situations, strengthening their readiness to transition from academic life to the job market, while adding valuable experience to their CVs.

The program was not limited to



Zain officials with the seventh cohort.



Recognizing one of the program's top-performers.



Recognizing a trainee.

field training inside stores. It also featured a range of additional activities, including an orientation session, workshops, and training sessions delivered by INJAZ to develop personal and professional skills and enhance trainees' readiness for the job market. Interactive and recreational activities also helped build team spirit, strengthen bonds between participants, and create a positive environment that combined practical learning with constructive engagement.

Trainees also took part in a workshop on the practical use of artificial intelligence in study, work, and everyday life. The workshop explored how AI tools can support innovation, idea analysis, presentation development, and preparation for

project pitches before the judges panel, while emphasizing the importance of responsible use and the role of these tools in supporting thinking rather than replacing it.

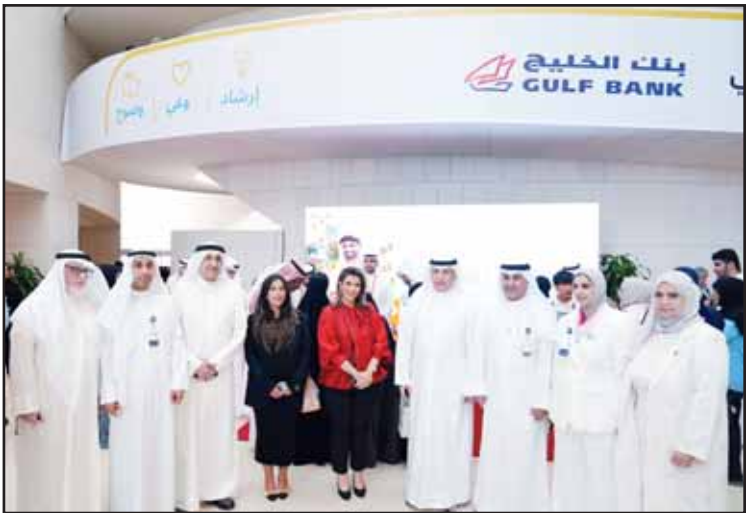
The final challenge was one of the program's key highlights, with trainees working in teams to develop practical youth-led ideas linked to Zain's areas of focus. The challenge centered on four main tracks: digital skills, sustainability, youth empowerment, and digital responsibility.

During the closing ceremony, the teams presented their projects, outlining the challenge each idea aimed to address, the target audience, implementation mechanism, expected impact, and success indicators. Their presentations were

also supported by visual concepts and early prototypes that brought the ideas to life.

The Zain Summer Program reflects the company's belief in the importance of investing in youth potential and providing practical opportunities that help young people discover their capabilities, develop their skills, and gain a realistic understanding of the workplace.

The program continues to serve as one of Zain's leading annual platforms for empowering Kuwaiti youth, strengthening their readiness for the job market, and preparing a generation equipped with the confidence, experience, and digital and professional skills needed to contribute effectively to the workforce and the digital economy.



Gulf Bank's participation in Kuwait University's Orientation Forum for new students.

Gulf Bank showcases the benefits of 'red' account

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: As part of its commitment to supporting youth and empowering them financially, Gulf Bank participated in Kuwait University's orientation forum for new students. During the event, the Bank introduced new students and their parents to a range of banking services designed specifically for young people, while also promoting financial awareness as part of its continued support for the "Let's Be Aware" campaign.

Gulf Bank's booth attracted strong interest from visitors, with the sales team highlighting the benefits of the red account, which is specifically designed to meet the needs of students and youth and complement their lifestyle. The team also presented the red plus prepaid card, which provides cardholders with a unique range of benefits, discounts, and exclusive offers.

Students who transfer their student allowances and will receive a red plus card free of charge for five years, in addition to 20,000 welcome points—equivalent to KD 60—through Gulf Points, Kuwait's most rewarding loyalty program. They will also receive a KD 10 voucher from Trolley and benefit from several other exclusive offers from Oula and Trolley.

Existing customers who hold a red account and obtain a red plus prepaid card will receive 5,000 welcome points, a 50% discount on the Tala-bat application every Monday, and a 50% discount on two tickets per day

at VOX Cinemas and Cinescape.

The journey continues beyond graduation, as graduates will receive an instant gift of 5,000 points upon receiving their graduation allowance, followed by an additional 20,000 points when converting their red account into a salary account and obtaining a complimentary credit card.

Gulf Bank's team also emphasized the importance of sound financial planning, responsible spending, protecting banking information, and raising awareness of the risks of electronic fraud. These efforts support the objectives of the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, which seeks to promote financial literacy and encourage responsible financial behavior across all segments of society, particularly among young people.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a strong presence at events that bring it closer to young people, reflecting its belief in the importance of supporting students at the beginning of their university journey. The Bank aims to provide them with banking solutions that meet their needs while strengthening their financial awareness and helping them make sound financial decisions that contribute to building their future.

The Bank's participation in the forum forms part of an integrated strategy to promote financial inclusion across all segments of society, strengthen engagement with young people, and introduce them to its innovative banking solutions and services.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): State-owned Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) posted on Wednesday a net profit of KD 2.155 billion (USD 6.9 billion) for the fiscal year 2025/2026, its strongest in three years, chief executive Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah said on Wednesday.

The last fiscal year had been "exceptional by every measure," despite the national oil sector having been dealt "the strongest blow," in the form of Iranian attacks on key infrastructure since the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, praising the resilience of industry staff in the face of adversity.

The turn of events showcased with clarity the ability of Kuwaitis to persevere, driven by an unbridled sense of national ardor, in the same manner their predecessors had navigated through the Iraqi invasion of 1990, he

underlined.

The three-year net profit high comes at a time of immense challenges that plagued the last fiscal year, he said, citing the drop in global oil prices and the ramifications of the Iranian onslaught, which triggered a sharp decline in crude output.

The national oil industry still managed to chalk up key accomplishments despite the unrest, including an expansion in offshore oil exploration work and a "greater presence," in the global petrochemicals industry, while the record USD 16 billion "Shaheen," pipeline deal that marks the biggest foreign investment in Kuwait's history was another case in point, added the official.

Results for the first half of 2026

ABK - Egypt achieves EGP 3.1 billion Net Profit

CAIRO, Aug 12: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait - Egypt (ABK-Egypt) announced outstanding financial results for the first half of 2026, with Net Profit recording EGP 3.1 billion for the period ending June 30, marking remarkable growth of 30% compared to EGP 2.4 billion for the same period last year. And Profit Before Tax increased by 40% compared to the same period last year to reach EGP 4.5 billion. Net Interest Income grew by 34% to reach EGP 5.1 billion, up from EGP 3.8 billion in the first half of 2025.

Total Assets grew in six months by 10% to reach EGP 196.7 billion, compared to EGP 178.1 billion in December 2025, Total Customers Deposits increased by 15% to EGP 161.6 billion compared to EGP 141 billion at the end of 2025. Meanwhile, the Bank's Total Gross Loans Portfolio increased by 7% to reach EGP 93.5 billion, compared to EGP 87.6 billion in 2025.

Commenting on these strong results, **Mr. Ali Marafi**, Chairman of ABK-Egypt, said: "The outstanding performance of ABK-Egypt during the first half of the current year marks another milestone in the Bank's track record of achievements since the acquisition by Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait Group in 2015. It also reflects our continued efforts to achieve the Group's vision of maximizing shareholders' equity. During the coming period, we will continue to build and develop in line with our ambitious strategy and vision to strengthen our position among leading banks in the Egyptian market."

Marafi also added: "The Bank continued to reinforce its positive impact in the communities where we operate over the course of the year by launching impactful initiatives demonstrating our commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility. Our commitment to making positive change is one that we have proudly upheld since we started our operations in Egypt and is heavily supported by the Bank's employees through their active participation in various volunteering programs that aim at achieving sustainable development through supporting and integrating vulnerable segments.

He continued, "These recent results showcase



Ali Marafi, Chairman of ABK-Egypt



Khaled El Salawy, CEO and Managing Director of ABK-Egypt

the Bank's unwavering efforts in providing the best banking products and services, as well as its commitment to the highest standards of innovation and customer service. The Bank consistently strives to strengthen its position in the Egyptian banking sector and is firmly committed to the principles of governance, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility (CSR), based on our belief that success is not only measured by financial performance, but also by the positive and lasting impact we create in our community.

In conclusion, Marafi stated "I would like to thank the Bank's executive management team and employees whose commitment has made our aspirations and ambitious plans achievable."

On his part, **Mr. Khaled El Salawy**, CEO and Managing Director of ABK-Egypt, stated: "The Bank's strong performance reinforced its solid financial position and its ability to navigate challenging market conditions. Our strategy has proven effective in mitigating risks and delivering strong growth rates across all key performance indicators amid the evolving local and global economic landscape."

service to customers.

International Awards

ABK-Egypt recently received four prestigious awards, including three from International Business Magazine for 2026 where El Salawy, was awarded "Best Visionary Banking Leader" in recognition of his pivotal role in driving the Bank's sustainable growth, fostering a culture of innovation and development, and enhancing institutional performance in line with global banking best practices.

Additionally, the Bank was honored with the "Best Corporate Banking Services" and "Best Retail Bank" awards, reaffirming its excellence in delivering outstanding banking services to both corporate and retail customers. ABK-Egypt also received Deutsche Bank's Client Excellence Award 2025 in recognition of the strong partnership between the two banks.

This award reflects the Bank's outstanding performance, operational excellence, and the successful collaboration in relationship management, cash management, trade finance, and institutional banking services, as well as the delivery of international client services in line with the highest global standards. The recognition further reinforces the mutual trust between the two banks and supports their continued commitment to achieving greater shared success while enhancing the quality of services provided to customers.

Furthermore, during H1 2026, ABK-Egypt and Mastercard announced a strategic collaboration, unlocking a new phase of cutting-edge consumer, commercial, and digital payment solutions.

This collaboration supports the Bank's digital transformation journey, enabling it to expand its range of services to meet the evolving needs of a broader customer base and deliver innovative solutions and a seamless, exceptional banking experience. It also supports Egypt's vision to transition towards a digital economy, while enabling customers to benefit from the enhanced digital capabilities offered by Mastercard's solutions across various levels.

Boursa Kuwait closes higher

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Wednesday's trading session in positive territory, with its All-Share Index gaining 24.61 points, or 0.28%, to close at 8,860.63 points.

Trading volume reached 267.7 million shares through 19,413 transactions, with a total value of KD 67.8 million, equivalent to approximately USD 221 million.

The Main Market Index advanced 26.36 points, or 0.30%, to 8,893.90 points. A total of 179.1 million shares changed hands through 10,514 transactions valued at KD 31.7 million, or about USD 103.3 million.

The Premier Market Index rose 25.51 points, or 0.27%, to close at 9,313.45 points. Trading volume stood at 88.6 million shares across 8,899 transactions, with a value of KD 36 million, equivalent to approximately USD 117.3 million.

The Main 50 Index climbed 34.84 points, or 0.34%, to reach 10,374.77 points. Some 134 million shares were traded through 7,420 transactions valued at KD 24.3 million, or approximately USD 79.2 million.

4% interim cash dividend

Al Mutajara Real Estate profit rises 22.8% to KD 4.72 million

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Mr. Abdulfatah M. R. Marafie, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Al Mutajara Real Estate Company K.S.C.C. (a subsidiary company owned 79.2% by The Commercial Real Estate Company – Al Tijaria), stated that the company's business results for the financial period ended 30 June 2026 resulted in achieving net profits amounting to KD 4,720,005 (Four Million Seven hundred Twenty thousand and Five Kuwaiti Dinars), reflecting an increase of 22.8% compared to the same period of the previous year.

According to the financial results of the FirstHalf of 2026, Marafie stated that the achieved results reflect growth in the operational performance and notable growth in investment revenues, supported by the continued implementation of the company's strategy aimed at maintaining a diversified real estate and investment portfolio while enhancing operational efficiency. Regarding the financial indicators, the company witnessed notable improvement, as the growth in return on equity, return on assets, and return on the company's capital reached 18.9%, 30.8%, and 22.8% respectively, compared to the same period last year.

Accordingly, the Board of Directors has resolved to distribute interim cash dividends for the first half of 2026 at a rate of 4%, equivalent to 4 fils per share.

