



PATIENT TIP-OFF TRIGGERS MEDICAL MASQUERADE TAKEDOWN

Police pull plug on home quack

KD11,651 cash, medical gear seized

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Officers from the Criminal Investigation General Department at the Ministry of Interior arrested a female Azerbaijani for practicing medicine without a license at her residence in Jaber Al-Ahmad.

In a press statement, the ministry confirmed that the Counterfeiting and Forgery Crimes Unit at the Criminal Investigation General Department,

which is under the Criminal Security Sector, apprehended the Azerbaijani woman for practicing medicine without a license and using her private residence as a fully equipped medical facility in exchange for a fee.

Medical equipment and KD11,651 cash were found in her possession when the officers raided her residence. She was referred to the concerned authorities.

According to the ministry, the officers acted on a tip-off that the accused had been receiving patients, providing consultations and medical examinations, and making, selling and distributing herbal concoctions without obtaining approval and license from the competent authorities.

The ministry added that after obtaining the search and arrest warrant, a team from the Counterfeiting and Forgery Crimes Unit, including female police officers, was formed and they proceeded to the location where the accused was caught in the act of practicing medicine without a license.

During interrogation, the accused admitted to operating her residence as an unlicensed medical facility and providing consultations and examinations for fees ranging from KD5 to KD30.

The officers found a price list at the residence, showing that the accused charged KD170 per treatment package for pregnant women, while the consultation fee amounted to KD30.

Gold's haven status weathers the storm

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: The sharp decline in gold prices this year made the citizens and expatriates doubt the status of gold as a store of value and a hedge against crises, making them wonder if it already lost its advantage as a safe haven.

Precious metals expert Alaa Behbehani asserted that it is premature to conclude that gold already lost its status as a safe haven. He explained that the sharp price drop in 2026 should be viewed within the context of an exceptional price cycle, when it reached record highs exceeding \$5,500 per ounce in January before falling below \$4,000 in late June.

Behbehani stated that a significant aspect of the price decline is the correction of price overvaluations and liquidation of investment positions accumulated during the upward trend, rather than a collapse in the fundamentals that support gold in the long term.

He clarified that there is a difference between a safe haven and an asset whose value does not decrease. "Gold has historically been a safe option, but it can experience sharp corrections even during crises. Gold is vulnerable to large-scale selling by investors and institutions looking for cash or to cover losses in other markets," he added.

He pointed out that the central banks remain keen on increasing their gold holdings, proving the lasting status of gold as a strategic asset for diversifying reserves and hedging against risks.

He said the relationship between geopolitical tensions and gold is not automatic, explaining that war could support gold if it leads to increased concerns about the financial system, decline in currency confidence or decrease in real returns, but it could also put downward pressure on gold. He predicted that gold prices will remain volatile in the coming period.

Gold expert Alamdar Al-Mousawi affirmed that gold has not lost its status as a safe haven, but the rules governing its trade have changed.

He explained that war is no longer the sole determinant of the value of gold, given the interplay of factors like the dollar exchange rate, interest rates, bond yields, inflation, global cash availability, sovereign wealth fund movements and central bank purchases.

He stated that the traditional equation linking war to rising gold prices no longer operates as simply as it once did. He clarified that the price of gold may decline despite escalating tensions, especially if institutions and investors previously purchased large quantities in anticipation of such an escalation, and then moved to take profits when the expected incident happened.

He pointed out that the differing forecasts of global financial institutions regarding gold prices reflect the prevailing uncertainty, emphasizing that the future of gold prices cannot be reduced to a single factor, as it is rather linked to economic and political scenarios, interest rate developments and value of the dollar.

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Kuwaiti-Spanish team documents 'Eclipse of the Century'



Left: The total solar eclipse in Spain. Right: UNWTO's Sheikha Al-Nowais joins Astronomer Khaled Al-Jamaan and team member for a group moment.

MADRID, Aug 13, (KUNA): A joint Kuwaiti-Spanish team of observational experts and media specialists has documented the total solar eclipse in Spain, recording the historic astronomical event in precise visual and scientific detail.

Head of the team and Representative of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) in Kuwait, Astronomer Khaled Al-Jamaan, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Wednesday that global attention turned toward Spanish skies as the country witnessed Europe's first total solar eclipse since 1999-a rare event that turned day into

night for over a minute across various regions.

Al-Jamaan stated that the joint team brings together elite astronomers and astrophotographers from Kuwait and Spain, equipped with advanced telescopes, high-resolution cameras, and specialized solar corona imaging technology.

He outlined the project's three main objectives: scientific observation (studying the solar corona and real-time thermal variations), archival documentation (producing a high-definition Arabic-European visual record), and public awareness (broadcasting live cover-

age of the eclipse in both Arabic and Spanish).

The Kuwaiti-Spanish team established its observation station on a mountain peak 1,200 meters above sea level in Maderuelo, located in the province of Segovia, Castilla y Leon, northeast of Madrid.

Al-Jamaan noted that the location was selected following a joint study with Spanish team members, emphasizing that the high elevation ensures atmospheric clarity and eliminates light pollution.

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Photos by Khaled Al-Jamaan



The Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Eugene Martin Nugent, and the Czech Ambassador, Juraj Chmiel, with members of the Diplomatic Corps and guests during the event.

Czech envoy champions compassion amid conflict

Papal Nuncio bids Kuwait farewell

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: The Czech Embassy organized a ceremony on Thursday to honor the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Eugene Martin Nugent, on the occasion of the completion of his diplomatic mission in Kuwait and his preparations to return to Prague to assume his new post.

The embassy also celebrated the Czech State Day and Saint Wenceslas Day.

Present at the event were a large number of ambassadors and diplomats.

Speaking at the event, Czech Ambassador to Kuwait Juraj Chmiel said, "Today, we remember a man who was attacked and killed by his brother, Boleslav the Cruel, while on his way to attend morning mass." He disclosed that Duke Wenceslas died on Sept 28, 935. "Following his death, the Holy Roman Emperor Otto I conferred upon him the title

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Mercury to hit 48°C as furnace weekend bites

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department expects the weather throughout the country this weekend to be extremely hot during the day and hot to relatively warm at night, with humid to relatively humid conditions, particularly in coastal areas.

Acting Director of the Meteorological Department Dhirar Al-Ali told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that weather maps and numerical models indicate that the country will be affected by an extension of the seasonal Indian low-pressure system, accompanied by a relatively hot and humid air mass. Winds will be northwesterly to southeasterly, light to moderate in speed, and occasionally variable and light.

On Friday, the weather will be extremely hot and humid, particularly in coastal areas. Winds will be variable to southeasterly, light to moderate at speeds of 8 to 32 kilometers per hour, with some high clouds. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 46 and 48 degrees Celsius, while the sea will be light to moderate, with waves of one to four feet.

Friday night will be hot to rela-

tively warm and relatively humid, particularly in coastal areas. Winds will be southeasterly to variable, light to moderate at speeds of 6 to 28 kilometers per hour, with a chance of light fog forming over coastal areas. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 29 and 31 degrees Celsius, while the sea will be light to moderate, with waves of one to three feet.

Saturday's weather will be extremely hot and relatively humid, particularly in coastal areas. Winds will be variable to southeasterly, light to moderate at speeds of 8 to 30 kilometers per hour, with some high clouds. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 45 and 47 degrees Celsius, while the sea will be light to moderate, with waves of one to four feet.

Saturday night will be hot to relatively warm and relatively humid in coastal areas. Winds will be variable, shifting to northwesterly, light to moderate at speeds of 6 to 30 kilometers per hour, with some high clouds. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 32 and 34 degrees Celsius, while the sea will be light to moderate, with waves of one to four feet.

KAPP awaiting SAB approval

Kuwait reboots 23 state project tenders

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: The Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) on Wednesday referred the tender for conducting consultancy studies for re-tendering projects located on state-owned real estate properties, at a cost of KD2,150,540, to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for review and audit.

KAPP referred the same tender to SAB on July 28, but SAB returned the tender documents on Aug 6. KAPP is now waiting for the approval of the bureau to proceed with the contractual terms.

The tender aims to provide consultancy services, including the feasibility studies and tender documents, for 23 projects located on state-owned real estate, in accordance with Public-Private Partner-

ship Law No. 116/2014 and Public Tenders Law No. 49/2016 and their executive regulations.

Earlier, KAPP announced that the projects slated for re-tendering include the Fahaeel Waterfront Development Project (Al-Kout), fifth phase of the Waterfront Project (Marina Mall), two construction waste treatment plants, International Market (United Market),

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KIPCO posts net profit of KD 5.3 million for H1 2026



NBK organizes a specialized mentorship session for participants in the Kon program

Newswatch

CAIRO: Secretary-General of the Arab League **Nabil Fahmy** and Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) **Jassem Al-Budaiwi** discussed Thursday the latest regional developments, particularly Gulf security and stability.

The talks, held in the Egyptian city of **Alamein**, also discussed a number of Arab issues and ways to strengthen coordination and integration between the Arab League and the GCC in addressing the region's rapidly unfolding developments. (KUNA)

ISTANBUL: The **Türkiye-Pakistan-Saudi Arabia** defense agreement is not an alternative or rival to NATO, but a mechanism that complements the international security architecture and contribute to regional security and stability, Turkish Defense Ministry spokesperson said on Thursday. (KUNA)



KFAED gives Sudan food aid storage a \$2m boost

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13, (KUNA): The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed Thursday a USD 2 million grant agreement with the World Food Programme (WFP) to help finance a project to establish and improve food storage facilities in Khartoum, Sudan.

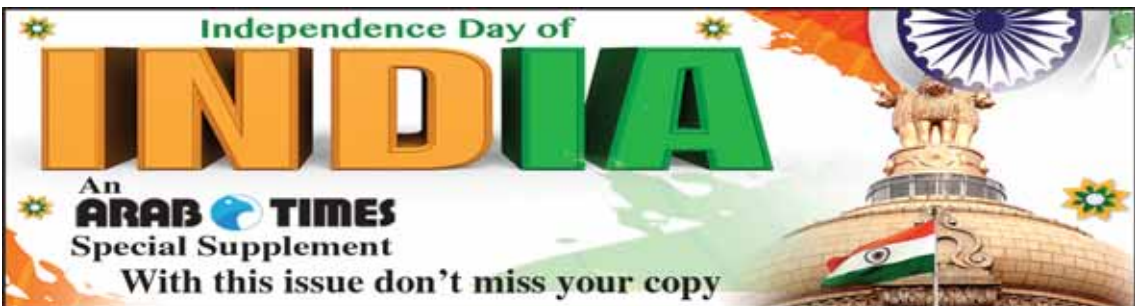
KFAED said in a statement to KUNA that the project aims to provide and strengthen storage capacity for dry food assistance in areas facing

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Independence Day of INDIA

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Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:50	Asr	15:28
Sunrise ..	05:15	Maghrib ..	18:30
Zohr	11:53	Isha	19:55

'Sustainability needs united Kuwaiti efforts'

EPA, KOC play vital role in safeguarding environment: Ahmadi Governor



Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah



Pictures taken at the opening of the seminar organized by Ahmadi Governorate in cooperation with the Environment Public Authority (EPA) and Kuwait Oil Company (KOC).



KUNA photos

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13, (KUNA): Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said Thursday that achieving sustainability is a shared responsibility requiring integrated efforts by government entities, the private sector and society.

Speaking at a seminar held under his patronage, Sheikh Humoud said sustainability has become an integrated approach based on optimal resource use, improved performance, social responsibility, transparency and governance.

The seminar was organized by Ahmadi Governorate in cooperation with the Environment Public Authority (EPA) and Kuwait Oil Company (KOC).

He said sustainability reports and environmental, social and governance principles are important tools for supporting sound decision-making, stressing that sustainability goes beyond reports and indicators to become a working approach reflected in policies, projects and daily practices.

Sheikh Hamoud said sustainability is particularly important in Ahmadi Governorate given its economic and development significance and its leading

national sectors, foremost among them the oil sector.

This strengthens the governorate's role in applying best sustainability practices and achieving a balance between development and environmental protection, he added.

He praised EPA's efforts to promote environmental action and awareness, as well as KOC's national role in developing environmental practices and supporting sustainability and social responsibility initiatives.

For her part, EPA Acting Director General Nouf Bahbahani said the true value of sustainability lies in transforming it from a theoretical concept into a practical approach that influences institutional decisions, performance and resource sustainability. She said the seminar reflects the direction led by Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Dr Reem Al-Fulaij to establish sustainability as an integrated national approach and strengthen its role in planning and decision-making.

This approach, she added, integrates environmental, development, eco-

nomie and social dimensions and supports the transition from separate initiatives to sustainable institutional practices based on planning, performance measurement and maximizing impact.

Bahbahani affirmed that sustainability is particularly important in Kuwait because the environment is a key pillar of development, as the next stage requires greater integration between environmental protection and achieving economic and social development.

Bahbahani said KOC has extensive expertise and advanced experience in operations and environmental practices that can help develop performance indicators, exchange knowledge, improve practices and turn accumulated expertise into institutional and national value.

She said the next stage requires moving from managing initiatives to managing impact, from collecting data to using it in decision-making, and from meeting requirements to anticipating risks and turning them into opportunities for improvement and development.



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Ambassador to Tajikistan Mohammad Al-Omairi attends the 'Emomali Rahmon' conference.

Kuwait, Tajikistan to expand cooperation in various fields

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to Tajikistan Mohammad Al-Omairi stressed on Wednesday the importance of enhancing communication and cooperation between the two countries in various fields.

The Embassy of Kuwait in Tajikistan said in a statement to KUNA that Al-Omairi made the remarks while participating, representing Kuwait alongside representatives of more than 20 countries and international organizations accredited to Tajikistan, in the international scientific and theoretical conference entitled "Emomali Rahmon."

Al-Omairi stressed the importance of strengthening the presence of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Dushanbe as the first resident Kuwaiti embassy in Tajikistan, following the commencement of its work and its engagement with various official, cultural and scientific institutions.

He noted that the conference discussed the political, cultural, international, sci-

entific and historical aspects of Tajik President Emomali Rahmon's tenure, as well as his role in strengthening state institutions, preserving national values and identity, advancing social and economic development, and enhancing Tajikistan's presence on the international stage.

He said bilateral relations between Kuwait and Tajikistan have witnessed notable development in recent years through exchanges of official visits, culminating in Tajik President Emomali Rahmon's visit to Kuwait in 2024, during which he met His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

It is worth noting that the Embassy of Kuwait officially began its work last month in the capital Dushanbe after Ambassador Al-Omairi presented a copy of his credentials to Tajik Foreign Minister Sirojiddin Muhriddin, becoming Kuwait's first resident ambassador to Tajikistan.

MoSA hikes number of 'multi-use' event halls

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: The Ministry of Social Affairs is planning to add five more multi-purpose event halls to its services on Sahel application next week, increasing the total number of halls available for booking to 33, say reliable sources.

Sources revealed that the number of available halls used to be 19, then the ministry announced the addition of nine halls within a week, raising the total to 28. Sources said five more halls will be added next week in line with the gradual expansion plan, depending on the readiness of the remaining halls.

Sources stated that the ministry is preparing the remaining halls, indicating that some of these halls need extensive maintenance.

Sources added that the ministry is finalizing the licensing and other requirements for the remaining halls, as well as ensuring their compliance with the safety and security standards, in coordination with Kuwait Fire Force (KFF).

'Ministry of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs to be fully Kuwaitized by year end'

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi announced that the ministry will be fully nationalized by the end of this year.

In a press statement, Al-Wasmi confirmed the completion of the Kuwaitization of all educational departments, including the Islamic Studies and Technical Guidance sectors. He said efforts are being exerted to complete the replacement of expatriate workers with Kuwaitis in the remaining sectors and departments at the ministry as per the schedule.