Mr. Marafie added that the Company continues to operate according to a balanced strategy based on diversifying its real estate investments in terms of size, nature, and geographical distribution, thereby balancing risks and returns while enhancing its financial sustainability. In line with this strategy, Mutajara has invested in an income-generating logistics and transportation centre in the State of Texas, USA.

The company also continues to implement its development plans across its real estate projects, most notably the expansion project of Al Ribab Complex, which aims



Abdulfatah M. R. Marafie, Chairman and CEO

to develop the complex's facilities and services through the addition of new leasable spaces, contributing to enhancing the experience of visitors and tenants while supporting the complex's position as an integrated commercial destination, in line with the company's future vision to develop its real estate assets and achieve sustainable long-term growth.

In conclusion, Mr. Abdulfatah M.R. Marafie prayed to Almighty God to protect Kuwait and its people from all harm and to bless Kuwait with lasting peace, safety, and stability under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah; and His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, may God preserve and protect them. He also expressed his deepest gratitude and appreciation to all shareholders, Board Members, and employees for their continuous support and dedicated efforts. He emphasized that Al Mutajara Real Estate Company will continue working towards strengthening its financial position and achieving its strategic objectives in a manner that delivers sustainable added value to shareholders.

Assets Under Management of KD 1.57 billion

Markaz records total revenue of KD 8.02 million for H1

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" (KSE: Markaz, Reuters: MARKZ.KW, Bloomberg: MARKAZ: KK) reported its financial results for H1-2026 with a Total Revenue of KD 8.02 million, as compared to KD 14.45 million in H1-2025. Q2 2026 made a strong recovery, fully compensating for the impact experienced in Q1 2026. Total revenue in Q2 2026 reached KD 10.68 million, compared to a negative revenue of KD 2.67 million in Q1 2026, resulting in a net profit of KD 6.79 million for Q2 2026, compared to a net loss of KD 6.76 million in Q1 2026 enabling the company to return to profitability and close H1 of the year with a net profit of KD 0.03 million (EPS: 0.07fils).

During H1-2026, market sentiment continued to be influenced by geopolitical developments across the region, resulting in heightened volatility across financial markets, especially in the GCC. Despite these challenges, Kuwait All Share Index remaining broadly stable. It is remarkable how well the GCC market withstood the geopolitical uncertainty, reflecting the preceding reforms and sound fiscal policies of all GCC countries. In addition, yields on sovereign GCC bonds were favorable, reflecting the world's faith in the region's resilience and optimism about its future prospects.

In Investment Banking, Markaz continued developing a pipeline of selective high-profile transactions, including providing valuation and financing advice to both corporates and high net worth family offices. The real estate portfolios in Kuwait and abroad continued to deliver stable occupancy levels, rental yields and collection ratios. The company is pursuing selective investment opportunities in private credit, private infrastructure and development financ-

ing. Assets Under Management (AUM) was KD 1.57 billion as of 30 June 2026, compared to KD 1.56 billion in the same period previous year. During the quarter, Markaz introduced 24-hour U.S. market access through its digital investment platform, iMarkaz Invest, enabling clients to monitor and trade eligible U.S. equities and ETFs beyond traditional market hours. This enhancement provides investors with greater flexibility to respond across time zones to economic news flows, geopolitical developments, and other market moving events as they unfold. Markaz continues to broaden its offerings across private markets, alternative investments and advisory services. The company's focus remains on strengthening institutional and high net worth client relationships while delivering investment solutions aligned with their long-term objectives.

Kuwait's largest loyalty program ... featuring over 900 local outlets

Best Al Yousifi joins the NBK Rewards Program

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: In line with its ongoing commitment to enriching its customers' banking experience and providing the best exclusive offers and premium rewards, National Bank of Kuwait announced that Best Al Yousifi has joined the NBK Rewards Loyalty Program.

Under this partnership, NBK offers its customers an exclusive opportunity to earn NBK Rewards points equivalent to 1% of the transaction value when shopping at Best Al Yousifi and spending KD 100 or more using any NBK Credit or Prepaid Card.

NBK customers can now enjoy a range of benefits when shopping at Best Al Yousifi, as they can use their accumulated NBK Rewards points to pay for all or part of their purchases instantly at participating outlets via point-of-sale (POS) terminals.

This initiative enhances the added value that NBK offers to its customers, enabling them to easily redeem their NBK Rewards points at a wide network of participating stores.

On this occasion, Shoug Al Ali – VP Head of Merchant Relations at NBK stated: "We are committed to building solid relationships with leading institutions across various sectors, and we leverage these partnerships to enhance our customers' banking experience by offering

Al-Ali:

- We leverage our relationships with leading institutions across various sectors to offer the top-notch deals and exclusive benefits to our customers.
- We continuously strive to widen our network of partners for the NBK Rewards Program to enrich our customers' banking experience.

top-notch deals, benefits, and discounts that elevate their experience to exceptional levels".

Al-Ali also added: "We continuously strive to widen our network of partners for the NBK Rewards Program to meet our customers' aspirations and diverse needs, while enhancing the value and benefits they receive when using NBK Credit and Prepaid Cards to shop at their favorite stores".

Moreover, Al-Ali emphasized that excellence and delivering the best banking experience to customers are integral to the Bank's culture, further noting that, thanks to extensive expertise gained over decades, NBK is well-equipped to understand customer needs, assess their goals, and exceed their expectations.

For his part, Mr. Wael Deeb, General Manager – Electronics Group at Best Al Yousifi, expressed his enthusiasm about the partnership, stating: "We are delighted to join the NBK Rewards Program, which reflects our commitment to offering our customers an exceptional shopping experience. This collaboration allows our customers to maximize the value of every purchase, and we look forward to a long-standing and fruitful partnership with NBK."

The NBK Rewards Program is the largest loyalty program in Kuwait, featuring over 900 participating local merchants. It enables holders of NBK Credit or Prepaid Cards to earn guaranteed rewards at a wide range of top local brands across diverse categories, including restaurants and cafes, fashion and cosmetics, clinics and health clubs, furniture and home goods, automotive dealerships, travel agencies and hotels, children's and educational products, entertainment, and more.

As a leading financial institution in the region, NBK is committed to offering a comprehensive range of Credit Cards featuring diverse benefits to meet various customer needs, including the Rewards Programs, cashback options, and exclusive local and global offers.



Mohammed Al-Othman and Dr. Adel Al-Yousifi



NBK & Best Al Yousifi representatives during the signing ceremony.



KFH officials among the attendees and participating in the honoring ceremony.



A glimpse of the ceremony.



Offering comprehensive training experience in a professional environment across diverse tracks

Kuwait Finance House concludes the third edition of KFH Academy

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has concluded the third, upgraded edition of KFH Academy, which offered a comprehensive training experience combining theoretical knowledge and practical application. The program provided a professional model for qualifying Kuwaiti youth within a leading banking environment across diverse tracks, including Public Relations and Media, Digital Transformation and Innovation, and Business Administration.

Over three weeks, 28 participants created a final project summarizing and reflecting on their experience. Each track presented its project at the program's closing and recognition ceremony in the presence of several KFH leaders.

This edition builds on last year's successful second edition of KFH Academy by expanding training and adding tracks for a broader group of university students and recent graduates across various disciplines, reflecting KFH's commitment to empowering young national talent.

Youth Empowerment

In his address delivered during the recognition ceremony, Executive Manager HR Planning and Center of Excellence at KFH, Abdulaziz Almathkoor, said: "At KFH, we are pleased to continue our unwavering commitment to empowering young national cadres by offering the best specialized training programs, which open broad horizons for students and recent graduates to develop their skills and prepare for the job market with confidence and knowledge."

He added that KFH Academy's upgraded edition continues previous successes in line with the best international training standards, as KFH sought to expand training



Abdulaziz Almathkoor

Almathkoor: We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to empowering young national cadres

ing by adding vital tracks in Public Relations and Media, Digital Transformation and Innovation, and Engineering Projects to fulfill the aspirations of more students from diverse disciplines.



Fahad AlSaad

AlSaad: An Integrated experience at Kuwait's largest bank and the world's second-largest Islamic bank

Almathkoor noted the program was designed to top global training standards, blending a rich theoretical learning experience with practical real-world application in professional banking. It also included specialized field

visits and intensive workshops with KFH partners across public and private sectors.

He further said: "KFH considers investing in people its smartest choice, with building an empowered, conscious, innovative generation serving as the foundation for sustaining its success as a leading financial institution."

An Integrated Experience

Meanwhile, Senior Manager of Public Relations and Events at KFH, Fahad AlSaad, explained that KFH Academy program was designed specifically for ambitious youth. He noted that the program delivers integrated training and a valuable chance to nurture young talent across various tracks within a professional environment at Kuwait's largest bank and the world's second-largest Islamic bank.

AlSaad stated that the program blends theory and practical application, featuring field visits, KFH Capital training, and workshops with strategic partners like Boursa Kuwait, Coded Academy, and Kuwait Times.

AlSaad noted KFH organized the program driven by its social responsibility and leading role to support, empower, and optimally invest in youth potential, honing their skills to become future leaders.

AlSaad emphasized that the participants' commitment, seriousness, and passion to benefit from the program were evident in their outstanding contributions to KFH Academy's videos, lectures, and workshops. He noted KFH will continue organizing these purposeful programs alongside its numerous year-round initiatives.

AlSaad extended his gratitude to all participating departments for their instrumental support throughout the program, wishing all participants continued growth and success.

Small businesses face hurdles

US challenges court-ordered tariff refunds

NEW YORK, Aug 12, (AP): Government lawyers said a Court of International Trade judge overstepped his authority by ordering the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol to issue refunds to all companies that paid tariffs that were deemed illegal in February, even those that didn't file a lawsuit in trade court.

The government filed an appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in June and filed its opening brief on Monday.

In it, government lawyers point to a case that went before the Supreme Court in June 2025, over birthright citizenship. Part of the decision in that case limited the use of universal injunctions, which apply a ruling to all people or companies affected, not just specific litigants.

Judge Richard Eaton, who is overseeing the tariff lawsuits in the Court of International Trade, has said the limits on universal injunctions don't apply in this case, but the government disagrees.

"The CIT's universal injunctions, requiring the government to refund IEEPA duties for all importers (including non-party importers), cannot possibly be squared with CASA," -

the court case that limited universal injunctions, the government wrote its brief.

The majority of tariff refunds have already been paid out. CBP has already processed and certified \$100 billion in refunds. At issue are companies that paid tariffs that went through the customs process and entries were finalized. There's a Congressional rule that the CBP cannot reprocess tariffs for which the administrative refund process is no longer available. Those companies are free to file a lawsuit to get that money back, the government said.

"The Court of International Trade (CIT) has already entered hundreds of such orders in suits brought by importers seeking that relief, and importers who have not yet brought such suits are free to do so within the statute of limitations," government lawyers wrote in the brief.

Barry Appleton, a law professor and co-director of New York Law School's Center for International Law, said it appears the government has the better legal argument, but businesses, especially smaller businesses, might suffer.



The United States Court of International Trade, center, is seen in front of the Jacob K. Javits Federal building, March 18, 2015, in New York. (AP)

Lulu expands its presence in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Further expanding its retail presence in Kuwait, Lulu has opened a new hypermarket at Jaber Mall in Jaber Al-Ahmad, taking its total number of stores in the country to 19.

The new hypermarket was inaugurated by Raad Khalaf Al Abdullah, Vice Chairman of Combined Group, in the presence of Paramita Tripathi, Ambassador of India to Kuwait; Dr. Matar Hamed Al Neyadi, Ambassador of the UAE to Kuwait; and Yusuffali M.A., Chairman of Lulu Group.

"This new store marks another major step in strengthening our presence in Kuwait and bringing our retail offering closer to growing communities. Looking ahead, we have five new projects planned over the next eight months, along with the development of our largest logistics centre in Kuwait at Al Shadadiya. These investments reflect our continued commitment to the country's retail sector, infrastructure development and long-term economic growth," said Yusuffali M.A., Chairman of Lulu Group.

Spread across more than 8,500 square metres, the new hypermarket is part of J2, a major public-private partnership development under the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW).

Designed as a modern shopping destination, the store offers a wide range of fresh food, groceries, household essentials and lifestyle products under one roof. It also introduces more than 500 new SKUs, including over 300 imported product ranges, giving customers a broader choice of products sourced from international markets.

For added convenience, the hypermarket features dedicated self-checkout counters, while the mall's multi-storey parking facility provides easy access for shoppers visiting both Lulu and the wider Jaber Mall development.