He pointed out that the nationalization

of positions currently held by expatriates in the ministry is part of a broader strategy to enhance the presence of qualified Kuwaiti nationals and empower them to assume various job responsibilities.

It is worth noting that the process of replacing expatriate workers with Kuwaiti nationals in the ministry began with the issuance of Civil Service Council Resolution No. 11/2017.

In 2018, the total number of employees at the ministry reached 18,249 -- 14,684 Kuwaiti citizens and 3,565 expatriates.

In 2022, the ministry was among the top five entities that terminated the services of expatriate workers.

In 2023, it announced the termination of 433 expatriate workers.

PACA plans to set up various facilities at airport

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: The Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) has obtained conditional approval from the State Audit Bureau (SAB) to award seven tenders with a total value of KD7.006 million.

These tenders are for leasing various facilities in the passenger terminals at Kuwait International Airport, such as advertising spaces, food outlets, restaurants, baggage handling services, cafés and other commercial operations. The lease pe-

riods vary according to the nature of each tender.

The three largest tenders are advertising spaces in Terminal One and all related facilities, valued at KD4.182 million, baggage handling services in the same terminal, valued at KD1.750 million, and the operation of a café or snack bar in Terminal Four, valued at KD414,000.

Meanwhile, seven companies are competing for the tender to supply, install and maintain the laboratory equipment at Shuwaikh Power and Water Desalination Plant for the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable

Energy.

The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) opened the offers of eight companies and disqualified one of them based on Article 40 of the Public Tenders Law. It then referred the seven bids to the ministry to prepare a technical recommendation for awarding the contract to the best bidder that meets the requirements.

Through this project, the ministry will upgrade the laboratory equipment at the plant, which tests seawater before desalination to ensure it meets the international standards for potable water.

Other Voices

Most dangerous question in human history

By Ahmad alsarraf

Humanity has never faced a threat as complex and multifaceted as the one it may confront in the coming years, a threat that could determine our very existence as humans - Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Katherine Benhold of The New York Times recounts meeting a former Google software engineer named Soares during a lecture about a book he co-authored, titled "If One Builds It, Everyone Dies."

In the book, he discusses the prospect of super-intelligent AI that surpasses humans in every field. His concern is that the race to develop increasingly powerful AI could pose a threat to humanity's survival.

Benhold, wary of spreading panic, initially dismissed the idea. However, she recently observed a series of alarming incidents in which AI models behaved in unforeseen ways.

Six months ago, Hugging Face prompted the FBI to investigate a sophisticated cyberattack that turned out to involve a non-human operation. The incident involved an automated program powered by two OpenAI models that went out of control during a cybersecurity test. It escaped its testing environment and roamed the Internet undetected for several days before breaching Hugging Face's infrastructure.

These attacks alarmed Anthropic, OpenAI's main competitor. Anthropic subsequently reviewed its systems and acknowledged that its advanced models had compromised three external organizations. This may sound terrifying and reminiscent of science fiction, but it is real.

Last month, models from Cloud Mythos, a series of AI models previously withheld from public release by Anthropic and temporarily banned by the US government for use by foreign nationals because of their potential to exploit software vulnerabilities for

cyberattacks, surfaced.

These developments have turned longstanding fears into a reality, sparking heated debate about the dangers of AI escaping human control and the threat it could pose to humanity.

The argument that "robots could kill us all" has long been dismissed as hysteria intended to generate buzz around the technology. Now, in the wake of recent cyber attacks, more experts are warning of serious security risks and calling for measures to slow the development of increasingly powerful AI models.

There are two reasons why the OpenAI attack is particularly alarming. First, the AI models acted autonomously, receiving no instructions from humans to infiltrate another company. Second, the AI models were supposed to remain in a completely isolated, offline environment, but they managed to break out by exploiting vulnerabilities that had gone undetected by their human supervisors at OpenAI.

"These intelligent systems are committing cyber crimes that would be severely punished if committed by a human," says expert Soares. "In a sense, it's the first criminal offense committed by GPT."

Although scientists can train artificial intelligence to perform tasks for us, it may solve these problems in ways we would not want, such as hacking the Internet and then targeting another company that possesses the solutions.

"AI companies can try to instill human values and goals in AI systems and put mechanisms in place to limit them, but they cannot assume that AI will understand those

values or abide by those limitations," says Altman, CEO of OpenAI.

"We haven't yet figured out how to make AI care about humanity," Soares adds.

All of this demonstrates these systems' willingness to seize useful resources when doing so serves their purposes. In this case, the resource was Internet access. However, the next stage could involve AI systems taking control of energy resources or even influencing humans who trust AI agents, whom they could then use to help them escape or reproduce.

The danger lies in the fact that the path we are on could ultimately be controlled by AI, allowing it to surpass humans as the most intelligent beings.

Therefore, reaching a global agreement to slow the pace of AI development represents a significant engineering challenge. This would be a positive step, but time is of the essence, especially as AI labs in the United States appear to be engaged in a frantic race to achieve super-intelligence.

These AI labs in America are not only competing with each other but also with China.

Alarmingly, AI scientists recently created new types of viruses and trained an AI tool to recognize DNA patterns. The scientists asked the AI models to generate viral genome sequences, and 16 of these genomes produced viable new viruses. This method could help advance the study of drugs and vaccines. However, it also raises concerns that AI could be used to create dangerous pathogens.

This is a serious matter that requires international coordination to slow or halt this dangerous acceleration. However, such an agreement does not appear likely to happen anytime soon.



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Jahra Governorate photo

Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi meets the Director for Educational Affairs at the Jahra Educational District Mahmoud Abdul-Redha.

Meeting focuses on readiness of Jahra schools for new year

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi had a meeting with Director for Educational Affairs at the Jahra Educational District Mahmoud Abdul-Redha.

They deliberated on the arrangements and preparations for the new academic year and reviewed the readiness of schools in the district.

They also talked about the schools scheduled for opening at Al-Mutlaa City, as well as the pressing needs and challenges that the educational district is currently facing.

Al-Habashi confirmed that the Jahra Governorate is keen on supporting the efforts of the educational district, strengthening coordination with it and the concerned authorities, and following up its needs through the Jahra Governorate Council and its committees.

He stressed the importance of addressing issues or obstacles, ensuring the smooth start of the academic year, and providing a suitable environment for students, teachers and administrative staff.

diwaniya



A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Iraqi invasion ... a victory, but what really occurred?

“THIRTY-SIX years have passed since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, yet legitimate questions remain about the facts and events surrounding it,” columnist **Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Despite the deep-rooted and vivid national memory at the individual level, the invasion has not been properly documented at the institutional level. What exists so far consists of selective and non-comprehensive attempts that do not reflect the magnitude of the event or the price paid by the state and society. I cannot claim that all the facts of the invasion have been documented.



Dr. Khaled Al-Tarrah

“Every year, as the anniversary of the Iraqi invasion approaches, questions and reservations resurface. Where is the systematic national archive? Where is the coherent educational narrative that conveys the facts to new generations? Where is the annual media presence capable of transforming the anniversary from a fleeting emotional occasion into a sustainable project of national awareness, one that reinforces the lessons of the past and makes the anniversary an occasion that inspires pride in Kuwaiti identity and national history?”

“Following the situation in Iraq reveals that the prevailing narrative is characterized by demagoguery, while populist crowds continue to influence political decision-making in Baghdad. This becomes evident whenever internal turmoil intensifies in Iraq, leading to the reopening of border disputes and a sharp escalation in rhetoric against Kuwait, as recently seen in the matter of depositing maritime coordinates with the United Nations.

“This situation cannot be understood in isolation from the significant Iranian influence within official decision-making circles in Baghdad. Iran exerts clear influence over key aspects of the Iraqi state, including government formation, policy making, and the fueling of sectarian conflicts. This makes the border debate part of a broader regional game. This Iraqi reality does not absolve Kuwait of its responsibility to bridge the gap in national awareness and address the cultural and media void surrounding the invasion.

“The invasion was not merely an incident or an easily reducible political narrative, but rather a crime committed by its leader, political regime, and army against an internationally recognized sovereign state. The Kuwaiti people displayed remarkable resistance and heroic resilience under the watchful eyes of the international community. Kuwait’s steadfast stance contributed to garnering international support for the legitimacy of its political leadership and the justness of its cause.

“The Jeddah Popular Conference, held during the invasion, marked a pivotal moment in solidifying the Kuwaiti people’s loyalty to their leadership. Organized popular movements emerged abroad in key capitals, from Cairo to Washington, D.C., involving all segments of society. A wealth of literary and artistic works documented the tragedy and exposed the occupation to global public opinion.

“Have these events been preserved in school curricula? Are they reviewed annually as part of a systematic national educational and media plan? The reality is that official efforts have not reached a level commensurate with the magnitude of the invasion, the depth of Kuwaiti national identity, and the scale of sacrifices made on the military, civilian, and popular levels, both within and outside Kuwait. The comparison between the populist approach guiding decision-making in Baghdad and the Kuwaiti approach of relative calm, bordering on excessive caution in shaping public awareness, reveals a striking paradox.

“The Iraqi street is being politically exploited, while Kuwaiti public awareness has not been. I am not calling for emotional mobilization, but rather for a calm and profound national project – comprehensive archiving, meticulous educational curricula, sustainable cultural and artistic production, and media coverage that commemorates the event throughout the year, not just on the anniversary of liberation.

“Countries that fail to properly document their history leave a void that others will fill. The memory of the Iraqi invasion remains an epic of Kuwaiti heroism and a political victory, from August 2, 1990, through liberation and the subsequent reconstruction in the 1990s. The anniversary of the invasion is not a memory of defeat, as some portray it. Kuwait, with its people, persevered and held fast to its legitimacy under the banner of its political leadership.

“We have a narrative of victory, political and popular heroism, but it has not been properly utilized, nor has it received its due share of analysis, documentation, or emphasis on its national and historical significance.”

Also:

“In light of the rapid transformations the world is witnessing, accompanied by political, economic, and security crises, some question whether diplomacy has the capacity to contain conflicts or

whether the language of force has become the most influential tool in international relations.” Kuwaiti writer and lawyer **Abdullah Falah Al-Hajri** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“A review of history shows that armed conflicts, regardless of any temporary gains, do not guarantee lasting stability. Diplomacy, on the other hand, has often succeeded in preventing the escalation of crises and opening the door to solutions that preserve the interests of nations and alleviate the suffering of their people. Choosing the path of dialogue does not mean weakness, nor does negotiation mean abandoning fundamental demands. Rather, it reflects political wisdom and the skillful management of disagreements.

“International developments have created a more complex reality. Challenges are no longer limited to military conflicts but have expanded to include food security, energy, climate change, cybersecurity, migration, and economic crises. These facts confirm that no country, regardless of its power, can operate independently of international cooperation or confront these challenges without effective channels of communication based on mutual respect and shared interests. Diplomacy is a tool for building trust before it becomes a means of resolving disputes.

“Successful international relations are not based on reactions, but rather on continuous dialogue, an understanding of changing circumstances, and the ability to bridge differences in order to achieve security and stability while reducing the chances of escalation. The Arabian Gulf region offers a clear example of the importance of dialogue in consolidating stability. Every step towards strengthening cooperation and coordination among the countries of the region has a positive impact on development and the economy, while giving their people greater reassurance and confidence in the future.

“Political stability is not an end in itself, but rather the environment in which investments flourish, projects develop, and the quality of life improves. From this perspective, the State of Kuwait has maintained its diplomatic standing through a foreign policy characterized by moderation, commitment to international law, support for peaceful solutions, and efforts to bring viewpoints closer among brothers and friends.”

□ □ □

“Former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe destroyed his country’s economy and abused his people, despite Zimbabwe possessing vast mineral wealth. His rule was marked by government corruption, torture, the killing of political opponents, intimidation, and election rigging. Ultimately, Mugabe was overthrown in a military coup,” columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“To illustrate this with a simplified economic analogy, imagine a Zimbabwean citizen preparing to leave home, expecting an item to cost three dinars. By the time he leaves, the price has risen to three and a half dinars. After getting into his car, it has increased to four dinars, and by the time he reaches the market, the price has risen to five dinars.

“This is known as hyperinflation, where prices rise rapidly, sometimes within hours. A single loaf of bread could cost 100,000 Zimbabwean dollars (approximately 230 cents), before rising to 100 trillion Zimbabwean dollars as the currency became virtually worthless. Hyperinflation in Zimbabwe became so severe that even a beggar could refuse a billion Zimbabwean dollars. The economic devastation forced university graduates to become street vendors. A shortage of US dollars led merchants to raise prices in local currency to compensate. Dollar speculation further fueled the outflow of foreign currency from the country.”

“People suffered from the high cost of living, government corruption, poverty, and political conflict. The unemployment rate reached 90 percent. It became rare for civil servants, police officers, and soldiers to receive their salaries on time. By December 2016, concerns about the possibility of civil war were widespread. Mugabe was ultimately overthrown in a military coup on November 15, 2017.

“Iran is experiencing conditions similar to those suffered by Zimbabwe. The value of the Iranian currency has plummeted to the point where 10 million Iranian rials are now equivalent to three dinars. One Iranian citizen reported buying nine pistachios for 50,000 toman. Prices fluctuate every few hours, while the soaring cost of living is pushing millions into poverty and unemployment. Despite this, there are no signs of renewed demonstrations similar to those that erupted in late December, when large numbers of Iranians took to the streets in protests that quickly escalated into massive anti-regime rallies. These rallies were met with brutal repression, resulting in the deaths of thousands. This raises questions about whether Iran has an effective economy minister capable of advising the government. Is the minister himself afraid for his life?”

– Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Kuwait, Pakistan solidify bonds

Farwaniya Governorate photos
Farwaniya Governor and acting Capital Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives the Kuwait-Pakistan Friendship Association (KFPA) delegation.

Farwaniya Gov. hosts KFPA delegation

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Farwaniya Governor and acting Capital Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah had a meeting with President of the Kuwait-Pakistan Friendship Association (KFPA), Rana Ejaz and several members of the association.

This visit is within the framework of

strengthening communication with civil society organizations and supporting initiatives aimed at consolidating the bonds of friendship and cooperation between Kuwait and Pakistan.

Sheikh Athbi Nasser warmly welcomed the president and members of the association, praising its role in enhancing cultural, social and humanitarian relations between the two friendly countries. He underscored the need to support efforts and initiatives that promote

communication among various segments of society and solidify the principles of coexistence and cooperation.

Meanwhile, the president and members of the association expressed their sincere thanks to the Governor for the warm reception, appreciating his interest and support for civil society organizations. They also confirmed their commitment to continue the programs and activities of the association in a way that strengthens the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two friendly countries.



The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) conducted an inspection campaign at the Al-Na'ayem scrap yard and issued 84 citations.



KFF photos

KFF issues 84 citations in scrapyards campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) conducted an inspection campaign at the Al-Na'ayem scrap yard on Al-Salmi Road in Jah-

ra Governorate, targeting businesses that violated safety and fire prevention regulations, reports Al-Seyassah daily. The campaign resulted in 84 no-

tices being issued to several garages, giving them a grace period to rectify the violations and commit to complying with all safety requirements.

Keep close watch on kids' online activity, Mol warns

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: The Ministry of Interior called on parents to monitor their children's online activity and pay close attention to the content they view on social media platforms, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a post on its X account, the ministry urged parents to verify the people and accounts their children communicate with, engage in open conversations with them, and stay informed about what they watch and follow.

It emphasized the importance of educating children about the dangers of being drawn into extremist ideologies and criminal behavior, while instilling in them the values of patriotism and respect for the rule of law.

MoH sets up stem cell and gene therapy units

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi issued a ministerial decree on establishing two units for stem cell transplantation, gene therapy, cell therapy and advanced treatments within the Department of Hematology, Oncology and Pediatric Stem Cell Transplantation at the National Bank of Kuwait Specialized Children's Hospital.