Also present at the inauguration were Saifee Rupawala, CEO of Lulu; Ashraf Ali M.A., Executive Director of Lulu; Anand Ram, Chief Operating Officer of Lulu International Holdings; Sreejith K.S., Director of Lulu Kuwait; Sakkir Hussain, Regional Director, along with other senior officials and guests.



Photos during the inauguration.

From Hannibal Lecter to the concert hall

At 88, Hopkins' musical dream comes true

NEW YORK, Aug 12, (AP): It may be hard to believe, but even Sir Anthony Hopkins doubts himself sometimes.

"There's a part of me which says, 'you didn't write that,'" he recalls of composing his debut album, "Life Is a Dream." "What's it called? Impostor syndrome."

Thankfully, it did not stop him from finishing the collection of 12 compositions he crafted over six decades.

Conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, performed by the Philharmonia Orchestra and recorded at London's Alexandra Palace in April, it will be released by Decca Records on Aug. 21.

"My first love, or vocation really, is music," said the 88-year-old actor. "That sounds very official, but I was raised with a lot of music (of the) postwar years, and it influenced me. And I started playing the piano when I was quite young."

He picked up the instrument at 4 and began composing years later, writing his first piece, a waltz, in 1960. He was 22 at the time.

"I find more freedom with music," he says, compared to acting, which he labels "a discipline, you have to know your stuff. But music for me is a freewheeling kind of art form."

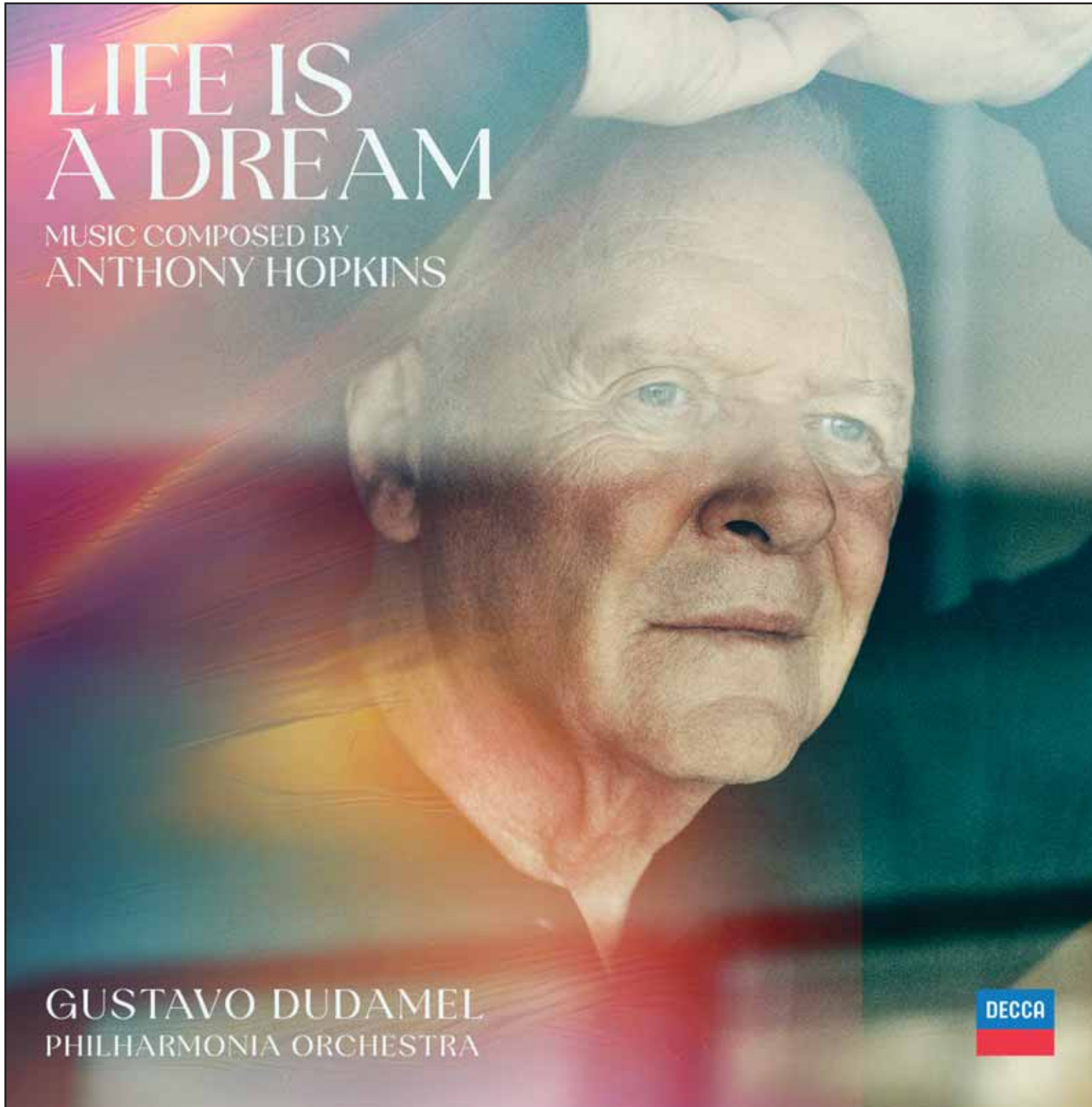
And he's had his fair share of experience. Prior to the release of "Life Is a Dream," Hopkins had composed scores for a number of films.

"The opening of 'Shadowlands' is my first adventure in composing music," he said, referring to the 1993 film he starred in as "The Chronicles of Narnia" author C.S. Lewis. Then he became the principal composer on a few other movies that he also starred in and directed, including 1996's "August" and 2007's "Slipstream." 2020's "Elyse."

"It's about my childhood," he says of the album, which shares its title with the Pedro Calderón de la Barca play. "It's basically the memories of my childhood and growing up in Wales, and my developments in life, my adolescent years," and so on.

But he says "there's a great sadness in it all because - don't get me wrong, I've had a wonderful life - but underneath it all, there is the knowledge that life is one long goodbye. From the moment we're born, we begin to die," he starts to laugh. "Sounds so cheerful!"

That tension - or better put, wisdom - carries throughout the release. Take the first single as an example. "1947: Suite for Solo Piano and



This album cover image released by Decca Records shows "Life Is a Dream," recorded in London with the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Gustavo Dudamel. (AP)

Orchestra: Il. Bracken Road" is the middle composition in a three-part suite about a particular summer in

South Wales. He says it contains a "melancholy and sadness," a sense that arises with its cello.

"It's the welcomed sound of nostalgia, of the strange, whimsical pain of life," he describes the song.

"All music is actually based in pain. Sounds pretty preposterous, but it is. It's about the yearning."

The same can be said about the song "Stella Aria" - named after his wife, director and actor Stella Hopkins - that deals with "the loneliness in all of us," he says, but is part of a path to "sheer happiness."

Hopkins has been reflecting for quite some time now - both in his memoir, "We Did OK, Kid," released last fall - and on this album. "I look at my own life now, and especially this year; I'm going to be 89 at the end of the year. And I look back and I'm thinking, 'good God, I couldn't have planned any of this.' From the moment I decided to become an actor, 70 years ago, I thought ... 'Why did I do that?' I didn't know, because I was pretty useless in school? I didn't know what else to do. So I tried for a scholarship, became an actor instead of a musician. And suddenly I'm given a huge plate of success by some force of nature."

"I'm without fear of mortality," he adds. "I'm just so grateful I've lived this long."

In a surprising turn of events, actor Bradley Cooper "passed me on to Dudamel," says Hopkins, after witnessing Hopkins' composition a few years before with the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Michael Seal. Dudamel was on board.

But when it came time to record at Alexandra Palace earlier this year, "I'm sitting there thinking, 'How the hell did I write this?' I have no idea," said Hopkins. "And Dudamel said, 'This is wonderful.' ... He is one of the most astonishing people I've met. He's so full of life and so full of energy and love, and it's quite extraordinary."

It's a shared affection. "The same depth of imagination, humanity and emotional truth that has defined his extraordinary work on stage and screen is present in his music," Dudamel said in a statement. "Anthony approaches music with the heart of a storyteller and the instincts of a poet, creating sound worlds that are both deeply personal and universally resonant."

After his debut album, live performances may be next. Top of Hopkins' list is Carnegie Hall.

"That's where I want to go. That's what I want," he says.

The 1947 film "Carnegie Hall" was a formative film for him, and he has the distinct memory of his mother saying, "You play at Carnegie Hall one day."

It is yet another dream in a life full of them.

Variety

NEW YORK: Sir Rod Stewart will be unable to continue his "One Last Time" farewell tour following a coronary stent procedure and after postponing and canceling a few performances, a representative for the singer has confirmed.

Stewart canceled his Tuesday night performance at Rocket Arena in Cleveland shortly after



Stewart

postponing his Sunday concert in Cincinnati at Riverbend Music Center. The latter venue said at the time that it was

due "to an unforeseen but minor medical procedure that required prompt attention."

Stewart also canceled a few dates earlier this year, including two in Las Vegas and one in San Diego.

"Following further medical evaluation, Sir Rod Stewart has successfully undergone a routine coronary stent procedure. Doctors are pleased with his recovery, and Rod is doing very well and has returned to his normal daily activities," a statement from his publicist read. "On the advice of his doctors, he will take the next four weeks to recuperate and regain full fitness before returning to the stage. Unfortunately, this means he will be unable to continue his current tour dates."

It added that "information regarding affected performances will be communicated by the respective promoters and venues."

Stewart, 81, was scheduled to appear through Sept. 3 in North America, including his six-night residency at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas and a few dates in Mexico.

"I'm already feeling better and very much on the mend. I want to thank the doctors, nurses and everyone who has taken such wonderful care of me," Stewart said in the statement. "I'm deeply disappointed to miss these shows and sorry to let my fans down, but I look forward to getting back on stage and having a good time with you all again soon." (AP)

23-track debut hits September

Ms. Rachel takes over airwaves with 'I'm So Happy'

NEW YORK, Aug 12, (AP): Parents of toddlers everywhere, prepare yourselves. YouTube sensation and music teacher Ms. Rachel and her husband, Aron Accurso, will release their debut album, the 23-track "I'm So Happy," on Sept. 25.

"Music is such a wonderful way for people to bond, for parents to bond. I know from the minute my kids were born, we're singing to them," Ms. Rachel, whose real name is Rachel Griffin Accurso, said.

Ms. Rachel launched her mega popular YouTube channel in 2019 with her husband, known online as Mr. Aron.

"I am a music educator, so I get excited about kids hearing a real clarinet on 'Icky Sticky Bubble Gum' and kids getting excited about hearing more real instruments," said Ms. Rachel.

But that isn't the only education they'll get from the album. A song like "I Could Be Your Friend" gives kids a script for bolstering their social skills. "We're always thinking about all kinds of kids, whether they have disabilities, whether they're autistic," she said. "We just want the world to feel like it's helpful to all children and the musical worlds as well."

The songs aren't limited by genre, either. Take the single "I Love a Rainbow" as an example: It's a big bossa nova number. Their take on the classic "Old McDonald" leans bluegrass.

"Music is at the heart of our show," added Aron Accurso. "And so, we've always wanted to release the music and have families ex-



Honoree Rachel Griffin Accurso (aka Ms. Rachel), and husband Aron Accurso attend the Glamour Women of the Year Awards at The Plaza Hotel, Nov. 4, 2025, in New York. (AP)

perience the music away from the screen."

"I'm So Happy" was co-produced by Aron Accurso and Grammy winner Scott Riesett and principally arranged by Mr. Aron as well. Aron Accurso reimagined a number of Ms. Rachel's fan favorite songs and childhood classics with a team of 19 vocalists and 42 instrumentalists.

"It's songs that people know from the show, but we decided to expand them and elevate them with new arrangements and reproducing them," Aron Accurso explained. "It was a process of, you know, looking at them and saying, 'OK, what else can we do to this to make it sparkle more? What can we add to it? What does it need to be on the album?'"

He says they most hope that the album will inspire "living room dance parties, because that's what we love with our children," he said. "We love to put on an album and dance around."

Ms. Rachel has made headlines over the last few years for using her social media platforms to advocate for global humanitarian crises,

with particular attention given to the plight of children in Gaza and those detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Most recently, she shared comments about the mysterious death of 18-year-old Nolan Wells in Mississippi, a case shadowed by the state's fraught racial history and lingering distrust in law enforcement.

"We know the investigation and everything that followed would have been different if Nolan Wells were white and his friends were black. Nolan and his family deserve justice," she wrote on Instagram.