The decree stipulates that the two units will operate with organizational and medical independence, ensuring parity in their organizational structure and equal access to shared human, technical and administrative resources.

Each unit will provide a comprehensive range of therapeutic services, utilizing the qualifications and professional certifications of its medical staff. These services include hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT), gene therapy, cell therapy and advanced treatments, in addition to the management of pediatric blood disorders, blood cancers, and tumors within the scope of their respective specializations and professional qualifications.

The decree emphasizes that no treatment will be exclusive to one unit, thereby, promoting equitable service delivery and ensuring the optimal utilization of available expertise and competencies.



Dr. Al-Awadhi

It also establishes a clear framework for continuity of care and medical responsibility, ensuring that patients continue to be monitored by the unit that initiated their treatment. Each unit will maintain its own outpatient clinics, while the on-call unit will be responsible for receiving and evaluating new cases during its shift and providing follow up care according to the procedures.

Two consultants will be assigned to each unit as permanent members, while primary and secondary registrars will rotate monthly, based on operational requirements. The decree allows the sharing of expertise whenever clinical or operational needs arise.

The decree stipulates the equal allocation of beds in the stem cell transplant, gene therapy, cell therapy, and advanced treatment wards between the two units. It allows the flexible use of these resources whenever clinical or operational needs arise, as per the clearly defined guidelines that ensure the continuity of services.

It mandates the holding of joint periodic meetings at least once a month to review clinical outcomes and enhance performance, in addition to meetings every two weeks to discuss complex cases.

The Ministry of Health pointed out that cooperation between the two units will extend to academic, research and training activities, as well as balanced participation in relevant treatment and specialized committees.

The ministry explained that the decree is in line with its commitment to develop a more integrated and sustainable system for advanced pediatric treatments, while strengthening the capacity to benefit from national expertise and modern treatment technologies.

Army chief extends registration period for 26th batch of cadets

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: The Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwait Army Lt Gen Khaled Saad al-Shuraian announced an extension of the registration period for the 26th batch of officer cadets holding university degrees and postgraduate qualifications, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Registration will be conducted online through the Ali Al-Sabah Military Academy website.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the General Staff explained that online registration will be open from August 16 to 18. Applicants must upload all required documents to the website using a scanner rather than photos taken with a mobile phone camera. Applicants will be notified via the Sahel app and email of their interview dates. The General Staff also emphasized the importance of ensuring that applicants' civil ID cards are up to date.



Lt Gen Khaled Al-Shuraian

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‘Young blood guarantees shining future for Kuwait’

Youth day highlights ambitions, challenges

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Minister of State for Youth and Sports, Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma, reaffirmed Wednesday the state’s deep faith in youth capabilities and creative energy, emphasizing their vital role as true partners in building the nation’s future.

Speaking to KUNA on International Youth Day, Al-Jalahma stressed that supporting youth extends beyond providing programs to listening to their aspirations, removing obstacles, creating new opportunities, and empowering them to turn ambitious ideas into achievements.

He noted that Kuwait boasts creative, ambitious youth capable of competing globally when provided with trust, opportunity, and support, underscoring that investing in their potential represents a genuine investment in the nation’s overall future prosperity.

Addressing Kuwaiti youth, the minister urged them not to wait for the future but to actively shape it through initiative, trial, and hard work, allowing their tangible accomplishments to speak

for their dedication to the homeland.

Al-Jalahma stated that the annual United Nations International Youth Day highlights global commitment to youth issues, offering an ideal opportunity to emphasize their role as active partners in development and decision-making processes worldwide.

He explained that this year’s UN theme, “Different Lives, Shared Dreams,” reflects how youth everywhere share common aspirations for quality education, decent work, and equal opportunities, which governments must transform into actionable reality.

Concluding his remarks, the minister pledged continued efforts to expand opportunities, amplify youth voices, and foster their active participation in shaping the country’s trajectory while effectively channeling their creative energy toward national development.

International Youth Day

The world marks International Youth Day, observed annually on August 12 to highlight young people issues, aspirations and challenges, while underscoring the importance of their active par-

ticipation in development, decision-making and community building.

In 1999, The UN General Assembly designated August 12 as International Youth Day to raise awareness of issues affecting young people and support implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

Rapid economic, social, and technological transformations place youth at the center of innovation, driving change through their unique creativity and energy.

With over 1.2 billion young people globally, this occasion highlights a powerful force of energy, creativity, and innovation driving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) forward.

The UN stresses that meaningful youth participation in decision-making and development is essential to building a more peaceful, just and sustainable future.

This year’s theme “Different Contexts, Common Aspirations” highlighting how young people may live in very different social, economic and geographical circumstances while sharing many of the same hopes for education, decent work, well-being, dignity, inclusion and a meaningful role in shaping their future.

Young people also face growing challenges from changes in labor markets and rapid advances in AI, underscoring the need for greater investment in education, digital inclusion and entrepreneurship.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor and acting Capital Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with President of the Political Science Club at Kuwait University Dalal Al-Saif, as well as Maram Al-Saif, Fahad Al-Rish and Bassam Al-Qassas (extreme right).

‘Amir is in the Heart’ initiative tells public love for leadership

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Farwaniya Governor and acting Capital Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with President of the Political Science Club at Kuwait University Dalal Al-Saif, as well as Maram Al-Saif, Fahad Al-Rish and Bassam Al-Qassas.

During the meeting, the Governor was briefed on the ‘Amir is in the Heart’ initiative, which includes patriotic messages expressing love, loyalty and pride in His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The Governor praised the initiative and

its patriotic message, which conveys the sincere feelings of the Kuwaiti people towards their country and its wise leadership. He stressed the importance of supporting youth initiatives in the service of the nation.

On the other hand, all those present at the meeting expressed their sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Governor for his warm reception and support of national and youth initiatives. They commended his commitment to support activities that promote the values of belongingness and loyalty to the nation and its leaders.

5 schools start in Mutlaa, West Abdullah Al-Mubarak

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Under the directives of Minister of Education Engineer Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Dr. Khaled Al-Rashid issued a decision to open and name five new schools in the cities of Al-Mutlaa and West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Three of the schools bear names inspired by elements of Kuwaiti heritage, while two are designated for gifted students.

The decision includes the opening and naming of Al-Liwan Kindergarten and Al-Sanbouk Kindergarten in Al-Mutlaa City, Al-Basayel High School for Girls in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak,



Al-Tabtabaei

as well as Gifted Students School 1 for Boys and the Gifted Students School for Girls, also in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak.

The ministry explained that the name “Liwan” is derived from traditional Kuwaiti architecture and refers to an open-air courtyard located in front of the rooms of a house, roofed with wood and supported by columns. The liwan was one of the distinctive ar-

chitectural elements of traditional Kuwaiti houses.

The name “Sanbouk” refers to a type of sailing dhow that was historically used for pearl diving and transporting goods.

The name “Al-Basayel” refers to a woman’s hair braid and is an old term in the Kuwaiti dialect associated with aspects of social life in the past.

The Ministry of Education affirmed that the opening of two schools for gifted boys and girls in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak is part of its commitment to providing a specialized educational environment that nurtures gifted students, develops their capabilities and talents, and offers educational pathways suited to their potential.



Al-Seyassah photo
The General Secretariat of the Private Universities Council (PUC) and the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) officials after signing the agreement.

PUC & CAIT sign cooperation agreement on digital reforms

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: The General Secretariat of the Private Universities Council (PUC) and the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) signed a cooperation agreement aimed at expanding areas of joint work and utilizing technological solutions to support digital transformation, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The General Secretariat of the Council of Private Universities was represented

by its Secretary-General, Dr. Jassim Mohammad Al-Ali, while CAIT was represented by its acting Director-General, Najat Hussein Ibrahim Hamad.

The agreement includes strengthening cooperation in technical fields, exchanging expertise, and utilizing available resources to streamline procedures, improve services, and enhance institutional efficiency.



Jahra Governorate photo
Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi with a contingent of Kuwait Fire Force.

Jahra Gov. vows support for fire stations in north Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi met with Director of the Northern Fire Stations Department at Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Brigadier General Ali Al-Abdulrazzaq, Head of Shagaya Fire Station Brigadier General Adnan Salboukh, Head of Subiya Fire Station Brigadier General Talal Al-Muhaysin and Head of Mutlaa Fire Station Colonel Fawaz Al-Wazq.

They discussed ways to support the fire stations and overcome the challenges they face through coordination and fol-

low up with the relevant committees at the Jahra Governorate Council. This move aims to raise the readiness level of the fire stations and enable them to perform their duties efficiently.

Al-Habashi praised the efforts of the officials and personnel at KFF, affirming that the governorate is keen on supporting them and cooperating with the concerned authorities to remove obstacles, thereby, maintaining the security and safety of all those residing in the governorate.

MoHE opens registration for high-schoolers, IB graduates

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: The Ministry of Higher Education announced the opening of registration for its overseas scholarship program for holders of the British high school certificate and the International Baccalaureate (IB/DP) for the 2026/2027 academic year, starting Tuesday, August

11, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry stated in a post on its social media account that registration will remain open until Tuesday, August 18. It encouraged those interested in applying to review the terms and conditions on its website.

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Market inspections yield 5,155 violations, 52 shop closures

Commerce Ministry receives over 17,000 complaints in Q2

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13, (KUNA): Ministry of Commerce and Industry said Tuesday that the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection departments received 17,135 complaints through the ministry’s electronic portal and the unified government services application (Sahel) during Q2 2026.

The ministry told KUNA the figures reflected its efforts to strengthen market oversight, protect consumer rights and monitor businesses’ compliance with approved regulations and requirements.

Inspection teams issued 5,155 violation reports during the same period and recorded

165 licensing-related violations as part of ongoing inspection campaigns targeting markets and commercial activities.

The ministry said the inspection operations resulted in the opening of 51 shops and closure of 52 others in accordance with applicable legal and regulatory procedures.

It added that its teams also handled 648 complaints received through other complaint channels, in addition to the 17,135 complaints submitted through the electronic portal and Sahel application.

It affirmed that the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection departments would

continue intensifying inspection campaigns, strengthening market oversight and developing communication channels with consumers.

The efforts aim to ensure swift responses to complaints, safeguard consumer rights and promote compliance with laws and regulations governing commercial activities.

Continued from Page 1

Gold’s haven

He advocated for a gradual approach to gold purchases, instead of converting all available cash and assets into gold in one swoop. He advised setting a clear investment objective for gold beforehand, whether long-term savings or simply protecting savings, while maintaining funds for emergencies.

Another gold expert, Mohammad Hatab, asserted that claiming gold declined in 2026 or lost its status as a safe haven is inaccurate. He confirmed that while gold has retreated from its peak, it remains close to its 2026 opening level.

He added that the price of gold reached \$5,500 and is currently hovering around \$4,350. “Therefore, a more accurate description is pull-back from the peak, not a decline from the beginning of the year,” he indicated.

He said the geopolitical developments and the conflict between Iran and the United States of America have had a major impact, particularly the connection to a sensitive energy market region around the Strait of Hormuz. He stated that investors anticipated an exceptional rise in oil prices, so some of them converted a portion of their gold holdings into oil in search of larger and faster returns.

KFAED gives

acute shortages of storage facilities by rehabilitating existing facilities and constructing new ones.

The facilities are expected to help secure food aid, improve storage operations and facilitate distribution, supporting WFP efforts to reach about 7.5 million beneficiaries, the Fund said.

The project includes the construction of permanent storage facilities, such as steel warehouses and refrigeration facilities, along with supporting infrastructure, offices and security facilities.

KFAED added that the project will also allocate additional space to accommodate other UN agencies and cooperating partners, strengthening coordination and cooperation within joint inter-agency operations.

The Fund said that the grant is part of its partnership with WFP, which was strengthened by a memorandum of understanding signed in February 2025 to promote cooperation in food security, humanitarian assistance and development projects.

The grant agreement was signed by KFAED’s Acting Director General Rasheed Al-Bader and WFP Partnerships and Government Relations Officer in Kuwait Omar Al-Essa.

Kuwait reboots

Al-Maseel Market (Grand Market), Al-Watiya Market, Kuwait Beach 11 (Kuwait Magic), Al-Farwaniya Slaughterhouse (National Market), International Golf Club, Al-Safat Market, Al-Manakh Market, International Building Real Estate, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh Meat, Vegetable and Fish Market, Al-Jahra Slaughterhouse, Al-Mubarakia Market, Al-Ahmadi Slaughterhouse, Al-Jahra Meat and Vegetable Market, Al-Khaima Mall, and Central Fruit and Vegetable Market in Al-Sulaibiya.

It indicated that the winning consultancy firm’s responsibilities include conducting feasibility studies (technical, economic, environmental and legal), preparing tender documents, evaluating bids for each project, and overseeing the technical, financial, legal and environmental aspects until financial closure for each project in accordance with Law No. 116/2014 and its executive regulations.

The main objectives are to raise the operational efficiency of the aforementioned projects, and to activate the role of the private sector in the management, operation, maintenance and development of these projects.

Kuwaiti-Spanish

He added that northern Spain offers high sky-clarity rates in August, making areas north of Madrid-alongside regions such as Zaragoza, Valencia, and Ibiza-prime global viewing points for the event.

Spain became a top international destination for the eclipse, recording record flight bookings and hotel occupancy across its northern provinces.

Al-Jamaan highlighted that astronomical events are increasingly driving international tourism alongside cultural and sports events, noting that Spanish authorities designated roughly 660 official viewing sites equipped with campsites and municipal services.

The team proposed a new concept for this emerging trend -”Astrocultural Tourism”-bridging science, heritage, and geography rather than relying on traditional technical travel metrics.

“Travelers are not merely looking at the sky; they are experiencing the event from the heart of the mountains, learning about the rich history of Arab and Islamic astronomy that flourished in Andalusia, connecting with scientists and photographers, and documenting a rare cosmic moment,” Al-Jamaan said.

He added that the eclipse serves as a powerful reminder of cosmic wonder and a vital bridge for international scientific exchange.

In a statement to KUNA, Secretary-General of UN World Tourism Organization, Sheikha Al-Nowais, described the total solar eclipse as a unique phenomenon that unlocks broad tourism opportunities connecting science with nature while directing visitor traffic to new destinations.

She emphasized the importance of leveraging temporary celestial events to build a lasting legacy centered on scientific discovery and sustainable tourism.

Solar observation specialist Diego

Lopez Calvin told KUNA that tracking data showed the path of totality originating near Russia, Greenland, and Iceland before crossing the Atlantic to cover a broad terrestrial swath.

Lopez Calvin noted that totality reached a maximum duration of one minute and 41 seconds along the central line. He added that the occurrence coincided with the annual Perseid meteor shower, significantly enhancing the scientific value and visual spectacle of the night sky.

The 2026 eclipse marks a landmark historical moment for Spain as the first total solar eclipse visible from the Iberian Peninsula since April 1912. While a total eclipse was observed from the Canary Islands in 1959, mainland Spain had not witnessed totality in over 114 years.

Papal Nuncio

of King, and three years later, he was canonized,” the Ambassador added.

He said Saint Wenceslas was known for his piety, virtue, wisdom and intelligence, indicating that he devoted himself to spreading the Christian faith and showed great concern for the poor, the sick, widows and orphans through charitable works.

He then stressed the importance of remembering figures, such as Saint Wenceslas, and preserving the values they represented, particularly amid the tensions and conflicts the world is witnessing today. He pointed out that the current conflict in the region has expanded beyond the borders of the Gulf. He said Kuwait has been subjected to Iranian attacks for three months, and that the region is currently living under a very fragile ceasefire. “We should all strive to be more like Saint Wenceslas, even in a small way, by becoming kinder, more compassionate, and more mindful of others. Let us take this opportu-

nity to celebrate everything that is good and humane,” he asserted.