Ms. Rachel says she knows her album may bring attention to her advocacy and vice versa. "I view myself as an advocate for children's rights so anytime they're being violated by anyone anywhere, I want to be speaking out," she said. "I want families to be happy and safe and healthy, and I think that's a wonderful thing. So, if it's brought up with the album, that's great."

1. "I'm So Happy" 2. "I Love a Rainbow" 3. "Icky Sticky Bubble Gum" 4. "Phonics" 5. "Hop Little Bunnies" 6. "Caterpillar" 7. "Up and Down" 8. "Bubble Pop" 9. "Walkin' at the Zoo" 10. "Open Shut Them" 11. "I Could Be Your Friend" 12. "I Listen to My Body" 13. "The Wheels on the Bus" 14. "Play the Bubbles" 15. "Pop Those Bubbles" 16. "Old MacDonald" 17. "If You Should Meet an Elephant" 18. "Counting to 20!" 19. "B-I-N-G-O" 20. "Lobby Loo" 21. "Big Feelings" 22. "Together" 23. "I Love You to the Moon"

Ronaldo and Rodriguez tie the knot after a decade together

LISBON, Aug 12, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo and Georgina Rodriguez are husband and wife.

They married Tuesday in a civil ceremony described by the public relations team that represents the Portuguese soccer star as "a private and intimate moment attended by their five children."

The ceremony took place in Cascais, a coastal town in western Portugal near the capital Lisbon, the Brunswick Group said in the announcement.

The couple posted a picture on their Instagram accounts showing their rings.

They have been together for the past decade after meeting in Madrid.

The 41-year-old Ronaldo, a five-time world player of the year and one of the most high-profile sports stars, is coming off playing in his record-tying sixth World Cup for Portugal.

His Saudi team, Al Nassr, starts its domestic season on Saturday.



Cristiano Ronaldo, left, and his partner Georgina Rodriguez watch the second practice session at the Monaco racetrack, in Monaco, May 23, 2019. (AP)

Film blends rural peace with sudden violence, creating an uneven tone

Honey, heists & horror: ‘The Rivals of Amziah King’ has a little bit of everything

NEW YORK, Aug 12, (AP): It turns out that the honey business isn’t as sweet as it sounds: In the new movie “The Rivals of Amziah King,” bee-keepers steal from each other, poison rivals’ insects and rip folk off. “It’s not full of kind people,” the title character warns.

“The Rivals of Amziah King” isn’t as sweet as it thinks it is, either. Instead of picking a single variety to explore, the movie is a maddening mishmash of genres - blending Quentin Tarantino’s sudden brutality, a coming-of-age tale, a heist flick, a revenge fantasy and a sweet, music-filled country hoedown.

Matthew McConaughey returns to the big screen playing the title character in what can only be called Matthew-McConaughey-turned-up-to-11 mode, pure Cheshire Cat smile, rasically wink and buttery, Southern gentlemanly charm. Suspenders and scruff on, cowboy boots snug, McConaughey is the one who makes everyone’s life instantly better just by showing up.

Written by Andrew Patterson and

James Montague and directed by Patterson, “The Rivals of Amziah King” follows McConaughey’s honey-producing King as he negotiates his patch of rural Oklahoma until he inexplicably leaves the movie at the hour mark and hands it off to Angelina LookingGlass, making her film debut.

We meet King ordering chicken fried steak sandwiches and cherry Cokes as he plays the banjo in a quartet of musicians at a beloved food joint. That gets interrupted when authorities need his knowledge to find out who abandoned \$250,000 worth of honey barrels on the road and King starts to investigate. Then someone gets a chunk of their skull - including ponytail - ripped off in an industrial accident and that takes over. Settle in, the whiplash is just beginning.

King soon connects with his former foster daughter - that’s LookingGlass, fierce and preternaturally grounded - who he gets to mansplain in the local ways, like what to eat at the potluck (“There’s a story in every



This image released by Black Bear shows Matthew McConaughey, left, and Angelina LookingGlass in a scene from “The Rivals of the Amziah King.” (AP)

dish”), life lessons (“Patience is better than being smart”) and beekeeping (“Every queen is a survivor”). Bees here, if you didn’t already get

tle down in this movie, like a puppy forever pulling on its leash. Early sequences employ frozen shots irritatingly dropped into the mix and later we have furious close-ups, quick cuts, quirky flashbacks, ethereal river sequences and lingering poetic images of close-up bees like from a documentary, a kinetic approach that seems not to have much faith in the actual story keeping viewers’ interest alive. Music supervisor Winslow Bright swamps many scenes with loud choirs, loud banjo and loud strings.

Maybe that’s because as soon as you’ve settled down for one genre, it gets hijacked by the next. Warm and extended moments of communal song - the great T Bone Burnett had a hand in some of the outstanding Americana tunes like “Quill” with McConaughey exuberant, and “Johnny Come Outside” - are undercut by seeing kids smash their heads on school bus roofs or a cool Western-like tracking of a honey-stealing local rascal that is marred by his horrific, boiling-to-death murder. There

are so many montages of honey production that viewers may qualify for a beekeeping certificate.

Great turns are produced by Kurt Russell as a lethal local kingpin who schmoozes his way past the law, and Jake Horowitz, a former Marine who knows how to plan a theft with military precision, mostly shirtless. One brazen theft here is of “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” and, however you liked that movie, you realize now how hard it was to actually pull off.

Patterson likes to remind viewers of his Oklahoma bona fides, but much of the overlong movie was shot in Alabama. And that hints at what’s wrong with “The Rivals of Amziah King” - it just doesn’t feel authentic, either in place or in story. Forget honey, it sort of leaves a vinegary taste behind.

“The Rivals of Amziah King,” a Black Bear release that hits theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for “language and some grisly images.” Running time: 130 minutes. Two stars out of four.

New class includes Camp

Swift, Lovett join Nashville songwriters Hall of Fame

NEW YORK, Aug 12, (AP): Global superstar Taylor Swift and country legend Lyle Lovett will be inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, the organization announced Tuesday.

The new class also includes Shawn Camp and Lee Thomas Miller, both elected in the contemporary songwriter category, and Bruce Channel as the veteran songwriter. They will be formally inducted during the 56th Anniversary Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame Gala later this year.

Swift, the 14-time Grammy Award winning artist, is elected in the contemporary songwriter/artist category. She’s known for writing many of her own hits since launching her career in Nashville as a preteen. Those include her country singles “Teardrops On My Guitar” and “Love Story,” as well as her blockbuster pop hits “Blank Space,” “Anti-Hero,” and “Cruel Summer.” She became the youngest woman ever inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in June.

Lovett is elected in the veteran songwriter/artist category. He started his career in the folk scene before finding success for his clever lyricism and innovative country-Americana songs like “She’s No Lady,” “Cowboy Man,” “Give Back My Heart,” “Why I Don’t Know,” “God Will” and more.

Camp began as a fiddle player for Shelby Lynne, Alan Jackson, Trisha Yearwood and others in the ‘80s before becoming a hit songwriter. His credits include Garth Brooks’ “Two Pina Colodas,” Brooks & Dunn’s “How Long Gone” and Willie Nelson’s “A Beautiful Time.”

Miller’s hits include Terri Clark’s “I Just Wanna Be Mad,” Trace Adkins’ “You’re Gonna Miss This,” Tim McGraw’s “Nothin’ To Die For” and “Southern Girl,” Chris Stapleton’s “Whiskey And You” and many songs for Brad Paisley, including “The World.”

Texas talent Channel is perhaps best known for “Hey! Baby!” written in 1959 and recorded by José Feliciano, Ringo Starr, Conway Twitty, Anne Murray and DJ Otzi; it may be most recognizable for its prominent placement in the 1987 film “Dirty Dancing.”

The Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame executive director Mark Ford made the announcement inside Belmont University’s R. Milton and Denice Johnson Center.

“This is always one of the most anticipated days on our calendar - the annual reveal of our incoming class,” Ford said in a statement. “We’re excited to once again add new names to a legendary list that began more than a half century ago.”



Taylor Swift appears at the MTV Video Music Awards in Elmont, N.Y., on Sept. 11, 2024. (AP)

Opera

Family tragedy inspires Mazzoli’s dark opioid fairy tale

‘The Galloping Cure’ brings opioids to opera

EDINBURGH, Scotland, Aug 12, (AP): Missy Mazzoli’s desire to compose an opera about the opioids epidemic was sparked by the deaths of two cousins.

“One was in 2002 and the other passed away in 2009 and they were both 25,” she said. “One overdosed on OxyContin and the other one overdosed heroin after becoming addicted to heroin via OxyContin.”

Using a carnival merry-go-round as an allegory, “The Galloping Cure” opened Sunday at the Edinburgh International Festival, a haunting portrayal of the drug’s destructive power that is among the most impactful of contemporary operas.

Mazzoli and librettist Royce Vavrek created a charismatic charlatan, Lucky Mack (baritone Justin Austin), who arrives at the faded community Youtown in a white double-breasted suit and matching cowboy hat, easing residents’ chronic pain by offering free rides on six fiberglass horses to get people hooked.

He starts charging money during the town’s yearlong descent - “dynamic pricing,” he calls it - then rents hobbyhorses until people go broke. He demands noses, hair, kneecaps and tongues as payments, body parts he will use to build more carousel horses. By the final notes, wasted bodies resemble a skid row.

“When he offers you the cure, he never tells you the price,” sings Dr. Theresa Hart (mezzo-soprano Daniela Mack), whose endorsement of Lucky Mack leads to the death of her daughter Noy (soprano Gabrielle Turgeon).



This image released by the Scottish Opera shows Justin Austin, foreground center, and Susan Bullock, top center, during a performance of “The Galloping Cure,” at Theatre Royal Glasgow on July 28, 2026 in Glasgow, Scotland. (AP)

This was the first of two launches for Mazzoli in a 71-day span. She becomes the first woman composer with a premiere at New York’s Metropolitan Opera with “Lincoln in the Bardo” on Oct. 19, a tight gap comparable to when Giuseppe Verdi’s “Il Trovatore” and “La Traviata” debuted 46 days apart in 1853.

A 45-year-old New Yorker originally from Lansdale, Pennsylvania, Mazzoli met Vavrek in 2009. They have become the Rodgers and Hammerstein of 21st-century American opera, previously creating “Song from the Uproar” (2012), “Breaking the Waves” (2016), “Proving Up” (2018) and “The Listeners” (2022).

“Galloping” runs through Wednesday in Scotland, moves to Sweden’s Norrlands Opera from Sept. 12-23 and the San Francisco Opera in the fall of 2027.

Vavrek, a 43-year-old Canadian who also lives in New York, won a Pulitzer Prize for Du Yun’s “Angel’s Bone.” He and Mazzoli had long contemplated an opioids opera but made progress only after commissioning a treatment in 2022

from author Karen Russell.

“It wasn’t until we collaborated with Karen that we found a way in that wasn’t preachy or predictable,” Mazzoli said. “Coming at it via this weird fairy tale allows us to bring in all sorts of compassion and allows us see it in an unexpected way.”

Russell joined Mazzoli and Vavrek for a Zoom meeting to discuss ideas, when they settled on Franz Kafka’s “A Country Doctor” as a starting point.

“There’s sort of this floorless void of existential suffering,” Russell said. “And then there’s also physical agony. Different kinds of pain are represented in that story and it feels like a fever dream to me.”

Russell’s treatment initially was called “The Devil’s Miracle.” She was influenced by the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm.

“All of your daughters are going to starve unless you give me your youngest child, right?” she said. “It’s like the devil knows when to appear, and it’s often in the context of extreme desperation.”

A breakthrough came in 2023, when

Mazzoli and Vavrek’s earlier work, “Breaking the Waves” was performed at the Opéra Comique in Paris. It was co-produced by the former artistic director of the English National Opera, John Berry, and directed by Tom Morris, who would go on to direct “Galloping.”

Berry arranged for the creative trio to spend time at Hawkwood, a retreat at Stroud in the English Cotswolds, where they developed the thematic structure and Mazzoli wrote an initial melody. Around the same time, Mazzoli was finishing the composition of the second act of “Lincoln,” based on the George Saunders novel.

“I was working on them both concurrently, which I would not recommend to anyone,” Mazzoli said. “But you do what you have to do when these opportunities come up.”

A 2-hour, 15-minute work conducted by Stuart Stratford with one intermission, “Galloping” was composed for four primary characters. One of them, a pain-wracked old woman named Ivona Kowalski (soprano Susan Bullock), sings early

on: “Life’s a joke and then you croak.”