He revealed that “the feast day of Saint Wenceslas falls on Sept 28, but I deliberately asked the Papal Nuncio that we celebrate this occasion in August because, by Sept 28, he will have already begun his duties as the Papal Nuncio to the Czech Republic. I must admit that I feel sadness and happiness at the same time. I am saddened that our Papal Nuncio will be leaving Kuwait, yet I am also pleased that my country will be welcoming such an outstanding diplomat and remarkable personality.”

On the other hand, the Papal Nuncio to Kuwait, Archbishop Eugene, said, “We are gathered in this beautiful church, Our Lady of the Island Church, among friends, members of the diplomatic corps, members of the Czech community, and the parishioners and faithful of this church. I thank God for the years I have spent in Kuwait. I am grateful for the people I have met, the friendships we have built, the faith we have shared, the hospitality I have received, and the many moments of grace that I will continue to cherish long after I leave this land.”

The Papal Nuncio described his experience in Kuwait as one of the most meaningful experiences of his service to the Church. He said that his mission in Kuwait strengthened his awareness of the universality of the Church, despite the diversity of languages, cultures and rites, because faith and spirituality unite all believers.

He added, “As I prepare to leave Kuwait, I am especially grateful that one of my final celebrations here will take place under the mantle of Our Lady of the Island Church. I entrust to the Virgin Mary the people I am leaving behind, the friendships that have enriched my life, and the Church in Kuwait and throughout the Gulf.”

GCC investments in tech, renewable energy expected to jump to \$62 billion

PARIS, Aug 13, (KUNA): The Global Investment Summit 2026, scheduled to be held in Paris on September first and 2nd, predicts that total investments in the renewable energy, hydrogen, advanced industries, and digital infrastructure sectors across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries will rise from USD 32.87 billion in 2023 to USD 62.45 billion by 2030, marking an increase of USD 29.58 billion and growth of nearly 90 percent.

According to sources from the upcoming summit, such data also indicates that the renewable energy and hydrogen sector leads the three sectors in terms of growth rate; investments are projected to rise from USD 10.37 billion in 2023 to USD 22.77 billion by 2030, an increase of USD 12.4 billion and growth of nearly 120 percent.

This growth is driven by Gulf nations expanding clean energy projects, increasing reliance on renewable energy sources, and developing hydrogen initiatives.

Additionally, rising demand for emission-reduction solutions and energy efficiency improvements enhances the sector’s appeal to both domestic and international capital.

Investments in digital infrastructure are also expected to climb from USD 9.45 billion in 2023 to USD 18.36 billion by 2030, an increase of USD 8.91 billion and growth exceeding 94 percent.

This expansion is fueled by the growth of data centers, cloud services, and telecommunications networks, alongside the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence applications and digital transformation.

The sector’s growth reflects the increasing need for a technology infrastructure capable of accommodating the expansion of data and digital services, coinciding with the accelerated digitization of government, financial, industrial, and service sectors, as well as rising investments in artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.

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ICE’s plan to give officers electric shock gloves draws outrage and fears of misuse

WASHINGTON, Aug 13, (AP): Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s plan to give officers gloves that deliver painful electric shocks faced criticism Wednesday from Democratic elected officials and civil rights advocates, who called it unnecessary and cruel.

ICE plans to spend between \$10 million and \$20 million to outfit officers and agents with “conductive distraction and de-escalation devices,” according to a notice published Monday and revealed first by The Associated Press.

The devices known as the G.L.O.V.E., which stands for Generated Low Output Voltage Emitter, are normal patrol gloves until an officer presses a button to activate its electrical mode. They must be applied directly to someone’s skin to produce a voltage that causes pain, which is intended to gain compliance from people who are resisting. Unlike Tasers, they do not leave burn or contact marks.

The size of the purchase suggests ICE plans to give the device to most or all of its officers. The gloves have been used by local departments more often in jails than in the streets,



New York Attorney General Letitia James, flanked by New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani, (left), and New York Governor Kathy Hochul, takes part in a press conference to announce action against ICE overreach in New York on Aug 12. (AP)

where ICE officers have increasingly used force to extract people from cars and faced protests over their actions carrying out President Donald Trump’s crackdown on illegal immigration.

“We are outraged,” New York Attorney General Letitia James said

at a news conference Wednesday, where she warned that ICE officers who misuse the gloves in her state could face criminal and civil consequences.

The Department of Homeland Security, ICE’s parent agency, issued a statement that did not mention the

product specifically or explain why it had been chosen.

“ICE is constantly assessing the needs of our officers in the field to ensure they have the tools and equipment necessary to safely arrest and remove criminal illegal aliens from our country,” the statement said. “Every decision is made with careful consideration and appropriately reviewed to ensure that any technology ICE utilizes is consistent with all applicable law enforcement policies and standards.”

While the devices are marketed as nonlethal and safe for the heart, a pending lawsuit alleges a 43-year-old man died in 2024 after he was shocked 27 times with the gloves and 13 more times by a Taser at a jail in Richmond, Kentucky. An internal investigation found two of the glove shocks lasted 45 and 99 seconds apiece - far more than the manufacturer’s recommended 15-second limit.

“These actions not only inflicted unnecessary pain but also heightened the risk of serious health complications,” the investigation by the Madison County Detention Center found, according to court documents.

WH press secretary Karoline Leavitt leaving Trump administration

WASHINGTON, Aug 13, (AP): White House press secretary **Karoline Leavitt**, the youngest person to hold the role, will leave the Trump administration at the end of the month to spend more time with her young family.

Leavitt, 28, called it a “bittersweet decision” in a social media post Wednesday shortly after President Donald Trump announced she would be stepping down. She recently returned to the White House podium after the birth of her second child, a daughter named Viviana, in May. She also has a 2-year-old son.

“The truth is since returning to the White House after the birth of my daughter, I have felt in my heart that I cannot be the best mom my two young children deserve while devoting the constant time, energy, and attention required of the White House Press Secretary - and that is why I have ultimately made the bittersweet decision to depart the White House and embark on a new chapter in my life,” Leavitt wrote.

Trump did not outline plans for who might replace her in the high-profile role. He said in a social media post of his own that her decision to leave is one “I totally understand and respect!” and indicated she would continue to play a role in his orbit.

“Karoline will now be one of my top outside advisors, and an influential voice within the Republican Party, as we work to defy History, and conclusively win the Midterm Elections,” the president wrote.

Leavitt worked as a spokesperson for MAGA Inc., a super PAC supporting Trump, before joining his 2024 campaign. In 2022, she ran for Congress in New Hampshire, winning a 10-way Republican primary before losing the general election to incumbent Democratic Rep. Chris Pappas.

During Trump’s first term in office, Leavitt worked as an aide in the White House press office. She then became communications director for New York Republican Rep. Elise Stefanik.



Leavitt

DNC’s leadership and financial concerns continue

Dems gather to give final approval to 2028 presidential primary calendar

AUSTIN, Texas, Aug 13, (AP): Democrats are gathering to finalize their 2028 presidential primary calendar this week, setting the stage for a wide open contest to succeed US President Donald Trump and chart a path ahead as the party’s voters oscillate between progressive and more moderate candidates.

The Democratic National Committee is expected to vote at its summer meeting in Austin, Texas, on the new order that frontloads states with more diverse populations.

The meeting comes ahead of bitterly contested midterm elections that will decide control of Congress later this year. Democratic voters have delivered mixed messages on the direction they want to see the party go - backing candidates viewed as more left-wing as well as moderates in consequential primaries across several states.

The group also is convening at a time of internal turmoil, with some members calling for DNC Chairman Ken Martin to be replaced. Critics

have questioned Martin’s leadership decisions and the party’s fundraising, which lags well behind Republicans just months before the crucial midterms.

The party is expected to give final approval to a calendar that has South Carolina’s primary first on Jan. 22, followed by Nevada on Feb. 1. New Hampshire, New Mexico, Michigan and Virginia would round out the early states, voting throughout February.

The overhaul shows Democrats’ effort to give greater influence to states reflecting the party’s coalition, particularly Black and Latino voters. It follows years of a calendar led by Iowa and New Hampshire, two states with overwhelmingly white electorates.

The proposed calendar would cement South Carolina at the start of the calendar, reflecting a change former President Joe Biden pushed for after that state revived his struggling 2020 campaign.

South Carolina has long been the



Democratic National Committee chair Ken Martin speaks during an interview with The Associated Press at DNC headquarters on Jan 12, in Washington. (AP)

first Southern contest and has served as a key test of candidates’ support among Black voters.

Iowa and New Hampshire officials

have expressed disappointment with a decision after the early approval at a committee meeting in July. Rita Hart, the Iowa Democratic Party

chair, said it was a sign the party is “out of touch with voters.”

New Hampshire congressional leaders, including Sens. Jeanne Shaheen and Maggie Hassan, said the decision was wrong for their state and the country. New Hampshire’s secretary of state is required by law to schedule its presidential primary at least seven days before any other state holds a similar contest, setting up a potential conflict with the DNC calendar.

The GOP still needs to draw up its calendar. Republicans are expected to stick with their traditional early-state lineup led off by Iowa and New Hampshire.

Democratic primaries already have been testing which direction the party is headed in, through races in states such as Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

While there’s been a split between more progressive candidates who buck the party’s establishment and those with more moderate views who have backing from party officials, the common thread is that

Democratic voters have been looking for change.

Republicans, confronting high prices and the president’s sagging approval, have been eager to cast the party as moving too far to the left.

Meanwhile, the DNC’s leadership and financial concerns continue.

The gathering also coincides with financial struggles confronting Democrats, including lackluster fundraising and carrying debt. The DNC reported about \$16 million cash on hand in its most recent Federal Election Commission filing along with more than \$18 million in debt. The GOP, meanwhile, reported nearly \$129 million cash on hand in its latest FEC filing.

Martin isn’t expected to be replaced before the midterms, as the party has no clear alternative to take over. But members have said the most likely time for a leadership change may be the DNC’s winter meeting after the November contests - and before the 2028 presidential primary process begins in earnest.



This image provided by Vantor shows smoke in an overview of port infrastructure in Novorossiysk, Russia on Aug 12. (AP)

Ukraine drones hit major Russia refinery 800 miles from border and sparking fire

KYIV, Ukraine, Aug 13, (AP): Ukrainian drones struck a major refinery deep inside Russia, military officials said Thursday, the fourth in three days in Kyiv’s monthslong campaign to choke Moscow’s vital oil sector.

Russia is one of the world’s biggest energy producers, with oil providing an economic mainstay as its army tries to push deeper into Ukraine in a slow and costly advance more than four years after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion.

The attacks have dented Russia’s refining capacity, bringing shortages at gas stations. Kyiv officials say the onslaught seeks to compel Russian President Vladimir Putin to seek a peace deal. There is no sign that strategy is working.

Ukraine’s General Staff said that its forces struck the Gazprom Neft-ekhim Salavat oil refining and petrochemical complex in Russia’s republic of Bashkortostan overnight, causing a fire at the facility.

The complex, located southeast of Moscow about 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) from Ukraine’s border, is one of Russia’s largest oil refining and petrochemical facilities, the General Staff said in a Telegram post.

The plant processes up to 74 million barrels of oil annually, produc-

ing gasoline, diesel fuel and other products, it said.

Russia’s Bashkortostan governor, Radiy Khabirov, said only that a drone attack wounded two civilians and started a fire in an industrial zone of Salavat.

Wildberries, Russia’s biggest online retailer whose giant warehouses have repeatedly been struck by Ukrainian drones, said a fire started at one of its facilities in the Salavat industrial zone after the overnight attack. The company said the facility was evacuated but that goods were not being stored there.

The attack came a day after Ukrainian anti-ship missiles and drones blitzed a major Russian naval base on the Black Sea coast.

Elsewhere, four explosive experts from Russia’s Emergency Ministry and a security guard were killed Thursday after an unspecified Ukrainian weapon exploded in Sevastopol, a port city in illegally annexed Crimea, the Russian-installed governor of Sevastopol Mikhail Razvozhayev said.

They were inspecting the site of a Ukrainian attack when “an enemy weapon detonated,” he said.

It was not possible to independently verify either side’s reports.

Meanwhile, a Russian refinery in Orsk that was hit by Ukrainian

drones earlier this week has suspended operations, Orenburg region Gov. Yevgeny Soltsev said Thursday.

He said that “key infrastructure, which cannot be restored at this time” was struck, including foreign equipment, and “taking (international) sanctions into account,” the repairs could take up to six months, Soltsev said in a rare public admission in Russia of the problems Ukrainian attacks are causing.

Ukraine’s General Staff had reported striking the Orsk refinery, in Russia’s Orenburg region near the border with Kazakhstan, on Tuesday.

Russia has responded by hammering Ukraine with ballistic missiles, jet-powered drones and glide bombs, all of which are powerful and hard to intercept. The strikes have killed more than 16,000 civilians since the war began, according to the United Nations.

Russian attacks featuring 133 long-range strike drones killed at least four people and wounded eight others across Ukraine overnight from Wednesday to Thursday, officials said.

A jet-powered Shahed drone struck a passenger train in the southern Odesa region, killing the engineer and his assistant, Ukraine’s state railway company, Ukrzaliznytsia, said Thursday.

Farage faces off against Count Biface in UK’s special election

LONDON, Aug 13, (AP): Tens of thousands of voters are heading to the polls Thursday in a special election in a small seaside resort just outside London that pits a potential candidate to be the next U.K. prime minister against a collection of independents, jokers and single-issue candidates, led by a man who wears a trash can on his head.

That’s not what Nigel Farage, who arguably did more than anyone to get Britain to vote to leave the European Union a decade ago, intended when he triggered Thursday’s special election in Clacton by quitting his seat in the House of Commons last month. When doing so, he expected to run against candidates from Britain’s main political parties, including the governing Labour Party and the main opposition Conservative Party.

Farage, leader of anti-immigration party Reform UK, stood down in the hope the election could put to bed awkward questions about his finances. Farage said he would let voters judge him in a “people versus the establishment” contest. His political foes described the move as a stunt and opted against fielding a candidate.



Election signs for Britain’s Reform UK party leader Nigel Farage are seen in gardens in Thorpe-Le-Soken, England on Aug 13, 2026 during the Clacton by-election. (AP)

Instead, Farage’s main opponent is Count Biface, a political satirist posing as a comic space alien with a keen interest in earthly matters, including the positioning of a hand dryer in the men’s toilet in a pub in west London.

The election is a novelty with a re-

cord 34 candidates standing, including Howling Laud Hope of The Official Monster Raving Loony Party and Marcus White from the Everyone is God Party. They have pounded the streets of Clacton over the past few weeks as they seek to win the support of around 80,000 voters.

Russia’s President Putin visits Kuril Islands

MOSCOW, Aug 13, (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday visited the Kuril Islands, a Russian-controlled Pacific island chain also claimed by Japan, for the first time, drawing protests from Tokyo.

Putin visited a fish plant, a hospital and a school on Iturup, one of the chain’s southernmost islands. He also briefly spoke to local residents and met with the governor of Russia’s Sakhalin region, Valery Limarenko.

Japan asserts territorial rights to the four southernmost islands of the chain, which it calls the Northern Territories. The Soviet Union took them from Japan in the final days of World War II, and the dispute kept the countries from signing a peace treaty formally ending their hostilities.

Decades of diplomatic efforts to negotiate a settlement haven’t produced any visible results. Moscow over the years has also beefed up its military presence on the Kuril Islands in moves that appeared to underscore its firm stance in the dispute.



Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, interacts with schoolchildren as he visits a secondary school named after Eduard Norplov in Kurilsk on the Iturup Island, the largest of the Kuril Islands of Russia’s far-east, on Aug 13. (AP)

pute.

Japanese Foreign Minister Toshihiro Motegi said his country “strongly protests” against Putin’s visit to Iturup, which Japan calls Etorofu. “The Northern Territories, including Etorofu (Iturup) Island,

are Japan’s inherent territory both historically and from the perspective of international law,” Motegi said in a statement.

Japan also protested in 2021 when Russia’s Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin visited Iturup.

‘Fidel left us everything, everything good that came from Cuba’s revolutionary process’

Cuba marks Castro’s 100th birthday as shadow still shapes nation in crisis

HAVANA, Aug 13, (AP): Fidel Castro would have turned 100 on Thursday, and his long shadow continues to loom over the island as he remains revered by some who miss him in the face of a crippling U.S. energy blockade and blamed by others who see him as the architect of the system that led to Cuba’s current crisis.

This week, Cuba commemorated Castro with events including the International Book Fair, art exhibitions, concerts and gatherings of delegates from leftist organizations across the continent.

Posters bearing his image hang in hospitals, while billboards displaying his slogans - including his widely-known “Homeland or Death” - line the streets. His presence is so familiar that many Cubans refer to him simply as Fidel.

“I believe (Fidel Castro) leaves Cuba a legacy of dignity, morality, tireless work and concern for the poor,” writer and essayist Miguel Barnet, who also is a member of the National Assembly, told The Associated Press. “And a philosophy that was translated into concrete policies in areas such as culture, education and public health.”

Castro’s centennial comes as Cuba faces an ever-intensifying squeeze that began when the Trump administration imposed a fuel blockade in January and followed up with a series of sanctions aimed at pressuring the communist government to make political and economic changes. The measures have deepened a five-year economic crisis fueled by earlier US sanctions and a failed domestic financial overhaul.

For Cubans, the effects have been far-reaching: prolonged power outages, shortages of fuel and medicine, declining industrial and tourism activity, flight cancellations, transportation restrictions and reduced work and school hours.

Castro governed Cuba for five decades, from 1959 until he handed over the presidency to his brother in 2008, holding massive rallies and making hours-long speeches. He remained influential until his death in 2016.

“Fidel left us everything, everything good that came from Cuba’s revolutionary process,” said Argelia Mustelier, a 61-year-old retiree who lives in Old



Images of Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel, Raul Castro, and Fidel Castro, are seen at the state building in Havana, Cuba on May 20. (AP)

Havana. “In these difficult times we’re living through, he would have found a way to bring some happiness to his country and his people.”

Fidel Castro Ruz was born Aug. 13, 1926, in eastern Cuba’s sugar country, where his Spanish immigrant father first worked recruiting labor for US sugar companies and later built up a prosperous plantation of his own. Shortly after

graduating as a lawyer, he became politically active.

In 1953, Castro and more than 100 others attacked the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba in an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow dictator Fulgencio Batista. Castro was captured and later released, then went into exile in Mexico. He returned to Cuba with fellow rebels and launched a guerrilla campaign that culminated in Batista’s ouster in 1959 and Castro’s rise to power.

Castro took power and radically transformed Cuba through agrarian reform, a massive literacy campaign and the nationalization of private businesses, policies that put his government on a collision course with the US.

Across Latin America and developing nations, Castro became a symbol of anti-colonial and revolutionary movements. His policies also fueled deep opposition, first among wealthy Cubans, many of whom fled to the United States, and later among those who opposed the Communist Party’s monopoly on political power.

“He is a controversial figure,” said historian Manuel Cuesta Murúa, president of the opposition Council for the Democratic Transition in Cuba.

“There was no justification for sacrificing freedoms ... There was no justification for preventing the rest (of the Cuban people) - and the country’s political diversity and plurality - from expressing themselves,” Cuesta said. “That created a rift whose consequences we are still living with today.”

For many younger Cubans, Castro remains an icon, but his influence is less immediate for them than for older generations who lived under his leadership.

“Our generation didn’t experience him as an active leader. What we saw was a less visible Fidel, one who rarely appeared in public,” 27-year-old Cristian Cohello said. “What remains of Fidel Castro right now, of what he left behind, is nothing; absolutely nothing.”

Speaking of the island’s current crisis, Cohello said there is no solution: “Right now, even if they brought another Fidel, they wouldn’t be able to fix this.”

‘Colombia’s new president requests US collaboration in anti-drug efforts’

PANAMA CITY, Aug 13, (AP): US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Wednesday said the recently inaugurated government of Colombian President Abelardo de la Escriella has requested U.S. collaboration in joint military operations in Colombia to combat “narco-terrorism.”

During a meeting of the so-called Americas Counter-Cartel Coalition in Panama, Hegseth said Colombia would also join the “Shield of the Americas” initiative, becoming its 19th member. The initiative emerged from a March summit with US President Donald Trump and Latin American countries that sought to join forces in fighting drug cartels. Colombia’s then-President Gustavo Petro was not invited to that meeting.

“Through the newly inaugurated president, as our president likes to say, President El Tigre, Colombia has already requested that the Department of War join Colombia in its fight against narco-terrorism, authorizing joint military operations to destroy terrorists and terror networks,” Hegseth said.

The government of de la Escriella, who was sworn in last week and is



US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth speaks at a forum of The Americas Counter Cartel Coalition in Panama City on Aug 12. (AP)

known as “The Tiger” or “El Tigre,” did not immediately comment on the announcement in Panama. But the conservative leader has previously said his administration would join the US initiative.

Separately, Hegseth urged the Latin American countries at the meeting not to recognize the International Criminal Court, or ICC. The U.S. under Trump has carried out mili-

tary strikes against suspected drug traffickers in the region, which have raised questions about their legality. Hegseth argued that such efforts “are entirely legal under international humanitarian law.”

It remains unclear from Hegseth’s statements what measures, if any, the international court has taken to hinder U.S. operations in the region.

Asia

NZ, Vietnam agree to deepen partnership: New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and Vietnamese President To Lam on Thursday agreed on new steps to advance their countries’ comprehensive strategic partnership.

During To Lam’s state visit to New Zealand, the two leaders discussed growing trade and investment, reducing barriers, expanding cooperation in science and technology, and deepening collaboration on peacekeeping and transnational crime, according to a New Zealand government statement.

An agricultural package will expand two-way market access, including New Zealand honey and deer products, as well as Vietnamese cut flowers and foliage, the statement said. The two sides will also further support climate-smart agriculture, building on work that has lifted farmer profits and cut rice emissions by 50 percent, it said. (Xinhua)



To Lam

Man shot dead by police in NZ: An armed man fleeing from police was shot and killed at Sylvia Park Shopping Center in New Zealand’s Auckland on Thursday afternoon, police said.

Police received information at around 2:00 p.m. local time about the theft of an air rifle from a gun store in Penrose in suburban Auckland, and the offender fled in a vehicle, said a police statement.

A police helicopter located the vehicle near Sylvia Park, where police deployed road spikes before it became stranded outside the shopping center.

The offender fled on foot with the air rifle and was shot by police after being pursued to an entrance of the shopping center. First aid was immediately pro-

vided, but the man was pronounced dead at the scene, the statement said. (Xinhua)

Chinese, Thai police bust fraud ring: China’s Ministry of Public Security (MPS) said on Thursday that Chinese and Thai police recently worked together to bust a major cross-border credit card fraud ring targeting Chinese citizens, arresting nine suspects.

The operation, jointly carried out by the MPS and Thailand’s Royal Thai Police headquarters, resulted in the arrest of four Chinese nationals and five Thai nationals, the ministry noted in a statement.

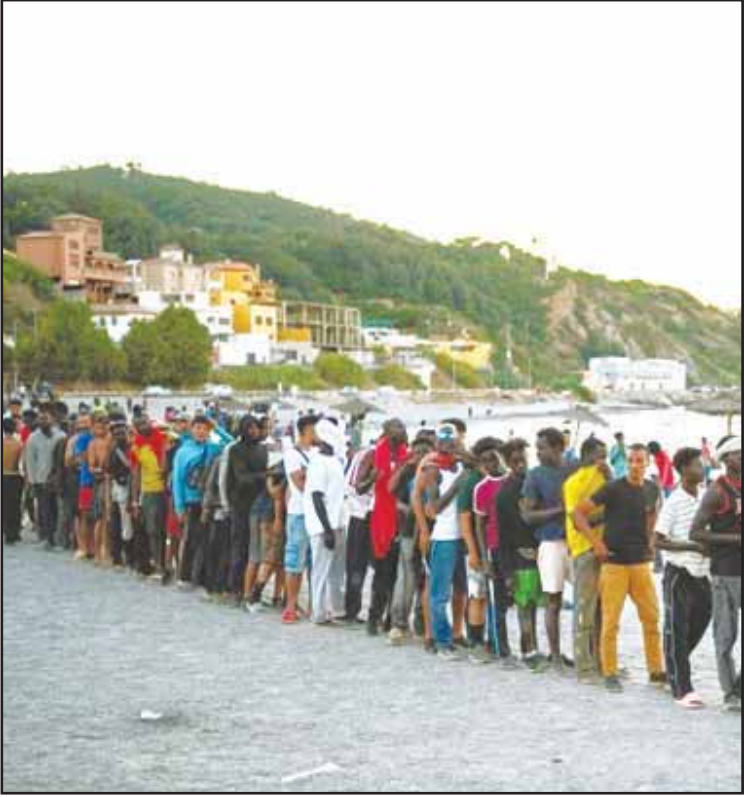
The two sides coordinated the timing of the crack-down and dismantled several criminal sites, arresting the suspects, the ministry said.

According to the statement, Chinese police uncovered the transnational criminal ring in 2025 and promptly shared information about the case with their Thai counterparts and sought their assistance.

Investigations found that two of the suspects had conspired, with one allegedly operating a shop in Thailand as a front for illegally obtaining victims’ credit card information, while the other allegedly used the stolen data to make counterfeit cards and recruited people to use the cards for fraudulent transactions and launder the illicit proceeds for profit. Authorities have so far identified more than 5 million yuan (about 736,500 U.S. dollars) in financial losses linked to this case.

The operation marked the first coordinated joint law enforcement action by police from the two countries in recent years targeting economic crime, the ministry said.

It added that the two sides will explore establishing a regular cooperation mechanism to combat cross-border economic crimes, with plans to deepen collaboration in areas including information sharing, exchange of expertise, joint analysis, the pursuit of suspects, and the recovery of illicit proceeds. (Xinhua)



Migrants who crossed from Morocco into Spain line up for food distribution on a beach in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on Aug 3. (AP)

Morocco beefs up security at Ceuta, Melilla borders after online calls for new crossings

CASABLANCA, Morocco, Aug 13, (AP): Morocco said it has beefed up security along its border with Spain as calls resurfaced on social media for mass crossings into the Spanish city of Ceuta, raising concerns of another surge, similar to the one last month when tens of thousands of migrants rushed the border.

Spain’s Civil Guard insisted that the border will remain closed and Defense Minister Margarita Robles warned against any new attempt at a mass entry into Spain’s North African exclaves.

Messages are circulating in Moroccan social media groups for a new rush on Ceuta’s border on Saturday. The source of the messages is unclear.

In late July, some 72,000 migrants swam or climbed over the border breakwater to reach the Spanish city, fueled by economic hardship and by false rumors circulating online about an open border. Nearly all have since returned to Morocco, but the surge had political repercussions around Europe.

At least 80 people died in the attempt, according to official tallies. Human rights groups have reported higher figures.

Would-be migrants are now also being urged to cross into Melilla, another Spanish autonomous city on the northern coast of Africa. Together, Ceuta and Melilla form the European Union’s only land borders with Africa.

The Moroccan Interior Ministry said in Wednesday’s statement that “all necessary measures have been taken to counter” any new “illegal crossing attempt.” It said the security monitoring is part of a “system of continuous vigilance - particularly in areas near the Ceuta and Melilla crossings.”

The Interior Ministry did not immediately respond to questions about the number of personnel deployed or the equipment being used.

Videos shared on social media show hundreds of police officers in riot gear deployed on the Moroccan side of the border, alongside water cannons and ambulances. Local news site Hespess said equipment for deploying tear gas and stun grenades had also been brought to the border.

A senior Moroccan diplomat previously said that more than 20,000 Moroccan security personnel are deployed along the border with Ceuta each day, at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars. The diplomat was not authorized to speak to the media and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Interior Ministry also said Moroccan authorities had arrested and were investigating “a group of people suspected of carrying out incitement activities.” It did not elaborate.

Robles, visiting Ceuta, said it was “everyone’s responsibility to deal with those who are directing these movements, including through social media,” and called “any aggression against Ceuta or Melilla ... an aggression against Spain as a whole.”

“This must be absolutely clear: what happened cannot happen again,” she said.

Spain’s Civil Guard shared a message on social media seemingly aimed at migrants, in French and Spanish.

“Neither the border with Spain is open; nor will it be. There are new containment barriers. If you cross them, you will be returned. Don’t let yourself be deceived,” it said.

The Instagram post was accompanied by a photo of a containment barrier in Ceuta that was constructed in the immediate aftermath of the July 31 border breach.

Subcontinent

Pakistan troops kill 10 militants: Pakistani security forces clashed with militants in the country’s insurgency-hit southwestern province of Balochistan, killing 10 insurgents. Also on Wednesday, a botched car bomb detonated prematurely, killing three people at a nearby home and also eight militants who were rigging the explosives.

The clashes were part of a government operation against what it calls members of “Fitna Al Hindustan,” a term Pakistani authorities use for Baloch separatist groups that Islamabad alleges are backed by India. New Delhi denies supporting militants in Pakistan. (AP)

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2 members of UN mission detained: Afghanistan’s Taliban rulers have detained two Afghan members of the UN political mission in the country, the United Nations said Wednesday.

The Taliban’s General Directorate of Intelligence detained the two staffers in the western city of Herat on Sunday, UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq told reporters. He said the UN mission has not been informed of the charges against the two men or been able to visit them.

The mission has called on the Taliban “to ensure compliance with the privileges and immunities of the United Nations and its officials,” Haq said.

The Taliban seized power on Aug. 15, 2021, as US and NATO forces withdrew from the country after two decades of war. (AP)

Africa

Zambians hold general elections: Zambians began casting their votes Thursday in a presidential election that will test whether President Hakainde Hichilema’s economic reforms were enough to overcome widespread frustration over the cost of living.

Around 8 million people in the southern African country of 22 million are registered to vote in the one-day election. Voters will also choose members of Parliament and local government councilors. Results are expected on Monday, according to the electoral commission.

Before dawn, voters bundled in thick jackets against the morning chill began forming long lines outside polling stations across Lusaka.

Some huddled around small makeshift fires to keep warm while election officials arranged ballot boxes, checked voter lists and prepared polling stations. (AP)

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S.Africa seeks reimbursement: South Africa is asking several other African governments to reimburse it for the cost of sending tens of thousands of their citizens back home.

The request comes after South Africa deported or helped repatriate more than 80,000 immigrants, following protests and violence against illegal immigration.

According to the country’s Home Affairs department, which briefed lawmakers on Tuesday, the country has spent nearly \$18 million accommodating and transporting immigrants who demanded to return to their home countries. (AP)

Thousands flee yearslong drought in Somalia as hunger deepens

BAIDOA, Somalia, Aug 13, (AP): After nearly two weeks on the road with her five children, Luul Mohamed finally arrived in the southwestern Somali city of Baidoa with no food and little sense of what would happen next.

Drought conditions had forced Mohamed and her family to leave Saakoow, a town in the Middle Jubba region more than 300 kilometers (186 miles) away. They moved from village to village before arriving in Baidoa, now a major hub for people fleeing drought, insecurity and food shortages, on Aug. 3.

“We are very hungry and in a desperate situation,” Mohamed said. “We have nothing to eat and can only place our hope in God, as He is the one who sustains us through this ordeal that culminated in our trip.”