Set designer Rebecca Ringst and lighting designer Lucy Carter used 120 vertical LEDs about 7 yards (6.5 meters) long that resembled needles and caused at times a hallucinatory effect. Mazzoli shifts themes to a darker register as addiction takes hold and the music turns to electronica by DJ Blume and Lorna Dune for teenagers’ raves, mixed into the Scottish Opera Orchestra.

There is a chorus of 14, singing sheep and a pair of dogs (hilariously portrayed by Catriona Hewitson and Edward Jowle), whose barks become words that Theresa understands as she becomes strung out.

“I’m really into finding that strange element that only works really for opera and some comic relief,” Vavrek said. “The dogs are funny. They’re silly.”

Lucky Mack similar to Harold Hill in Meredith Willson’s “The Music Man,” Sportin’ Life in “The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess” and Dr. Dulcamara in Donizetti’s “L’elisir d’amore (The Elixir of Love).” Morris called him a “grifter/magician/snake-oil salesman.”

Gardening

How to find grubs in your lawn and what to do before they cause serious grass damage

WASHINGTON, Aug 12, (AP): What does it mean when brown patches show up in a perfectly healthy lawn? The truth is, it could be anything from drought to dog urine, fungal diseases, pests or too much fertilizer. But many homeowners automatically blame grubs.

The problem with this is that it’s often not the case, and even if grubs are present, small populations are not problematic.

Treatment should only be applied after confirming a true grub infestation. Fortunately, there’s a simple way to check, but action must be taken during a specific window of time to be effective. And that time is nigh.

Grubs are the early life forms of beetles, including European chafers, and Asiatic, Japanese and Oriental beetles. They live close to the surface under lawns and other plants, where they feed on roots, disconnecting the roots from the plants’ top growth.

Confirming their presence is easy: Dig up a 3- to 4-inch-deep (7.6 to 10 centimeters), 12-inch-square (930 square centimeters) section of symptomatic lawn that partially overlaps the border of healthy grass.

If there are grubs in the lawn, the whitish, brown-headed, half-inch to 1-inch-long (1 to 2.5 centimeters) beetle larvae, which resemble shrimp, will be visible either on the underlying soil or on the underside of the sod-like square you removed. They’re generally curled into the shape of the



This image provided by Bugwood.org shows three species of white grubs: Japanese beetle (Popillia japonica), from left, European chafer (Amphimallon majalis) and June bug (Phyllophaga spp.). (AP)

letter C.

Fewer than 10 grubs per square foot of soil is normal and does not indicate an infestation, so you should not take any action. Instead, seek out other potential causes.

Treatment against grubs should only be applied if there are 10 or more of the insects present under the section of turf you removed. Heavily infested lawn sections will easily roll up like a carpet when you attempt to remove them, their roots severed by the feeding insects.

Because grubs are most vulnerable to pest-control measures when they are young, those measures will only be effective if applied in late summer.

Milky spore powder is a natural product that targets only Japanese beetle grubs. Unfortunately, it’s not always easy to discern between the species. If you are certain your grubs are the Japanese variety, you can give it a try, but success rates are mixed, with better outcomes reported in warmer regions.

Beneficial nematodes are microscopic, non-segmented worms that attack soil-dwelling insects, including all types of grubs. They’re a more universal approach, with higher success rates. They, too, are natural, as they already exist in the soil; you would just be adding more. The nematodes work by infecting grubs with a bacterium that can kill them in as little as 48 hours.

There are many nematode species available, so read package labels and look for the Heterorhabditis bacteriophora (Hb) strain, which specifically targets grubs.

To optimize effectiveness, water the soil well before applying either treatment.

Variety

WISCONSIN: A few years ago, a pop culture store owner in Wisconsin mentioned to Jason Ganos, a well-known Nintendo game collector, that he had a box of Super Mario cartridges that had been sitting in storage for years. It stopped Ganos in his tracks.

It turned out to be an ultra-rare collection of 97 “absolutely pristine” copies of Super Mario Brothers Duck Hunt, a popular Nintendo game that was released in 1988, Ganos said.

After some initial research, Ganos found that the cartridges he held were not only a new variant of the game, but also the last known production date of it.

Most of the cartridges will go up for sale Friday in an online auction that will run until Sept. 9.

“I still don’t quite believe that any of this is happening,” Ganos said. “I just think it’s kind of serendipitous that this happened. It’s just still very bizarre to me.”

Ganos, a hard-core fan covered in Nintendo tattoos and who has operated Nintendo Wire, a news service for Nintendo announcements and nostalgia for over 10 years, said he would not venture to guess how much the games are worth. (AP)

‘Measles is raging, immunization rates are falling’

Trump’s vaccine order to raise fears, cause confusion and endanger kids: doctors

WASHINGTON, Aug 12, (AP): Doctors say US President Donald Trump’s new executive order on vaccines is misguided and likely to stoke fear and confusion among parents at a time when measles is raging, immunization rates are falling and children are heading back to school.

“Many families are finishing up that back-to-school checklist, and among those things is the medical checkup and assuring that their kids have their vaccines,” Michigan pediatrician Dr. Molly O’Shea said. “To put into question the safety or efficacy of these vaccines right now is really unfortunate and ill-conceived.”

The order, signed Monday, advocates separating the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine into three different single-disease shots and giving all childhood immunizations at separate appointments when possible. It also includes several changes to the childhood vaccine schedule already attempted by Trump’s health department but blocked by a federal judge. The department is run by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who helped lead the anti-vaccine movement for years.

Trump repeatedly suggested the number or timing of vaccines could play a role in rising rates of autism spectrum disorder, even though decades of studies have firmly concluded there is no link.

He also strongly suggested that the MMR vaccine could be harmful or even deadly.

Dr. Paul Offit, a Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia vaccine researcher and former government adviser, said the recommendations by Trump and Kennedy “are just not science based,” and it’s irresponsible to cast doubt on a vaccine that protects against measles when the nation is facing its biggest epidemic in more than 30 years.

“The harm that it will cause is ... to induce chaos and confusion into the system, so people aren’t sure what they’re supposed to do,” he said.

At one point before signing his executive order, Trump used the word “lethal” when talking about the current MMR vaccine, saying: “Together there could be a possibility they are quite lethal and separately, it looks like they are not at all lethal but just very effective.”

Doctors strongly rejected this characterization, saying the current combination vaccine has gone through rigorous studies and years of safety tracking - like other childhood vaccines - and has been shown to be very safe. The diseases they protect against are the far bigger risk, they said.

“The suggestion that separating the measles, mumps and rubella vaccines one from another has



US President Donald Trump, left, shakes the hand of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. during a meeting to sign an executive order about vaccines on Aug 10 in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington. (AP)

value is incorrect in both science and in immune response,” O’Shea said. “You actually get a better immune response giving them together. There’s no value in separating them.”

There are currently no separate vaccines for children against these diseases in the US but Trump’s order directs the health department to present a plan to offer them. Trump spokesperson Kush Desai has said that would give parents more options on timing and frequency, ultimately increasing vaccine uptake.

Doctors lamented that Trump revived debunked theories about vaccines and autism. Autism diagnoses have been rising for decades, with a recent count finding that an estimated 1 in 31 children in the U.S. have autism spectrum disorder. Scientists say that’s in part because the definition has broadened with expanded understanding of its wide range of traits and symptoms. There’s no single cause, they say, and genetic and environmental factors can play a role.

Dr. Andrew Racine, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said the potential link between childhood vaccines and autism has been studied in dozens of well-designed studies around the globe and there is “unequivocally” no link.

The fact Trump raised the issue, O’Shea said, “is really misguided and unfair to families.”

Trump’s comments and his order also cause confusion about which vaccines to give children and when, doctors said.

In the first year of Trump’s term, Kennedy set out to overhaul immunization guidance, firing a 17-member vaccine advisory committee and installing replacements who made the restrictive recommendations halted by a federal judge.

Those recommendations call for injections against 11 diseases, with additional vaccines separately categorized for at-risk children or as available through “shared decision-making” with a doctor.

The pediatrics academy, meanwhile, continued to recommend vaccines to protect against 18 diseases in its 2026 immunization schedule.

O’Shea said that schedule “has been very well designed, carefully constructed and thoughtfully put together to provide safety and protection just as the baby or young child’s immune system is ready to accept it.”

Doctors said insurance coverage shouldn’t be an issue. Medicaid and CHIP continue to cover the vaccines recommended before the current Trump administration took office. Through 2027, private health insurance plans generally will too, said Chris Regal of AHIP, the national health insurers’ trade association.

With confusion and fear rising, Racine said pediatricians expect to answer more questions from parents.

But many doctors fear vaccine hesitancy may still keep increasing. Federal data shows US kindergarten vaccination rates have been dropping, with the share of children with exemptions hitting an all-time high in the 2024-25 school year.

Experts said they worry about families skipping necessary vaccines for their children or spacing out shots, since a vaccine-preventable disease could strike between doctor visits.

“Parents deserve clear, evidence-based guidance about how to protect their children, not competing recommendations issued through political processes,” said Michael Osterholm, a University of Minnesota expert on infectious diseases. “When families receive conflicting messages, confidence in vaccination suffers, and children ultimately bear the consequences.”

Young activists in Maldives confront climate threats to their island nation

ADDU CITY, Maldives, Aug 12, (AP): A group of young people in the Maldives recently paddled kayaks to protest land reclamation work that was cutting through protected mangrove wetlands in a UNESCO biosphere reserve, even spray-painting “ECOCIDE” on a reclaimed patch.

The nonprofit Project ThimaaVeshi, which means “self and surroundings,” is part of a new generation of activists in the Indian Ocean island nation tackling issues that are part of their daily lives: coastal erosion, plastic pollution and development-damaged ecosystems.

In Addu City in the south, the activists have focused on overdevelopment, documenting the impact on wetlands and reefs. In the capital, Male, others are tackling the plastic waste suffocating streets, hangout spots and swimming areas.

As they team up with surfers and others for cleanups, picking fishing lines out of coral reefs and piling up discarded water bottles, the groups educate youth on their right to a clean and healthy environment.

They are united in knowing that, unlike with previous generations, climate change and environmental damage are no longer a distant threat.

The Maldives has championed itself as a country fighting its vulnerability to climate change and sea level rise, but the government has said sacrifices must be made at times in favor of development, and the activists say protective measures are not happening fast enough.

Exvyperts have said the country south of India and Sri Lanka is expected to be around 80% uninhabitable within the next 50 years due to rising sea levels.

“It was just us and a bunch of hopes and dreams,” said a 21-year-old co-founder of Project ThimaaVeshi, Yameen Maumoon.

Maumoon along with Mishal Mushahid started their activism as student leaders working with the Addu City council. What started as a group of friends became a movement and a registered nonprofit after they graduated from high school.

In Male and neighboring Hulhumale, another youth group seeking formal registration, Ripple, started when friends noticed the trash building up in areas where they hung out.

“One day when we were playing Minecraft, we were joking around, saying we should start making TikToks and we should start cleaning up,” said a co-founder, Mariyam Maasha Waheed. What began as an informal cleanup grew after their TikTok videos gained traction.

The group now organizes weekly cleanups and campaigns against plastic pollution, collaborating with others to recycle the plastic they collect.

Founders said they want environmental action to feel less intimidating and more communal.

A co-founder of the newest group seeking registration, Barnacles, Yania Hussain Ishan, became interested in environmental issues while preparing a presentation for school on protecting nature. The group focuses on climate education and youth leadership.

The constant talk on social media and elsewhere about a climate emergency has led to their generation’s feeling of a lack of agency over it, Ishan said.



Buildings stand on Male, the capital city of the Maldives on June 19. (AP)

How do computers talk with voices that sound like people?

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



By Tam Nguyen

University of Dayton

Curious Kids is a series for children of all ages. If you have a question you’d like an expert to answer, send it to CuriousKidsUS@theconversation.com.

How is a text-to-speech voice made? - Sarah G age 11 Seguin, Texas

When you talk to computerized assistants like Siri or Alexa, they reply in voices that sound very human. But how do computers, smartphones and apps actually talk like a person? They use a technology called text-to-speech.

When you speak, your lungs push air up your windpipe and through the vocal cords in your throat. That makes the vocal cords vibrate, which creates sound. Your brain tells your mouth, tongue and lips to shape that sound into words.

I’m a computer engineer who researches how computers create realistic experiences for people. A computer simulates this process of making spoken words. It sends electrical signals to a tiny speaker, which vibrates really fast. The vibrations push against the air surrounding the speaker, creating sound waves. Software in the computer controls those electrical signals in order to shape the sound waves to create speech.

If a computer wants to say “Hello, how are you?” it breaks each word into bits of sound called phonemes. Phonemes are the smallest building blocks of speech, such as the sounds “sh,” “short i” and “p” to say “ship.” The software creates the phonemes and groups them in the correct order to form words: “Heh” “lo” “how” “r” “u”? The human brain and mouth create and connect phonemes, too.

Way back in the 1700s, inventors tried to make machines work like your lungs and throat do. They used bellows - a big bag that a person could squeeze - to push air from inside the bag through pipes, whistles and leather tubes. The sounds that came out were squeaky, weird and creepy.

The first electronic speech machines, called synthesizers, were built in the 1930s. One famous machine was called Voder, which made its debut at the 1939 World’s Fair in New York City. Voder looked like an organ. A person had to press electronic buttons, keys and foot pedals to get it to gasp out basic phrases like “Good morning!”

Computers began speaking by putting together phonemes in the 1960s, creating stiff, robotic speech.

Old computer voices often sounded robotic and

choppy, like “He-llo-hu-man-I-am-a-com-pu-ter.” This happened because older software programs had to stitch together small sounds that had been mapped out from recorded voices. The maps, called spectrograms, look like graphs with peaks and valleys representing how strong each tone was at each instance when a sound happened.

The programs put the maps together like pieces in a puzzle and turned them back into sounds. That method worked, but it sounded very unnatural.

Today’s computers use machine learning, a kind of artificial intelligence, to sound like a person. Engineers and scientists train an AI program by giving it many hours of recordings of real people talking. The machine learning software analyzes patterns in the speech. That includes everything from how people breathe to when they laugh and to how their voices sound higher when they get excited.

The patterns allow the computer to shape phonemes into words and sentences in all the subtle ways people do.

This advanced technology even allows a sophisticated AI computer to listen to a recording of your voice for just a few seconds, learn your exact speech patterns and copy it. It can then say sentences you have never actually spoken, in a voice that sounds just like yours.

Text-to-speech software helps millions of people every day. In cars, it gives directions so drivers can keep their eyes on the road. It can read news articles and websites for people who are blind, and it can give a voice to people who cannot speak.

Like some other powerful technologies, the software can also be misused. Advanced software can create highly realistic fake voices, sometimes called audio deepfakes. These synthetic voices can sound almost identical to a real person’s voice by learning from a short sample of their speech.

Scammers can use this technology to impersonate family members, co-workers or celebrities. They can make phone calls or leave voice messages that try to fool people into believing bad information. Scientists and engineers are working to make tools that can identify fake voices to help stop scammers.

So the next time you hear a phone, computer or video game speak with a human voice, you know how it was able to it without having lungs, vocal cords, lips or a tongue!

Hello, curious kids! Do you have a question you’d like an expert to answer? Ask an adult to send your question to CuriousKidsUS@theconversation.com. Please tell us your name, age and the city where you live.

And since curiosity has no age limit - adults, let us know what you’re wondering, too. We won’t be able to answer every question, but we will do our best. (AP)



A total solar eclipse is seen from Arlington, Texas, April 8, 2024. (AP)

Spain prepares for rare solar eclipse against backdrop of heat, wildfires

MADRID, Aug 12, (AP): Spaniards were rushing to buy specialized glasses to view a rare total solar eclipse Wednesday, as authorities warned people flocking to rural areas to avoid anything that could spark new wildfires.

Across a swath of northern and central Spain, millions of people will have some of mainland Europe’s best views of the celestial spectacle. It will begin around sunset, when the sun, moon and Earth align, briefly bringing parts of the Iberian Peninsula - plus slivers of Greenland and Iceland - into darkness.

The event could draw at least an additional half a million visitors, Spanish authorities say. Against the backdrop of scorching summer temperatures and wildfires, officials have rolled out a large public safety campaign ahead of the much-antic-

ipated eclipse, with totality - when the moon completely covers the sun’s light - expected to last less than 2 1/2 minutes.

Spain’s Interior Ministry said 350 official viewing sites have been set up across the country’s sparsely populated interior, an area often referred to as “Empty Spain.” Authorities have limited or restricted access to another 123 sites because of environmental conditions or obstacles that could hinder an evacuation in the event of a wildfire.

Only weeks ago, the most destructive wildfire in Spanish history devoured 500 square kilometers (193 square miles) and forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of people in central Spain. Several smaller wildfires remain active elsewhere in the country.

More than 33,500 law enforcement officers will be deployed to ob-

servation areas and access points, the ministry said.

“High temperatures, the accumulated dryness of vegetation, and the intense pressure on natural areas due to projected travel necessitate extreme preventive measures,” Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska said.

Much of Spain will be on alert Wednesday as temperatures climb above 35 Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) and vegetation remains bone-dry. The national weather agency, AEMET, forecast such temperatures across northwest to southeastern Spain, including many areas where the total eclipse will be observed.

Authorities’ top priority is to prevent even a single spark that could lead to a fire, as happened in Ávila, west of Madrid, in late July. They are urging visitors not to light fires, litter or park in areas with dry vegetation.

Hosts reunite ‘Big Four’ bowling attack

Australia launches 20-test year in Top End against depleted Bangladesh

MELBOURNE, Aug 12, (AP): Test cricket returns to Australia’s tropical Top End for the first time since 2003 when the hosts face Bangladesh in a two-match series starting Thursday.

The series opener at Marrara Stadium in Darwin marks Bangladesh’s first test tour Down Under in over two decades and kicks off a 12-month period of at least 20 test matches for the Aussies including tours of world test champion South Africa, India and England.

Australia’s so-called Big Four bowling attack is set to be reunited in Darwin with Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon returning from injuries.

Pace bowlers Cummins, Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc and off-spinner Lyon have been the longtime front line attack for Australia but injuries have limited the frequency of all four combining in the same XI in recent series.

Hazlewood’s expected inclusion comes at the expense of the evergreen Scott Boland, while all-rounders Cameron Green and Beau

Webster have also been named in Australia’s starting team.

“We know Scotty’s class, it is always a pretty tight call,” said captain Cummins at a pre-match press conference Wednesday. “There is not much you can say to Scotty except there is a lot of cricket coming up.

“He knows his worth, and how good he is, and I am sure he will be out there at some point pretty soon.”

While the bowling unit is settled, it’s Australia’s batting lineup that poses more questions.

Opening bat Jake Weatherald, the first test player from Australia’s Northern Territory, has been retained from the Ashes series win over England last season despite indifferent form and is likely to open the innings with Travis Head.

The retirement of veteran opening batter Usman Khawaja has allowed a structural reshuffle with the hosts able to unleash both its allrounders, Green and Webster, at the same time.

Marnus Labuschagne and Steve Smith anchor the innings at No. 3 and No. 4 respectively, with Labus-



In this file photo, Australian bowlers Josh Hazlewood, left, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Starc, second right, and Pat Cummins, right, hold the Ashes trophy as they celebrate at the end the last day of their Ashes cricket test match against England in Sydney. (AP)

chagne also in need of runs to secure his place in the lineup.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh arrives severely depleted in the bowling department.

Nahid Rana, Mustafizur Rahman, and Shoriful Islam are all unavailable for the opening test, though Shoriful may return for the second match in Mackay, Queensland state

from Aug. 22-26.

The 23-year old Rana, one of the quickest bowlers in world cricket, will be sorely missed by the tourists after he tormented a depleted Australian side with extreme pace and bounce to secure a historic ODI home series victory for Bangladesh just two months ago

Rana then suffered a side strain in a Twenty20 international match against Zimbabwe in July, but skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto said despite Rana’s absence his team was still ready for the challenge.

“It was the first time we beat them and we played on good wickets so that gives us a little more confidence,” Shanto said. “Here it is a different ball game and challenge.

“Bounce is the main thing but in the last few months on home soil we have been preparing bouncy wickets and played ODI series on a bouncy wicket.”

The batting order has also been hit hard by injuries, with veteran Mushfiqur Rahim ruled out due to a finger injury and the brittle top order was

exposed as it collapsed for a lowly 54 in a heavy defeat to a Cricket Australia XI in a warm-up match on the weekend at the same venue.

“It was a practice match and it can happen,” Shanto said. “I think we have prepared ourself pretty well and we are confident that we will play some good cricket here.”

This opening fixture launches a grueling schedule for Australia of 20 test matches over the next 12 months, with the possibility of an additional World Test Championship final if they qualify.

After the second test against Bangladesh, Australia travel for a three-test series in South Africa in October, before hosting New Zealand for four tests in the southern summer. They then have a five-test series in India before a one-off day-night test against England at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in March to mark the 150th anniversary of matches between the two countries. Then there’s an away Ashes campaign beginning in June to bring the marathon campaign to a close.

James faces Lakers on Christmas

LeBron to debut for 76ers vs Knicks on opening night

NEW YORK, Aug 12, (AP): LeBron James will visit the New York Knicks on opening night and the Los Angeles Lakers on Christmas.

James’ arrival in Philadelphia has made the 76ers must-see TV, and they are all over the NBA’s biggest days of the season.

James will make his 76ers debut against the NBA champion Knicks on Oct. 20. The game at Madison Square Garden will be part of a tripleheader, when the Knicks raise a banner to celebrate their first championship since 1973 and James then kicks off the final stop in his career.

He will return to LA to face the Lakers on Christmas, after Victor Wembanyama and the San Antonio Spurs are back in New York for an NBA Finals rematch to open a five-game schedule.



LeBron James

old Ohio native back for a third time. That will be part of an ESPN doubleheader preceding Denver visiting Oklahoma City.

Minnesota visits Miami to highlight the schedule on Oct. 21, when most teams will open their seasons. The Heat acquired two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo from Milwaukee - and tried to bring James back as well - and the Timberwolves traded for flashy point guard LaMelo Ball. Golden State then faces the Lakers to cap that ESPN doubleheader.

The Spurs are also a top draw now behind Wembanyama, the NBA Defensive Player of the Year who helped San Antonio win Game 7 of the West finals in Oklahoma City to end the Thunder’s title reign.

This will be his second time playing at Madison Square Garden on Christmas, after he delivered a massive 42-point, 18-rebound performance in 2024 in a loss in his first time playing on the holiday. This matchup will be his first time back on the court in New York since the Knicks set an NBA Finals record by rallying from 29 points down for a 107-106 victory in Game 4. They won the title in San Antonio in the next game.

San Antonio will face Houston and former Longhorns star Kevin Durant in a game at the University of Texas on Oct. 23 airing on Prime Video, the back of a doubleheader starting with the Knicks at the Celtics.

INDIANAPOLIS, Aug 12, (AP): Kelsey Mitchell scored 20 of her 28 points in the first half, and Caitlin Clark added 22 points and 10 assists to lead the Indiana Fever to a 106-92 victory over the New York Liberty on Tuesday night.

Indiana has won seven of its last nine, and this one came after coach Stephanie White’s 2 1/2-minute pregame outburst, defending herself while also calling out the side-shows she thinks have overshadowed the WNBA.

This time, it seemed to fuel the Fever, who shot 59% from the field and 79% from 3-point range as they took a 64-46 halftime lead against New York, which had gone 8-1 since losing by 20 to Indiana in mid-July. And this time, unlike last week against defending WNBA champion Las Vegas, they didn’t allow a double-digit lead to slip away.

Mitchell was 11 of 16 from the field and she, like Clark and Sophie Cunningham, each made four 3s on a night Indiana finished with 16 on 25 attempts. Cunningham had 12 points, and Aliyah Boston added 19 points and seven rebounds.

Breanna Stewart and Sabrina Ionescu each had 19 points for the Liberty. Jonquel Jones finished with 14 points and 10 rebounds.

Aces 86, Mystics 76

In Las Vegas, A’ja Wilson had 26 points, 13 rebounds and four blocks for her 17th double-double this season, Jackie Young added 25 points and eight assists, and Las Vegas ended Washington’s seven-game winning streak with a victory.

Chelsea Gray scored 12 points, and NaLyssa Smith had 11 points and 11 rebounds for Las Vegas (23-11). Young became the seventh-fastest player in WNBA history to reach at least 4,000 points and 1,000 as-



Indiana Fever guard Caitlin Clark (22) shoots in front of New York Liberty guard Pauline Astier (18) in the second half of a WNBA basketball game in Indianapolis. (AP)

sists, doing so in 275 career games.