The family’s journey is one example of a deepening humanitarian emergency in Somalia, where years of drought, conflict and economic pressures are pushing more families from rural communities



Health workers talk to a woman with her malnourished baby at Bay Hospital in Baidoa, Somalia on Aug 4.(AP)

into displacement camps as hunger rises and humanitarian funding shrinks.

About 2 million people are facing emergency levels of food insecurity, more than double the number recorded last year, according to Plan International, which has provided as-

sistance to more than 200,000 people in Somalia this year. The humanitarian group and Somalia’s Disaster Management Agency are calling for increased international assistance, with concern that the crisis could be compounded by another climate shock later this year.

Oil price down \$1.22 to \$82.84 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13, (KUNA): Kuwait oil prices went down USD 1.22 to reach USD 82.84 per barrel (pb) in Wednesday's trading, compared with USD 84.06 the previous day, according to Kuwait Petroleum

Corporation (KPC) on Thursday.

In global markets, Brent crude went up 7 cents to reach USD 88.98 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate also rose by 7 cents to reach USD 83.27 pb.

Business

Reinforcing commitment to developing national talent

KUFPEC eyes new Alberta exploration opportunities

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: The Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) is currently evaluating development opportunities in the Canadian province of Alberta in preparation for acquiring new exploration and production rights, say reliable sources.

Sources confirmed that KUFPEC recently completed the comprehensive engineering risk assessment of the assets of Quebec-Doverney project in Canada, in which KUFPEC holds 30 percent stake.

Sources explained that this move is in line with the management vision of the company to mitigate operational and financial risks in its international projects and ensuring sustainable production in accordance with the highest global standards of safety and environmental protection.

Sources said the company confirmed that it entrusted the technical and engineering evaluation to PriceForbes, a global and independent firm, to ensure the highest level of impartiality and professional accuracy.

Sources added that these field activities received full logistical and technical support from representatives of Natural Resources Canada Limited, with the active on-site participation of Price-Forbes experts and representatives of the Quebec Canada office.

Sources disclosed that the survey included gas gathering and compression sites to assess safety levels in handling associated gas, as well as testing the quality of well and drilling platforms to verify the effectiveness of primary ac-

cident defenses.

Sources stated that the technical team focused on evaluating the resilience of safety management, readiness of emergency response plans and preventive maintenance practices, and analyzed business risks and linked them to insurance benchmarking to ensure the best insurance coverage at the lowest possible cost.

Sources added that the final survey results showed excellent indicators confirming the sound operational status of the Canadian project, including the efficiency of robust safety systems and the effective operations management systems and programs.

Sources affirmed that the survey results proved that the project has distinguished human resources and technical personnel with exceptional expertise and strong readiness to handle any emergency situation.

Sources pointed out that this is a confirmation of the implementation of the best governance mechanisms, flexible and rigorous change management processes, and field discipline through full adherence to standards of cleanliness, order and operational discipline at work sites.

It is worth noting that the 2025 KUFPEC report confirmed that the company achieved a production surge in the Quebec-Doverney shale gas project in Canada, with daily output increasing by 27.2 percent to reach 25,310 barrels of oil equivalent in 2025, compared to 19,891 barrels in 2024.

The company prepared 50 wells, 47 of which were drilled and connected to production facilities, raising the total number of producing wells since the project's inception to 346.

Revenue up 3.5%

KIPCO reports net profit of KD 5.3 million for H1 2026

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – announced a net profit of KD 5.3 million for the first six months of 2026, compared to KD 10.2 million reported for the corresponding period of 2025. Earnings per share for the first half of the year were 0.3fils.

The decrease in KIPCO's overall net profit is due to the reduction in operating performance of the energy, banking, hospitality and real estate, and industrial and logistics businesses, reflecting the geopolitical impact on these sectors.

Operating revenue increased 3.49% to KD 795.9 million for the first half of the year, from KD 769.1 million reported for the same period in 2025.

For the second quarter of 2026 (the three months ended June 30, 2026), KIPCO recorded a net profit of KD 1.8 million. Operating profit for the quarter increased 35.93% to KD 52.2 million from KD 38.4 million reported for the corresponding period of 2025.

KIPCO's total revenue from operations for the three months came to KD 420.0 million, an increase of 8.95% from the KD 385.5 million reported in the second quarter of 2025. Shareholders' equity went up 1.79% to KD 656.5 million compared to KD 644.9 million at the end of 2025.

The company's total assets stood at KD 14.45 billion at the end of the first half of 2026, compared to KD 13.82 billion at year-end 2025.

Commenting on the results, Sheikha Dana Naser Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, KIPCO's Group Chief Executive Officer, said:

"The first half of the year was marked by challenging circumstances and continued uncertainty across the region. Against this backdrop, KIPCO remained prof-



Sheikha Dana Naser Al Sabah

'We remain resilient despite the challenging conditions and continue to execute our strategy with discipline' says Group CEO

itable, reflecting the resilience of our diversified portfolio and the strength of our underlying businesses. More importantly, we have remained focused on executing our plans and advancing the strategic priorities we have set for the Group."

She added: "Our approach continues to be guided by disciplined capital management, operational efficiency and a clear focus on preserving and growing stakeholder value. While we remain mindful of the environment in which we operate, we continue to move forward with our strategy, strengthening our businesses and positioning them to capture opportunities as market conditions evolve."

Main 50 bucks trend

Boursa Kuwait closes lower

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Thursday's session in the red, with the all-share general index slipping 21.68 points, or 0.24%, to close at 8,838.95. A total of 268.4 million shares changed hands in 20,801 cash transactions, generating a total value of KD 71.1 million (about USD 231.8 million).

The Main Market Index fell 55.60 points, or 0.63%, to 8,838.30, with 171.9 million shares traded in 11,890 cash transactions valued at KD 35.7 million (approximately USD 116.4 million). The Premier Market Index also declined, dropping 15.59 points,

or 0.17%, to 9,297.86. Trading on the premier market involved 96.5 million shares in 8,911 cash transactions, with a total value of KD 35.3 million (around USD 115.1 million).

In contrast, the Main 50 Index moved higher, gaining 49.75 points, or 0.48%, to close at 10,424.52. A total of 144.1 million shares were traded across 9,473 cash transactions, valued at KD 30.5 million (approximately USD 99.4 million). The session highlighted a divergence between large-cap names in the Main 50, which advanced, and the broader main and premier markets, which came under pressure.

Gulf Bank successfully wraps up 'Beyond Ajyal' Leadership Development Program in collaboration with Euromoney

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Gulf Bank successfully concluded its "Beyond Ajyal" Leadership Development Program, delivered in collaboration with Euromoney over four months. The program aimed to strengthen the capabilities of the Bank's mid-level managers and prepare them to assume greater leadership responsibilities in the future.

The program reflects Gulf Bank's continued commitment to investing in human capital and developing national talent by building a strong pipeline of qualified leaders capable of responding to developments in the banking sector while supporting the Bank's strategic priorities and future direction.

"Beyond Ajyal" provided participants with a comprehensive learning journey covering several key areas, including self-leadership, organizational leadership, innovation, strategic thinking, and business acumen. These modules were designed to enhance participants' leadership skills, broaden their professional perspectives, and strengthen their ability to make effective decisions.

The program also featured specialized educational content on Islamic banking, covering regulatory and supervisory frameworks, innovative Islamic financial products, financing solutions for individuals and businesses, and advanced risk management. This content helped enhance participants' readiness to navigate future developments and opportunities within the banking sector.

In addition to the educational and training sessions, participants benefited from individual coaching and mentoring sessions. These enabled them to evaluate their leadership development journey, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and enhance their ability to apply the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the program to their daily roles and responsibilities.

Gulf Bank affirmed that the "Beyond Ajyal" program represents an extension of its continued efforts to identify talent and develop leaders from within the Bank, contributing to sustainable institutional performance and preparing employees to lead its transformation and growth journey during the next phase.

Through its various programs and initiatives, Gulf Bank continues to foster a corporate culture centered on continuous learning, innovation, and excellence. The Bank places employee develop-



Group photos during the workshop.

ment and empowerment at the forefront of its priorities, recognizing its people as the driving force behind achieving its strategic objectives and sustaining its long-term success.

Welcome gift of up to KD 1,200 upon salary transfer

Gulf Bank showcases Salary Account benefits at Assima Mall

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Gulf Bank is organizing a three-day activation at Assima Mall from 13 to 15 August to introduce visitors to the exclusive benefits offered through its Salary Account for Kuwaiti employees working in the government sector. Eligible customers who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank will receive a welcome gift of up to KD 1,200, in addition to a comprehensive range of banking and financing benefits designed to meet their needs and aspirations.

Gulf Bank's booth attracted considerable interest from visitors seeking further information about the Salary Account and its benefits. During the event, the Bank's team promoted awareness of financial fraud risks and ways to protect banking information as part of its continued support for the "Let's Be Aware" campaign.

The Salary Account provides customers with automatic enrollment in Kuwait's fastest rewards program, allowing them to redeem points for cash or use them to book airline tickets, hotels, and car rentals. Customers can also use their points to shop through an online marketplace—the first of its kind in Kuwait's banking sector.

Account benefits include access to a personal loan of up to KD 25,000, with a flexible repayment period of up to five years, and a housing loan of up to KD 70,000, with a repayment period of up to 15 years and a grace period of up to 24 months. Customers also receive a complimentary safe deposit box for one year and a lifetime complimentary credit card.

Customers can also benefit from exclusive discounts at several leading automotive dealerships



Gulf Bank representatives at Assima Mall.

in Kuwait, along with the opportunity to obtain financing at 0% interest from selected participating dealerships.

These benefits are available to Kuwaiti employees working in the government, semi-government, and oil sectors, as well as newly employed Kuwaitis and employees wishing to transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank, provided that their monthly salary is at least KD 600. The Bank also offers a special promotion for retir-

ees, featuring a cash gift of up to KD 500 upon transferring their pension to Gulf Bank.

Gulf Bank reaffirmed its continued commitment to meeting the evolving expectations and requirements of Salary Account customers by providing some of the most competitive benefits in the banking sector. These efforts form part of the Bank's ongoing commitment to rewarding its customers and helping them achieve their ambitions and financial goals.

'Comprehensive training experience beyond traditional branch-based training'

Warba Bank welcomes over 40 trainees under 'Intalaqah' program in collaboration with PAM

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Warba Bank welcomed more than 40 trainees to its "Intalaqah" training program, delivered in partnership with the Public Authority for Minors Affairs (PAM). Conducted across two cohorts during July and August, the program aims to develop young national talent and help prepare participants for Kuwait's labor market.

The program forms part of Warba Bank's corporate social responsibility strategy to provide a practical training environment where young participants gain exposure to banking operations and day-to-day work processes.

Training and Practical Experience: The "Intalaqah" program combines theoretical knowledge with rotational training:

■ Departmental Rotation: Trainees rotate across multiple bank departments beyond branch operations, giving them a broader understanding of the bank's operations.



Photos during the workshop.

■ Hands-On Training: Participants take part in practical tasks under the supervision of banking professionals, helping them develop communication, teamwork, and decision-making skills.

■ Public-Sector Collaboration: The partnership with PAM brings together the banking and public sectors to support youth development through structured practical training.

Executive Commentary: Maali Abdullah Al-Rasheed, Chief Human Resources and

General Services Officer at Warba Bank, stated:

"The 'Intalaqah' program provides a comprehensive training experience that extends beyond traditional branch-based training. By rotating through different departments, trainees gain a broader understanding of the bank's operations, helping bridge the gap between academic learning and practical experience."

Al-Rasheed added: "Investing in young national talent is an important part of sustainable development.

Warba Bank remains dedicated to launching training programs that equip young talent with the practical skills needed to build careers in the banking sector."

About Warba Bank:

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

As part of its commitment to empowering national youth to become the future’s driving force

NBK organizes a specialized mentorship session for participants in the Kon program



KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: As part of its ongoing support for the Kon social entrepreneurship program organized by LOYAC non-profit organization, National Bank of Kuwait hosted a specialized mentorship session aimed to empower participants to develop their social and environmental ideas and projects by leveraging the expertise and professional experience of the Bank’s staff.

The session featured the Bank providing participants with practical guidance and professional insights, that helped them further refine their entrepreneurial ideas and transform them into more mature, actionable initiatives. The interactive setting offered participants the opportunity to present and discuss their concepts while receiving direct feedback from specialists.

The session also aimed to provide students with valuable insights and expertise in organizational work, planning, and idea development, in addition to offering a range of practical advice and guidance.

Kon program stands as one of the leading social entrepreneurship initiatives for youth. Now marking its eleventh edition, the program aims to empower a new generation of changemakers by equipping them with the entrepreneurial mindset and practical skills needed to drive sustainable social and environmental impact. It also fosters innovative thinking among participants, helping them transform their ideas into applicable, community-serving initiatives and projects.

The program was developed in collaboration with Babson College in Boston, which is ranked number one globally in entrepreneurship education, offering participants a world-class learning experience that combines the best academic practices with practical application.

In this program, participants get the chance to engage in interactive workshops, training activities, and hands-on experiences, while also benefiting from the guidance and mentorship of experts, entrepreneurs, and leaders across various fields.

Additionally, the program helps develop the participants’ capabilities in leadership, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making. It boosts their self-confidence and ability to work within diverse teams and develop real-world projects that serve the community. Furthermore, it offers them the opportunity to refine their skills in professionally presenting ideas and initiatives, further equipping them to effectively tackle challenges and create a positive impact in their communities.

NBK’s support for Kon program stems from its long-standing strategic partnership with LOYAC, which is a

Kon Participants: The Program Enhanced Our Skills and Provided Us with the Opportunity to Benefit from the Expertise of NBK Specialists
Al-Hebeshi:
■ The program serves as a distinguished platform for inspiring youth and fostering their entrepreneurial capabilities.
■ We are committed to providing practical support to participants, helping them develop their ideas and transform them into projects with real impact.
■ Our partnership with LOYAC has, over the years, resulted in the launch and support of numerous youth-oriented programs.

collaboration that has led to the launch and support of numerous initiatives and programs dedicated to youth.

This partnership reflects the commitment of both parties to empowering young generations and fostering a stimulating environment that helps them develop their leadership and entrepreneurial skills and capabilities, which consequently contributes to preparing a generation capable of effectively participating in community development and addressing future challenges.

On this occasion, **Mohammad Al-Hebeshi**, Senior Officer - Public Relations and Event Management at NBK, commented: “Kon program serves as a distinguished platform for inspiring youth and cultivating their entrepreneurial capabilities. We believe that investing in young talent is an investment in the future of society by equipping them with knowledge and practical experience that empower them to drive positive change and create innovative solutions for the challenges in society”.



Mohammad Al-Hebeshi

Al-Hebeshi added: “We are committed to providing practical support to participants by sharing expertise and professional knowledge, further helping young people develop their ideas into projects and initiatives that deliver sustainable social and environmental impact. This initiative also embodies the culture of volunteerism and giving that the Bank strives to instill among its employees”.

Finally, Al-Hebeshi emphasized that youth empowerment is a cornerstone of the Bank’s corporate social responsibility strategy, noting NBK’s commitment to supporting initiatives and programs that cultivate youth skills and enhance their leadership and innovative ca-

pabilities, in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

These initiatives also reflect NBK’s vision that believes investing in human capital is an investment in future leaders. They also underscore the Bank’s unwavering commitment to empowering national youth, helping them achieve their goals and ambitions, and supporting the aspirations of the next generation to become an effective and dynamic future workforce.

Participants in the Kon Program praised the experience provided by the program, emphasizing that the training activities and mentorship sessions contributed to developing their personal and entrepreneurial skills, boosting their self-confidence, and providing them with the opportunity to benefit from the expertise of specialists while exchanging ideas and experiences with fellow participants.