Shakira Austin scored 20 points and Sonia Citron added 19 for Washington (19-13), which had not lost since July 18 against Golden State. Kiki Iriafen had 15 points and 13 rebounds. Betnijah Laney-Hamilton scored six points in her debut for Washington.

The Aces finished with 40-plus points in the paint for the ninth straight game.

Mercury 94, Sparks 87

In Los Angeles, Rookie Noemie Brochant had a season-high 24 points, Alyssa Thomas scored nine

of her 16 points in the fourth quarter, and the Phoenix Mercury beat the Los Angeles Sparks to snap a three-game losing streak.

Phoenix trailed 81-78 with 4:56 left in the fourth quarter before closing on a 16-6 run.

Thomas made a layup with 49.6 seconds left for an 88-84 lead and added two free throws after on the Mercury’s next possession for a six-point lead. DeWanna Bonner sealed it by making four straight free throws down the stretch.

Dearica Hamby and Rae Burrell each scored 19 points for Los Ange-

les (12-20). Nneka Ogumike had 18 points, nine rebounds and eight assists.

Kahleah Copper added 18 points and Bonner finished with 11 for Phoenix (13-22). Brochant was 10 of 13 from the field to help the Mercury shoot 52%. Thomas also had seven rebounds and nine assists.

Phoenix guard Kelsey Plum did not play against the team that traded her a little over a week ago. Plum was limited to 14 minutes in the Mercury’s 95-75 loss to Washington on Sunday due to left calf tightness.

Superstar eligible for two-year extension

Dunleavy confident Curry will retire with Warriors

Messi mourns father Jorge, questions his soccer future

MIAMI, Aug 12, (AP): Lionel Messi shared a tribute to his late father, Jorge, on social media on Wednesday, opening up about how difficult it was to lead Argentina to the World Cup final and expressing uncertainty about whether he will continue playing soccer.

“I don’t know what I’m going to do without you,” the post said in Spanish, shared on Messi’s Instagram. “I don’t know how to keep going. All I ever did was play soccer, and now I have serious doubts about whether I’ll keep doing it for much longer.”

Jorge Messi - who played a fundamental role in the soccer star’s career, serving as his agent and managing his business affairs - died Saturday. He was 68.

Lionel Messi led Argentina to a runner-up finish in this summer’s World Cup. In the team’s first match, against Algeria, he was visibly emotional after scoring the first of his three goals. He said later that he wept for “a reason unrelated to sports.”

“You asked me to play in this last World Cup so many times and

just before it started was when you took a turn for the worse,” the post said. “It was the first time you weren’t going to be at the tournament. But mom kept telling me that you were going to get better and that you’d be well enough to travel. I kept telling you that we were going to make it to the final so you could travel.”

The post added that Messi “wanted to win it” for his father.

“I couldn’t,” the post continued. “My legs had nothing left. This time I tried to push beyond what my body could handle, but I couldn’t. I never managed to feel right.”

Messages of support for the Messi family have poured in over recent days. Messi had returned to his native Argentina and missed his MLS club Inter Miami’s recent Leagues Cup match against Monterrey.

Inter Miami concludes the group phase of the tournament Wednesday night against León, though coach Guillermo Hoyos said Tuesday there is no timetable for Messi’s return.

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug 12, (AP): The Golden State Warriors have every indication Stephen Curry would like to stay with the team for the remainder of his career, and they plan to make that happen for the two-time NBA MVP.

The 38-year-old Curry is hoping to play at least a couple more years and has said he wants them to be with the Warriors. He is set to complete a \$62.6 million extension he signed for the 2026-27 season in August 2024.

Whether a new contract will get done right away remains to be seen. Curry becomes eligible for a two-year extension Aug. 29, and general manager Mike Dunleavy said, “I’m pretty confident Steph will finish his career here.”

“Ultimately it’s his call, his decision, whether that’s allowing his contract to run out and move on,” Dunleavy said during a video call Tuesday. “Look, if he comes to me and wants to be moved, Joe (owner Joe Lacob) and I will talk it through. We wouldn’t love it. But he’s earned the right to do what he wants, do those things. But as far as the messaging or any idea that he would be anywhere else, that’s not a thing we’re looking at or he’s looking at.”

Curry averaged 26.6 points, 4.7



In this file photo, Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry, right, watches his shot go in during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Lakers in Los Angeles. (AP)

assists and 3.6 rebounds but was limited to 43 games last season for the Warriors, who will host Denver on Christmas night - playing on the holiday for the 14th straight year.

Closely monitoring his playing time will be a top priority as coach Steve Kerr returns for two more seasons after signing a new con-

tract in May. Curry missed more than two months with a nagging right knee injury before he finally came back in early April.

He had initially hoped to return after the All-Star break.

“I think with the knee, other injuries and then his age, it’s definitely something we have to manage,”

Dunleavy said.

The Warriors (37-45) also dealt with season-ending knee injuries to Jimmy Butler and Moses Moody that required surgeries and finish 10th in the Western Conference. After beating the Los Angeles Clippers in the first play-in tournament game, Golden State lost 111-96 at Phoenix.

The Warriors missed out on signing LeBron James this offseason but brought back Draymond Green on a one-year contract for \$27.7 million, and also Kristaps Porzingis, Al Horford and Gary Payton II.

Dunleavy hasn’t heard any change of thinking from Curry, who is headed into his 18th NBA season still determined to add to his four championships with Golden State. The Warriors last won in 2022.

“That’s always been what he’s discussed. I think that’s tracking quite well,” Dunleavy said of Curry staying put.

“There’s two things I’m confident about with Steph. He really, really wants to win and he wants to finish his career as a Warrior. I don’t think that changes tomorrow, Aug. 29th, the start of the season, middle of the season, the end of next season. I think those things are going to be consistent.”

Financial realities begin to shift

PGA Tour faces prospect of more LIV Golf players returning after initial trickling

WASHINGTON, Aug 12, (AP): Any notion that players lured away by the Saudi Arabia riches of LIV Golf would never return to the PGA Tour doesn't hold much water these days. Five months from now, there could be as many as five ex-LIV players teeing it up at the season opener in California.

Brooks Koepka was the first to return, and that didn't go the way he had hoped. He played 16 times and looked like a five-time major champion until his caddie handed him the putter. Koepka failed to reach the postseason at No. 94 in the FedEx Cup, a performance he described as "pathetic."

Patrick Reed, who decided not to renew with LIV a week before it began the 2026 season, is leading the Race to Dubai on the European tour and is a lock to be among the leading 10 players not already exempt to get PGA Tour cards for 2027.

"I always saw myself wanting to start and finish my career on the PGA Tour," Reed said. He will be playing the Nexo Championship next week in Scotland for a \$3 million purse. Even one of the lesser "Challenger Series" events in the new tour schedule will feel like an upgrade.

Others currently among the leading 10 are Eugenio Chacarra, Bernd Wiesberger and Shaun Norris. All of them were part of LIV Golf when the rival league launched in 2022, and all have been away from LIV long enough to return without penalty (and without equity).

The PGA Tour has a full plate as it tries to shore up a revamped schedule for 2028 and to create a post-season format that finally puts some meaning into the word "playoffs."

Brian Rolapp, one year into his role as CEO of the PGA Tour, has never spent much time talking about LIV Golf because there's no need,

especially now. Rolapp saying in a Bloomberg News interview that there was "no merger, no conversations with LIV Golf," somehow made news. The framework agreement got rid of the lawsuits. That was key.

But creating a path back will need to be added to the plate at some point.

The renegade league is in survival mode without Saudi funding, and while it is leaning into the concept of "LIV 2.0" with the promise of a lead investor, the numbers don't make sense. The Public Investment Fund spent more than \$5 billion in five years, much of that to attract stars who went over to LIV because of the money.

"So many of them came because this was a good opportunity for them to make some money, and this second bite at the apple is equity instead of cash," LIV CEO Scott O'Neil said last week when sharing the news of

an agreement with an investor.

He was full of more optimism than details, chief among them the size of the investment.

And then the show went on. Joaquin Niemann won for the ninth time. Jon Rahm clinched the individual title for the third straight time and picked up a \$6 million bonus, down from \$18 million the last two years he won it.

Scottie Scheffler won \$10 million for winning the PGA Tour's regular season. The PGA Tour's new "Championship Series" in 2028 offers \$20 million purses. LIV Golf's restructuring will likely have prize funds half that size. The math is not that complicated.

LIV ends its season next week in Indianapolis. And then what? Players will have months to contemplate their futures in golf while dropping in on the odd European tour or Asian Tour event.

The day before O'Neil gave his update on a lead investor, Cameron Smith said about a return to the PGA Tour, "I mean, if it was the only option, I think that's where everyone would want to be for sure, 100%." Lucas Herbert said his management has been in touch with the tour.

The key figures are Rahm and Bryson DeChambeau, who are more valuable to LIV Golf than they would be to the PGA Tour. Of course, that's not the way DeChambeau sees it.

"Personally, I'd love to be able to play events on the PGA Tour, too," DeChambeau said last week in an interview with the New York Post. "I think that's best for golf. I'd love that. It's not an either-or mentality. It's 'can we do both?' I think that's where everybody wants to be.

"There isn't a golf fan on the planet who doesn't want to see me play a big tour event, and I get that," he said. "I'd love to go play events that

make sense, love to play team golf and love to play wherever they'll let me."

Is that what the PGA Tour and its members want?

Rolapp in January offered a path back to DeChambeau, Smith and Rahm - major champions since LIV launched in 2022 - and gave them three weeks to decide. None took the offer, no surprise. At the time, there was no indication Saudi Arabia was going to turn off the cash spigot for a league that is (was) all about cash.

Those are three prominent names. There are others like Tyrrell Hatton (four Ryder Cup teams) and Niemann (nine LIV victories). There is unproven youth. There also are 17 players who are 40 or older who might not want to saddle up for a rugged path back to where they once were.

So much depends on how LIV 2.0 comes together and how long it can last.

All Blacks wash away Sharks 54-0 in rain-soaked Durban



Sharks' Donovan Don, jumps for the ball with All Blacks' Ruben Love during a friendly rugby match between Sharks and All Blacks, in Durban, South Africa. (AP)

McKenzie injured

DURBAN, South Africa, Aug 12, (AP): New Zealand comfortably handled the Sharks 54-0 and a sodden Kings Park to go two for two on its South Africa tour.

Test fullback Damian McKenzie limped off after scoring a 28th-minute try. His exit was precautionary 11 days before the Greatest Rivalry test series against the Springboks. He twisted his left ankle early while landing to take a mark.

"It's not too bad but we just felt he was hobbling around less than 100%," All Blacks coach Dave Rennie said. "He will be fine."

The All Blacks started half of their test XV against the weakest of the four provincial sides they face, and were too slick for the heavily depleted Sharks on a pitch soaked by heavy rain right up until kickoff.

They fixed the issues that were shown up while beating the Stormers 38-21 in Cape Town last Friday. The maul defense stopped two early lineup drives by the Sharks from five meters out, the scrum was solid, and discipline much



All Blacks' Damian McKenzie, left, scores a try as Sharks' Vusi Moyi tries to defend during a friendly rugby match between Sharks and All Blacks. (AP)

improved. No yellow cards were conceded and the penalty count was half of the 16 conceded to the Stormers.

They scored eight tries, seven converted by standout Ruben Love - four from the sideline and one in off the post.

Love led the All Blacks' pre-match haka, which was uniquely met by a solo haka from Ma'a Nonu, the 44-year-old rugby great who played for New Zealand 104 times from 2003-15 and was signed by the Sharks only a week ago.

"It was such a privilege and an

honor, and to do the haka, showing my respect on behalf of my family to the team I love," he told broadcaster SuperSport.

Nonu, who hasn't retired, opposed New Zealand for the first time but too late to have an impact. The Sharks were 42-0 down when he came off the bench with a quarter to go.

After containing a rousing start by the Sharks, the All Blacks got their first try in the 19th from winger Fehi Fineanganofa after a Jordie Barrett bomb.

McKenzie slid over the tryline

moments later but the try was ruled out by a knock on. Five minutes later, McKenzie was over again in another splash beside the right corner flag after a Barrett kickpass to Fineanganofa. Then the fullback limped off.

New Zealand turned around 14-0 ahead and gradually washed away the Sharks like an incoming tide.

The other wing, Caleb Clarke, scored from a huge miss-out pass by No. 8 Wallace Sititi, then Clarke gave the final offload for Fineanganofa's second try.