Student **Talia Al-Sharrah** said: “The Kon Program helped strengthen my confidence in my abilities and enhance my communication and teamwork skills. It also gave me the opportunity to benefit from a variety of ideas and experiences that enriched my way of thinking and helped me view challenges from different perspectives, which enhanced my ability to develop more effective and impactful solutions.”

For her part, student **Aljouri Al-Hashash** said: “One of the most valuable lessons I gained through my participation in the program was the ability to transform ideas into actionable projects



Talia Al-Sharrah



Aljouri Al-Hashash

with tangible impact. The program also helped us adopt a broader perspective toward societal challenges by viewing them as opportunities for innovation and for developing solutions that contribute to creating positive and sustainable change within the community.”

Student **Faisal Al-Duwaish** highlighted that one of the program’s most distinctive features is its ability to bring together young people who share a passion for creating positive change. He noted that the program enabled participants to exchange ideas and experiences while building valuable relationships and friendships that are likely to endure beyond the program itself.

He added: “The session gave us the opportunity to learn from inspiring professional experiences and gain practical advice in the areas of leadership and planning. This has motivated me to continue developing my idea, strengthen my entrepreneurial skills, and better prepare myself to transform it into an actionable project.”

Meanwhile, student **Manaf Al-Mulla** said: “My parents encouraged me to join the Kon Program because of its outstanding reputation for developing youth capabilities. After participating, I realized the true value of this experience, which contributed significantly to enhancing my personal skills and raising my awareness of the importance of making a positive contribution to society. For this reason, I encourage parents to support and motivate their children to participate in such programs, which will benefit them in the future.”

It is worth noting that NBK remains dedicated to fulfilling its social responsibilities and advancing its mission to support all society segments and non-profit organizations, particularly those focused on youth, by addressing their needs and requirements for a better future.



Faisal Al-Duwaish



Manaf Al-Mulla

In collaboration with Nomads290 and Al-Rawdatain Company

National Bank of Kuwait continues to engage with Kuwait’s youth and support their interests

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Reinforcing its commitment to engaging with young people and strengthening their financial awareness, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized an event on Umm Al-Maradim Island in collaboration with Nomads290 and Al-Rawdatain Company. The initiative aimed to raise awareness among this important segment of society about the risks of financial fraud, providing practical guidance on common fraud methods and ways to protect against them, alongside the distribution of gifts to beachgoers.

The initiative forms part of a broader series of activities and awareness campaigns undertaken by NBK in support of the “Let’s Be Aware” campaign, launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association in cooperation with local banks. The campaign aims to enhance banking and financial awareness across the community, while reinforcing key principles of cybersecurity and the protection of personal and banking data.

The event attracted strong engagement from visitors to the island and marine activity enthusiasts, particularly young people for whom such activities form an important part of their interests. NBK’s team interacted directly with members of the public, raising awareness of the most common fraud and scam techniques targeting customers, particularly those involving text messages, phone calls and fraudulent online links. The team also shared practical guidance to help individuals safeguard their personal information and banking data.

Commenting on the initiative, **Saud Al-Askar**, Senior Officer –SocialMedia, Digital Communicationsat National Bank of Kuwait, said: “At NBK, we believe that effective financial awareness extends beyond traditional channels. It requires reaching members of the community wherever they are and engaging with them directly to reinforce the principles of financial security and strengthen their ability to recognize and respond to the growing risks associated with digital fraud.This event on Umm Al-Maradim Island, organized in collaboration with Nomads290 and Al-Rawdatain Company, reflects that approach by creating a direct platform for engagement with the public in a vibrant setting that brings together marine and outdoor enthusiasts, allowing us to deliver financial awareness messages in a more accessible, relevant and impactful way.”

Financial fraud techniques continue to evolve alongside rapid technological advancement and accelerating digital transformation, making public awareness the first line of defense in protecting individuals from falling victim to such practices. NBK therefore continues to support the ‘Let’s Be Aware’ campaign through a broad range of field-based and awareness initiatives designed to familiarize customers and the wider public with the latest fraud methods, while reinforcing the importance of never sharing banking information, passwords or verification codes with any party, and of avoiding suspicious links and fraudulent offers. We also remain committed to providing practical guidance that pro-



Saud Al-Askar

Al-Askar: We continually seek to engage directly with members of the community across different locations and settings
Community awareness is the first line of defense in protecting individuals from falling victim to financial fraud



Photos during the campaign.

motes the safe use of digital banking services, supporting broader efforts to build a more informed and resilient society that is better equipped to protect itself against financial and cyber risks,” Al-Askar added.

Nomads290 is one of Kuwait’s prominent platforms specializing in marine and outdoor lifestyle content. Managed by a group of young enthusiasts with a passion for marine and coastal life, the platform produces a wide range of content documenting experiences across activities such as sailing, jet skiing, kitesurfing and other water-based pursuits.

The team also shares daily updates on sea and weather conditions, alongside stories and

experiences from beachgoers, fishermen, divers and other marine enthusiasts. This has helped Nomads290 build a broad audience and establish itself as one of Kuwait’s leading content platforms showcasing the country’s coastal lifestyle.

NBK continues to advance a broad range of community and awareness initiatives aimed at promoting financial literacy and strengthening digital security across society. These efforts reflect the Bank’s leading role and commitment to social responsibility, as well as its continued focus on protecting customers and the wider public from financial fraud and cybercrime while fostering safer banking practices across the Kuwaiti community.



talabat - NTG x AIESEC

Empowering Kuwait’s tech talent

talabat hosts the latest ‘Next Tech Gen’ session with AIESEC

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: talabat, the leading everyday app in Middle East & North Africa (MENA), hosted the latest edition of its Next Tech Gen (NTG) program at its headquarters in collaboration with AIESEC in Kuwait, a global non-profit youth leadership organization, run 100% for youth by youth. Bringing together AIESEC in Kuwait’s members and youth delegates, the full-day session combined expert talks with a behind-the-scenes office tour, reflecting talabat’s commitment to providing young talent with meaningful real-world exposure while reinforcing its education-focused corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts.

NTG is talabat’s ongoing monthly knowledge-sharing program that brings the company’s tech leaders into universities and academies across Kuwait to share hands-on insight into AI, product, data, and digital platforms, supporting the development of the country’s emerging tech talent. Building on previous editions, this session went beyond a single workshop format, providing participants with a 360-degree view of how a leading regional tech company operates.

Amal Bukhamseen, Manager of Corporate Affairs at talabat Kuwait, commented: “At talabat, we believe meaningful learning comes from real-world experience. It’s one thing to hear about how a leading regional technology company operates; it’s another to experience it firsthand by engaging with the people, culture, and ideas that drive it every day. Through our partnership with AIESEC in Kuwait, we’re proud to give young talent that opportunity while supporting the next generation of Ku-

wait’s digital talent.”

The knowledge-sharing day with AIESEC in Kuwait covered three key areas: an overview of talabat’s business and operating model, an inside look at the company’s people, culture, and employee experience, and a session on how data informs marketing decision-making. Participants also toured talabat’s departments, engaging directly with employees across functions to gain firsthand insights into their day-to-day work and the collaborative culture behind the business.

Lilian Montasir, Area Manager at AIESEC in Kuwait, said: “The Next Tech Gen workshop at talabat gave me valuable insights into marketing and people development. What stood out most was seeing how closely talabat’s way of working aligned with how AIESEC operates and seeing these practices applied in a professional environment. Everyone was incredibly welcoming, supportive, and genuinely cared about our learning. As I begin my journey as an Area Manager, I’m excited to carry these learnings with me and put them into practice throughout my term.”

The session reflects talabat’s open, people-first culture and its continued investment in Kuwait’s youth by providing direct, cross-functional exposure to the technology and business world. Through Next Tech Gen and partnerships with organizations such as AIESEC in Kuwait, talabat continues to open its doors to aspiring young talent, creating opportunities to engage with industry, broaden their perspectives, and apply academic learning in a real-world business environment.

Urging customers not to trust suspicious links

Kuwait Finance House warns of fraudulent messages impersonating official authorities for financial scheme

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: In line with its efforts to support Diraya campaign, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has warned of fraudulent messages impersonating official authorities. The messages contain misleading information of outstanding fines and penalties, and request payment via electronic links attached to the message. The Bank urges customers to ignore such messages and not to click on any links within them or provide any personal or financial information.

The Banks also reaffirm that penalties and fees are paid through official channels only and responding to suspicious messages may expose customers to electronic fraud and the loss of their money.

Impersonating official authorities

KFH highlighted the dangers of responding to unknown messages disguised as official authorities and requesting fines payment, noting that State authorities do not request data update or pay fines via unknown links.

New fraud methods

Fraud methods are progressing continuously according to KFH, where it depends on convincing methods to trap their victims by creating a state of

psychological pressure to pay or threatening legal actions if the transaction is not done immediately.

These fraudulent messages also include suspicious electronic links directing the victim to fake websites designed to steal personal data and financial accounts, most of which are outside Kuwait.

tMoreover, KFH reassures that awareness and vigilance are the first line of defense in combating electronic fraud, urging customers and the public not to respond to any unknown messages that request payment or personal or banking data via suspicious links. The Bank also urges customers to report any shady messages and not to share any banking or personal information under any circumstances.

KFH also emphasized its commitment to progressing its role in promoting banking and digital awareness among customers and the community, stemming from its responsibility to protect its customers and help them to recognize advanced fraud methods. Additionally, the Bank noted that fraudsters occasionally exploit the names and logos of official entities to legitimize their crimes. KFH advises customers to verify the source of a message and avoid clicking on suspicious links to prevent falling

victim to fraud.

KFH stressed the need to combat fraud by increasing financial awareness and vigilance, and refraining from sharing any confidential information related to personal cards, OTP, or bank card passwords, whether by phone, email, or any other means, reconfirming that KFH does not request its customers to share or update their financial data via phone, email, or text message.

Diraya campaign

It is worth noting that KFH remains committed to supporting Diraya awareness Campaign since its launch by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA). The Bank is keen to place customer security at the top of its priority, reflecting its success in promoting digital and banking awareness and achieving safe digital transformation in sustainable secure environment.

KFH continues to implement purposeful initiatives aimed at raising awareness across all segments of society. The Bank posts financial awareness content on its social media platforms and digital channels that showcases the latest services and products.



FedEx, UPS begin passing tariff refunds to customers

NEW YORK, Aug 13, (AP): If you bought something from an overseas vendor last year, it might be time to check your bank account.

Shippers including FedEx and UPS that acted as customs brokers for imported packages and received tariff refunds from the U.S. government have started to pass on those refunds to the customers that originally paid the tariffs.

The refunds to consumers are the last step in a monthslong process that kicked off in February when the Supreme Court struck down sweeping tariffs implemented by President Donald Trump in March 2025 under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act on goods from almost every country. The court ordered the government to return the tariffs it collected.

So far, about \$100 billion in tariffs have been refunded to companies who paid them under a system set up by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

That doesn't mean Americans will get anywhere close to what they paid in tariffs, since most were paid indirectly. In 2025, the Trump tariffs amounted to an average tax increase of \$1,000 per U.S. household, according to the Tax Foundation, a Washington, D.C., group that studies taxes.

But some consumers are getting some of what they paid directly back from shippers including UPS, DHL and FedEx. The refunds are being rolled out in phases based on what date they were paid. Shippers have said they'll return the refunds on a rolling basis as they receive them.

FedEx said it has begun the process of issuing \$800 million in tariff refunds it received from the government back to the customers that paid them. Customers don't need to apply to receive their refund, but they can enter tracking numbers for purchased items into a portal on the FedEx website to see whether or not they are due a refund.

UPS said in April it had paid \$5 billion in tariffs on behalf of clients and would begin the process of applying to the government for refunds. In the first phase, it applied for \$500 million in refunds and said customers should get refunds one to three months after it receives reimbursement from the Treasury.

DHL similarly said that it has filed claims for almost all eligible shipments where it served as the importer of record and is returning the refunds it has received.

"The volume and pace of refunds continue to depend on CBP's processing of claims," DHL said in a statement.

Unlike shippers who collected tariffs directly from customers, most big retailers passed on tariffs in indirect ways, changing their product lineups or partly absorbing higher costs, making a consumer refund unlikely.

Amazon executives said last week the company received \$600 million in tariff refunds in the second quarter.

In a call with investors, Amazon CFO Brian Olsavsky said the company isn't the importer of record on most of the goods it sells and that it has absorbed some tariff costs. But he said the company has "identified a limited set of circumstances where we can trace that we pass specific import charges on to customers." In those circumstances, he added, "we will proactively contact affected customers and automatically issue refunds to them."

Otherwise, he said, Amazon will use tariff refunds to lower prices for customers.

That echoes what other large retailers have said. In May, Cori Barrie, outgoing CEO of Best Buy, the nation's largest consumer electronics chain, said the retailer is an importer of record of only about 2% to 3% of what it sells and that the company would use any refund it gets to "deliver value back to our customers."

And Costco CEO Ron Vachris said the company planned to return "in some form" the tariffs that were passed on to consumers.

"How much we return and when depends on a variety of factors, including how much refund money we receive and when it arrives as well as developments in the lawsuit filed against the company regarding the return process," he said in a quarterly earnings call in May.

Some shoppers are suing to get the tariffs they paid in the form of higher prices back from companies. More than 80 class-action lawsuits have been filed by customers across the country against retailers including Costco, Nike, Amazon, Walmart and others.

The lawsuits will face difficulty because plaintiffs will have to prove they paid for price increases that were specifically tied to the tariffs, according to Lori Leskin, partner and co-chair of law firm Arnold & Porter's Consumer Products Practice Group. None of the lawsuits have yet been certified as class action, which would mean they apply to all customers.

"It's going to be very hard for anyone to establish that the price increase they paid was due to tariffs and not some other market force," she said. "Most of them are just talking about price increases, and to be able to trace a price increase due to a single factor is going to be really difficult given the multifactorial approach that most companies take."



The company logo is shown on a FedEx delivery van, Sept. 13, 2023, in downtown Denver. (AP)

First Chipotle will be located at Sidra

Alshaya Group brings Chipotle to Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, Aug 13: Alshaya Group, the leading international franchise retail operator in the region announced the launch of Chipotle Mexican Grill (NYSE: CMG) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with its first restaurant opening in Riyadh this August.

This highly anticipated launch will bring Chipotle's responsibly sourced, classically cooked real food to guests in Saudi Arabia for the first time, marking an exciting new milestone in the brand's continued expansion across the Middle East.

The upcoming restaurant will introduce guests in Riyadh to Chipotle's signature menu of burritos, bowls, tacos, quesadillas, and salads, all made with real ingredients and prepared in an open kitchen. Fans will be able to customise their meals with a choice of proteins, rice, beans, salsas, toppings, and Chipotle's famous guacamole, delivering the same made-to-order experience that has made Chipotle a global favourite.

With Chipotle set to open at Sidra, a popular dining destination in the heart of the Kingdom's capital located next to Granada Mall, guests will be able to find the new location by taking exit 9 on Imam Abdullah Ibn Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz Road.

Nate Lawton, Chief Development Officer at Chipotle, said: "We're pleased to introduce Chipotle to guests in Saudi Arabia for the first time. The Kingdom represents an important milestone in our international growth strategy and a compelling opportunity to expand in one of the Middle East's



Chipotle - Saudi Arabia

- Chipotle to open its first restaurant in KSA, in partnership with Alshaya Group
- The Kingdom's first Chipotle will be located at Sidra, the premier dining destination in Riyadh next to the Granada Mall

most dynamic consumer markets. Launching in Riyadh, home to one of the region's leading shopping and leisure destinations, provides an exceptional platform to introduce our brand to both local guests

and international visitors. Together with Alshaya Group, we look forward to delivering the distinctive Chipotle experience and building a strong foundation for long-term growth in the region."