First-time captain Luke Jacobson put Barrett away for a score, and a Quinn Tupaea break was finished by scrumhalf Kyle Prestont.

Closing tries by Timoci Tavata-vanawai and Sam Darry brought up the All Blacks' half-century.

They face the Bulls in Pretoria on Saturday. Yet to appear on tour because of "niggles" were hooker Codie Taylor, wing Will Jordan, prop Tyrel Lomax and scrumhalf Cam Roigard, who was a late withdrawal from Tuesday's game because of a tight calf.

The All Blacks still haven't named a replacement for center Billy Proctor, who broke a shoulder blade against the Stormers. There's heavy speculation about the return of flyhalf Richie Mo'unga, who last played for New Zealand at the 2023 World Cup.



In this file photo, Netherlands' Memphis Depay tries to reach the ball in front of the goal during the World Cup Group F soccer match between Tunisia and the Netherlands in Kansas City, Mo. (AP)

Sparse crowd in Birmingham

Organizers defend European championships ticket prices

LONDON, Aug 12, (AP): Organizers of the European championships have defended ticket prices in Birmingham after British sprinter Amy Hunt won the 100-meter final at a nearly half-empty Alexander Stadium.

One of Olympic champion Keely Hodgkinson's coaches was among those questioning prices and raising concerns about parking and the cost of food - with bratwurst hot dogs going for 15 pounds (\$20).

The category A seats for Monday night's session - which included Jakob Ingebrigtsen's victory in the 5,000 meters and Hunt's gold - cost 150 pounds (\$202). The cheapest adult ticket was 26 pounds (\$35).

Official attendance Monday night was 13,623, though journalists on hand said the actual figure seemed lower, in a stadium with capacity at 23,000.

"Hearing from fans re high ticket prices, parking issues & even people not knowing it was taking place," Jenny Meadows, a coach of

Hodgkinson, wrote on social media.

Commentator Sonja McLaughlan added: "Actually a bit shocked at type of prices being charged. It's a shame for the athletes who deserve better. The sport has this precious



Germany's Shanie Craft makes an attempt in the women's discus throw qualifying at the European Athletics Championships in Birmingham, England. (AP)

window without football, free to air television exposure and it looks flat with such a sparse crowd."

The morning sessions - during which the athletes compete in qualifying rounds - offer lower prices. Ticket prices for Tuesday's and Wednesday's evening sessions top out at 110 pounds (\$148), before reverting to the higher prices Thursday through Sunday.

Organizers said Tuesday that more than 50% of tickets were priced at 30 pounds (\$40) and lower.

"Birmingham 2026 is delighted with ticket sales for the championships, which have far surpassed our targets," they said in a statement. "Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening sessions are approaching sell-out, with several other sessions close to capacity."

The widely anticipated women's 800-meter final is Friday night and is expected to feature Hodgkinson, Audrey Werro and Femke Broeders-Bol.

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From left, second-placed Germany's Isabel Gose, first-placed Italy's Simona Quadarella and third-placed Germany's Maya Werner pose after the 800 meters freestyle final during the European Swimming Championships in Saint-Denis, near Paris, France. (AP)

Sports

East Bengal ends Al-Arabi Champions League Two dream

Kuwait side drops to Challenge League

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KOLKATA, India, Aug 12: Al-Arabi's AFC Champions League Two campaign came to an end after they suffered a 4-1 defeat to India's East Bengal in the playoff round at Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata.

The result means Al-Arabi will now compete in the AFC Challenge League, while East Bengal secured its place in the AFC Champions League Two.

Al-Arabi coach Goran Sablic started Suleiman Abdulghafour in goal, with Abdullah Ammar, Abdulwahab Al-Awadi, Jawhar Rasul and Sheldon forming the defensive line. Ali Aziz, Khaled Al-Murshid and Kenan Malinco operated in midfield, while Youssef Majed, Zaid Qanbar and Anaba Ayewala led the attack.

The hosts made the brighter start and looked to capitalize on some early uncertainty in Al-Arabi's defense. Abdulghafour, however, remained alert and made several important saves to keep the score level.

Al-Arabi gradually grew into the game and began creating opportunities. Ayewala broke into the penalty area in the 12th minute but fired into the side netting. Al-Murshid tested the East Bengal goalkeeper seven minutes later, while Malinco also saw an effort saved in the 23rd minute.

The visitors then took greater control of midfield and enjoyed a spell of pressure. Ayewala weaved past several defenders five minutes before halftime but sent his effort over the bar, while Malinco headed a cross wide in the final minute of the half.

Both teams increased the tempo after the restart.

Ayewala again threatened in the 49th minute, forcing the East Bengal goalkeeper to turn his shot behind for a corner. The hosts responded immediately on the counter, but Al-Murshid produced a crucial intervention to deny them.

Al-Arabi was forced into a change in the 71st minute when Ali Abdulrasoul replaced the injured Abdullah Ammar.

Three minutes later, Al-Arabi was awarded a penalty after Malinco was brought down inside the box. Ayewala stepped up and confidently converted to give the visitors the lead.

Al-Arabi had a chance to extend its advantage in the 81st minute, but Youssef Majed headed wide.

Sablic responded by bringing on Bandar Al-Salama and Hamad Al-Harbi for Majed and Al-Murshid as he looked to maintain the team's momentum.

East Bengal threw players forward in the closing stages and finally found the equalizer in stoppage time. Jai Gupta rose to head the ball past Abdulghafour, sending the match into extra time.

The additional 30 minutes proved decisive. Al-Arabi missed several chances to regain the lead, with Al-Salama among those unable to capitalize, while the team's physical condition appeared to deteriorate.

East Bengal took advantage in the 108th minute when Palestinian Bassim Rashid unleashed a powerful shot to put the hosts ahead.

Al-Arabi pushed for another equalizer, but its hopes were ended in the 116th minute when David beat the Al-Arabi defense and scored East Bengal's third goal.

Rohit Danu completed the rout in the 120th minute, sealing a 4-1 victory and sending East Bengal into the AFC Champions League Two.



Al-Arabi and East Bengal players vie for the ball during the AFC Champions League Two playoff in Kolkata.

Glave leads Britain 1-2 in men's 100 meters at European championships

Tentoglou wins fourth consecutive long jump title



Britain's Romell Glave crosses the finish line to win the gold medal in the men's 100 meters final at the European Athletics Championships in Birmingham, England. (AP)

BIRMINGHAM, England, Aug 12, (AP): Miltiadis Tentoglou of Greece overcame windy conditions to win his fourth consecutive long jump title at the European championships.

The two-time Olympic champion's mark of 8.44 meters on his fourth attempt was good enough for gold at Alexander Stadium on Day 2 of the continental track-and-field competition.

"This was one of the hardest finals I have ever done," the 28-year-old Tentoglou said. "I am good in all conditions but this wind was so hard on us long jumpers. It was changing all the time and always negative."

Switzerland's Simon Ehammer (8.29 meters) took silver and Bozhidar Saraboyukov (8.26 meters) of Bulgaria was third.

"Ehammer is a very strong guy and he was kind of OK with it. But for the other jumpers and me, it was incredibly difficult," Tentoglou said. "I had to try so hard for this 8.44m

jump. It is nothing for me usually but today it was so hard to do. This was not just a regular 8.40m jump for me. It was big jump. So I appreciate it a



Greece's Miltiadis Tentoglou makes an attempt in the men's long jump final at the European Athletics Championships in Birmingham, England. (AP)

lot.

"This is one of my most precious victories because it is also a complex season for me. This is the start of winning golds again."

At the 2024 Paris Games, Tentoglou became just the second man - Carl Lewis is the other - to win two consecutive Olympic long jump titles.

Britain's Romell Glave won gold and teammate Jeremiah Azu took silver in the final of the men's 100 meters.

The 26-year-old Glave improved on his bronze in Rome two years ago by finishing first in 10.09 seconds. Azu crossed in 10.16. Owen Ansah (10.19) of Germany was third.

"It's an amazing feeling. The work I've put in to reach this point was a lot," Glave said. "Me and my coach have been working on the first 30 metres. It paid off and it's amazing to upgrade my bronze from 2024."

It came a night after Amy Hunt won gold for Britain in the women's 100.

Two-time defending champion Marcell Jacobs pulled up halfway through Tuesday's final with an

apparent leg injury before jogging across the line. Jacobs won gold in the 100 at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Nadine Visser of the Netherlands secured her first major outdoor title by winning the women's 100 meter hurdles - barely.

Visser crossed the line in 12.668 seconds to win by one-thousandth of a second over Poland's Pia Skrzyszowska, the 2022 champion.

"This is a real relief, honestly. It still hasn't sunk in completely. This is the medal I've wanted for a very long time," the 31-year-old Visser said.

"Winning by a thousandth, this was unnecessary. I'm a really big perfectionist, always thinking about things that could have gone better. Waiting for the photo finish, I wasn't really thinking about whether I would get the gold medal or not, I just felt this wasn't the perfect race," she added. "In the end it doesn't matter because it was enough. I am so happy."

Laeticia Bapté (12.73) of France was third.

Kuwait Volleyball Association works to develop new generation of referees

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: The Kuwait Volleyball Association is stepping up efforts to develop its refereeing system by organizing a specialized course for newly recruited referees at the Leaders Preparation Center in Khaldiya from August 30 to September 10.

The initiative is part of the association's strategy to attract and develop young refereeing talent and establish a strong pool of qualified officials capable of handling volleyball competitions to the required technical and professional standards.

The course will combine theoretical lectures with practical training, covering the technical and legal aspects of refereeing, recent amendments to the rules, and the proper handling of different situations that may arise during matches.

International referees Ali Al-Ostad, chairman of the Referees Committee, and Dr. Ahmed Al-Anizan, the committee's rapporteur, will conduct the course. They will draw on their experience to improve the participants' technical and physical readiness and prepare them for a gradual transition into competitive officiating.

Dr. Al-Anizan said the program is designed to develop a new generation of referees and strengthen the overall standard of officiating in line with the continued growth of volleyball locally and regionally.

He added that the initiative would help provide the association's competitions with qualified referees in the coming seasons while laying the foundation for a young and capable refereeing base.



Dr. Ahmed Al-Anizan

Al-Anizan also highlighted the cooperation between the association's Board of Directors and the Referees Committee in developing officials and enhancing their technical capabilities. He said the committee regularly organizes training and qualification programs for both existing and new referees ahead of each season to ensure they are fully prepared to officiate matches across all age groups.

He stressed that keeping referees updated on the latest technical and legal developments has contributed positively to their performances. The standard of Kuwaiti volleyball referees has improved significantly in recent years, he said, reflecting the continued efforts of the association and its Referees Committee to develop and qualify national officiating talent.

Burgan signs Hernandez to boost Club World Champ'ship campaign

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 12: Burgan Club has completed the signing of Spanish right-back Angel Hernandez as part of its preparations for the upcoming handball season and a busy international campaign.

The experienced Hernandez brings a strong resumé to the team, having previously represented Portuguese side Porto, Qatar's Al-Duhail and Kuwait Club. He also spent a period on loan with Egyptian powerhouse Al Ahly.

Hernandez becomes Burgan's second foreign signing, joining Japanese player Yasuhiro. The club has also strengthened its local contingent with the addition of Al-Qadsia's Abdullah Al-Attayah and five players from Al-Salmiya — Hussein Salman, Bandar Al-Shammari, Mohammed Al-Bahar, Hassan Rajab and Youssef Rajab.

The latest additions are part of Burgan's plans to assemble a competitive squad capable of challenging on multiple fronts. The management is seeking to strengthen key positions with experienced players while maintaining the core of the squad that delivered a historic Asian achievement.

Burgan is preparing for its biggest challenge yet — a historic appearance at the IHF Men's Club World Championship in Cairo from September 24 until early October.

The team will begin an overseas training camp in North Macedonia on August 25, running until September 20. The camp will feature intensive training sessions and a series of friendly matches aimed at improving the players' physical and technical levels before the Club World Championship.

Following the camp, the team will return to Kuwait before flying to Egypt two days later to complete its final preparations for the tournament.

The draw has placed Asian champions Burgan in Group B alongside German giants Füchse Berlin, hosts Al Ahly and the winner of the preliminary-round clash between Hungarian side Veszprem and Australia's Sydney.

Meanwhile, Kazma announced the renewal of Walid Al-Enezi's contract for a third consecutive season. He will continue with the first-team handball technical staff as fitness coach, conditioning specialist and performance analyst.