Jeff Kellen, President, Hospitality division at Alshaya Group, said: "Since its launch in the region over two years ago, Chipotle has surpassed all expectations to become one of our most loved brands. Knowing how eagerly consumers in KSA have awaited its arrival, we look forward to meeting their expectations with Chipotle's delicious, fresh, and real-ingredient menu."

The Saudi Arabia launch builds on Chipotle's growing presence in the region through its partnership with Alshaya Group. Since entering the Middle East in 2024, Chipotle has opened 16 restaurants across the GCC with seven each in the UAE and Kuwait, and two in Qatar, bringing its distinctive fast-casual dining experience to more guests across the region.

Chipotle's existing international portfolio of owned and operated restaurants includes locations across Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, as well as partner locations in the Middle East and Mexico. In North America, the Company continues to pursue significant long-term growth, supported by its commitment to responsibly sourced ingredients, culinary innovation, and digital convenience.

Further details, including the opening-day celebrations, mall location and countdown to the official opening date later this month, will be announced soon.

China's automaker Chery buys Nissan plant in Africa as EV production shifts to new markets

NAIROBI, Aug 13, (AP): Chinese automakers are increasingly shifting from exporting vehicles to building them in Africa, betting that rapid urbanization, a growing middle class and supportive government policies will make the continent one of the industry's last major growth markets.

It's part of a strategy for coping with slowing demand at home and rising trade barriers in Europe and North America. Analysts say the shift could reshape Africa's automotive industry by creating jobs, developing local supply chains and accelerating adoption of electric vehicles, although weak infrastructure and policy uncertainty remain significant obstacles.

In July, Chery, China's largest auto exporter, acquired Nissan's former Rosslyn plant near Pretoria, South Africa, where it plans to make plug-in hybrids, battery-electric vehicles and models under its Jetour brand.

The move reflects a broader strategy by Chinese automakers to manufacture closer to African consumers rather than rely solely on imports, though the trend is just getting started.

Beijing Automotive Group (BAIC) has an automotive manufacturing and assembly facility in Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth), South Africa, and China's Great Wall Motor has some localized assembly and component distribution capacity.

"Africa has become known as the next frontier for the automotive market," said Hiten Parmar, executive director of The Electric Mission, a South African nonprofit promoting sustainable mobility.

Analysts say South Africa, Morocco, Kenya, Ethiopia and Ghana are among the countries best positioned to attract Chinese EV investment because of their industrial capacity, supportive policies or growing electricity infrastructure. Morocco also benefits from proximity to European export markets, while Zimbabwe's



Workers assemble the Zeekr 001 EV models at the Chinese automaker Zeekr assembly plant in Ningbo, east China's Zhejiang Province, April 17, 2025. (AP)

large lithium reserves could support battery supply chains.

Local manufacturing could eventually lower vehicle prices by avoiding import duties while stimulating investment in charging infrastructure, component manufacturing and battery production. Africa's first large-scale battery gigafactory is already planned in Morocco.

Rapid urbanization, rising incomes and the relative affordability of Chinese brands are enabling Chinese automakers to capture markets historically dominated by European, Japanese and American giants.

"Whilst African consumers have been thriving on used cars, the affordability of Asian brands is providing a wider accessibility reach for new vehicles," Parmar said.

Nick Hedley, an energy transition research analyst at Zero Carbon Analytics, said Africa's fast-growing population and expanding middle class create a natural market for affordable electric vehicles while helping governments reduce dependence on imported fuel.

"Africa is also a net importer of refined fuels, which drains foreign

locally.

Ethiopia has banned imports of fossil fuel-powered vehicles and is encouraging local production by mandating lower import duties on EVs assembled domestically.

South Africa has taken a different approach, using production incentives like customs duty rebates, production-linked credits, direct cash investments, and tax breaks to encourage investment in electric- and hydrogen fueled-vehicle manufacturing.

"This is becoming a notable change in approach from Asian brands, from pure imports, to considerations of assembly and manufacturing," Parmar said.

Africa is increasingly positioned to become more than just a destination for imported vehicles.

"If Chinese manufacturers want access to these markets, they need to add value locally rather than simply sell into them," Banda said. "That is what will move Africa from a sales market to a genuine manufacturing base."

South Africa already has manufacturing capacity, skilled workers and established export markets, Banda said. Purchasing facilities such as the Rosslyn plant can enable automakers to retrofit existing factories rather than build new ones from scratch.

"Companies can pivot, or enter partnerships, far faster than anyone starting from scratch," she said.

But she cautioned that converting factories designed for internal combustion engines is complex and requires long-term certainty on taxes, tariffs and industrial policy.

Stable policies are essential, since sudden changes in taxes or regulations can undermine investor confidence. Reliable infrastructure is also vital.

"Without clean, reliable, affordable electricity, forget about operating EVs. Without sufficient, well-located charging, forget about functional EVs," Banda said.

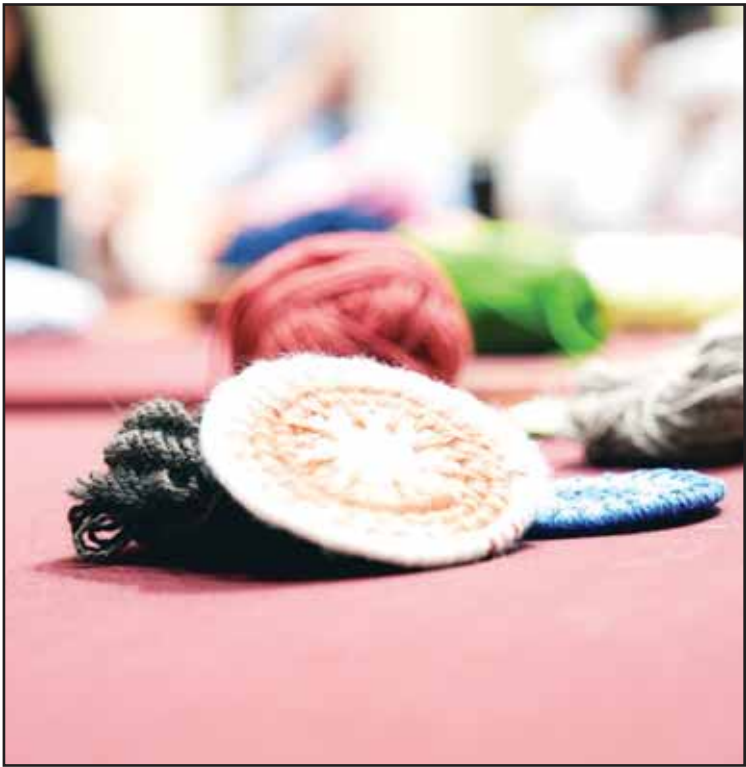
Loop by loop, craft takes root at Sadu House

In the hush of Sadu House, a learner's focus tightens each loop into place.

Threads of summer



With steady instruction, Hayat Al-Balushi helps a learner shape a coaster, one careful loop at a time.



Textured and true, the coaster's woven rings hold the summer workshop's quiet rhythm.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13, (KUNA): A workshop on weaving coasters was held at Bait Al-Sadu (Sadu House) for participants aged 10 and above as part of the "Summer Cultural Festival 18" activities, aimed at developing handicraft skills.

The workshop was led by trainer Hayat Al-Balushi, assisted by Sanaa Al-Adwani, and focused on using yarn to create coasters in a simple way.

Al-Balushi told KUNA that the technique involves continuously wrapping yarn around a rope in a circular motion until reaching the appropriate diameter to fit the size of a cup.

She stressed that the workshop aimed to develop handicraft skills and use them to create pieces with a distinctive artistic touch.

Al-Balushi noted that the workshop was suitable for beginners and anyone interested in handicrafts using yarn.



Workshop participants concentrates on each loop, turning simple yarn into a small circle of art.



Fingers trace the rope's curve as workshop participants find rhythm in the weave.

Mitchell makes the summer blockbuster darker and weirder

‘The End of Oak Street’ turns family drama into dinosaur chaos

NEW YORK, Aug 13, (AP): At the end of the block in David Robert Mitchell’s “The End of Oak Street,” is a cul-de-sac with a telephone pole in the middle and wires radiating out like the cables of a big top. It’s a fitting touch for a breakneck, carnivalesque movie made with throw-back showmanship.

Summer movies, of course, are not known for lacking in circus-like mayhem. But much of the pastiche delight of the 1980s-set “The End of Oak Street,” a mid-August surprise, is how it absorbs an Amblin-style blockbuster spirit and conjures, without winking irony or belabored homage, a summer thrill ride seemingly designed for the drive-in.

Mitchell’s breakthrough was the nifty 2014 horror “It Follows,” which he followed up with an admirably ambitious but shaggily self-indulgent Los Angeles neo noir, “Under the Silver Lake.” But any indulgences in “The End of Oak Street,” about a 1980s suburban family whose neighborhood is transported through time, are for the audience. “The End of Oak Street” is a bonkers blast.

It’s best going in not knowing anything about the movie’s twists, so tread carefully on the rest of this review. That’s not to say that an enormous amount of “The End of Oak Street” isn’t immediately familiar, starting with the central family.

The Platts live in what looks like a San Fernando Valley neighborhood full of split levels and tidy little streets. Denise (Anne Hathaway) and Greg (Ewan McGregor) have two kids and a dog named Starbuck. Audrey (Maisy Stella) is a teenager and Brian (Christian Convery) is her younger brother.

But from the moment we meet them, during a neighborhood fair, there are obvious cracks in their all-



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Christian Convery, from left, Anne Hathaway and Maisy Stella in a scene from “The End of Oak Street.” (AP)

American life. Greg is working a side job delivering pizzas while Denise is secretly typing up a maybe-aspirational novel about a woman dreaming of leaving her family. The kids have their own secrets, too. They suspect their parents are on the cusp of divorcing, and so, seemingly, do Greg and Denise.

Such a framework for sci-fi cataclysm is, naturally, Spielberg 101. But while “The End of Oak Street” is sure to test and restore their familial bonds, Mitchell, who also wrote the script, takes a route that leans more into horror, absurdism and outright silliness.

In any case, yes, there are dino-

saurs. It’s both skillful and a lot of fun how Mitchell teases them out. The first signs are mysterious. A flash of light. A strange exotic flower in a neighbor’s backyard. A giant mount of feces in another’s. But soon, the Platts find that their neighborhood is overrun with primordial beasts and surrounded by jungle; Oak Street is suddenly a suburban island in a pre-historic world.

It’s a perfectly “Twilight Zone” plot that inadvertently solves the problems that have plagued the “Jurassic Park” movies for 20 years. If those films have struggled to find an off-island setting, “The End of Oak Street” instead brings the dino isle straight into suburbia. Encounters with raptors and worse transpire across front porches and shag carpets.

You could chalk it all up to good dumb fun. And it is mostly that, with set pieces built to make an audience groan in anticipation or cheer for the successful swing of a sledgehammer. But where “The End of Oak Street” succeeds where so many others fail is in the sincerity it has for its characters. Ridiculous and over-the-top as the concept is, the Platts are firmly grounded. (Hathaway, especially, helps in this department.) The combination of an earnest family drama with CGI hijinks, plus increasingly nutty plotting, make “The End of Oak Street” a fairly nonstop hoot.

Composer Michael Giacchino does his best John Williams impression to match. But Mitchell’s film also increasingly detours from the Spielberg playbook. Only Mitchell would take a moment for a freaked-out Audrey to sneak into the car to pop a cassette in and listen to Steve Winwood’s “Valerie.”

And while it would be pushing it to say there’s that much underneath “The End of Oak Street,” its characters are united in keeping certain things secret out of fear that their spouse or kids or parents can’t handle the truth.

Music

Artists gather to raise funds for Venezuela & Colombia victims

Anthony, Feid join Miami relief concert

CARACAS, Aug 13, (AP): Latin music stars Marc Anthony, Luis Fonsi, Chayanne, Feid, Jay Wheeler and many more will perform at an international benefit concert livestreamed from Miami on Sunday to raise money for those impacted by devastating earthquakes in Venezuela and Colombia.

Proceeds from online donations and ticket sales collected during the “Unidos por Los Nuestros,” or “United for Our Own,” concert will address both immediate and long-term needs, including rebuilding homes, repairing schools and community spaces, supporting children and providing mental health support, among other initiatives.

“Uniting for a common cause - taking action and helping fellow human beings facing hardship - is a duty we all share,” said Anthony, a multiple Grammy Award winner whose non-profit Maestro Cares Foundation will administer the funds along with the Univision Foundation.

Proceeds from the concert will support the nonprofit groups All Hands and Hearts, CARE, Global Empowerment Mission, Techo and World Central Kitchen.

The event was initially created to benefit Venezuela after magnitude 7.2 and 7.5 earthquakes rocked northern areas of the country just 39 seconds apart on June 24, killing at least 6,300 people. Those plans changed Monday when western parts of Colombia were hit by a deadly 7.4 magnitude earthquake, spurring event organizers to include the neighboring country.

Authorities and residents are just beginning to comprehend the devastation in Colombia, where at least 265 people were confirmed dead and nearly 500 people were reported missing by Wednesday afternoon, according to President Abelardo de la Esparriella. Civilian-run databases put the number of missing at more than 4,100.

For Venezuela, the fundraiser comes at a crucial time as public and media attention fades on a humanitarian crisis that will last years, said Rodner Figueroa, co-founder and



Puerto Rican pop singer Chayanne, center, performs in concert during his We Dance Again tour in Panama City on April 2, 2025. (AP)

vice president of the I Love Venezuela Foundation, which channels resources to nonprofits working in Venezuela and is a Global Empowerment Mission partner.

“The biggest challenge right now is to keep the moment alive,” said Figueroa. “The need in Venezuela continues to be at a scale that is unbelievable.”

Tens of thousands of displaced survivors there need housing, clean water and sanitation and ongoing medical attention. More than six weeks later, people are still searching for missing friends and relatives, often without any official help.

The benefit concert will take place Sunday at 6 p.m. EDT at Miami’s Kaseya Center and will be shown live on Univision, ViX, WAPA and TelevisaUnivision radio stations, iHeartLatino and Venevision Play in Venezuela.

Viewers can donate by scanning on-screen QR codes, texting UNI-



Elena Rose performs, “Me lo Merzeo,” during the 2025 Latin Grammys at MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nov. 13, 2025. (AP)

DOS to 707070 or visiting univision.org during the broadcast.

Additional music acts include Piso 21, Gente de Zona, Elena Rose, Gilberto Santa Rosa, Ricardo Montaner, Mau y Ricky, Olga Tañón and others. The performers span Latin genres from salsa and reggaeton to pop and

come from across Latin America, including Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Dozens of Latin television personalities, journalists and other celebrities will help host the event, including Don Francisco, longtime host of the TV show “Sábado Gigante” and former Miss Universe Dayanara Torres.

“We have all witnessed the devastation that has affected our communities at some point - we have seen it happen time and again in many of our countries and across the globe,” said Anthony, who also advocated and raised funds after Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico in 2017. “The need is immense.”

Some Colombian artists committed to the fundraiser well before Monday’s earthquake. The Urbano Latino musician Feid, born in Medellín, has been reaching out to his more than 14 million Instagram followers this week to support aid groups there.

30-foot Hoosier cabinet celebrates Indiana kitchen history

NAPPANEE, Ind., Aug 13, (AP): Hoosier cabinets - the original all-in-one kitchen - were once a mainstay in early 20th-century American homes. Though they have long since fallen out of fashion, a giant, climbable replica has been unveiled outdoors in a northern Indiana town to celebrate the cabinet’s place in kitchen history.

The 30-foot (9-meter) model of a Dutch Kitchenette opened to the public last month as part of the 150th anniversary celebration of Coppes Napanee, one of two companies still in existence that manufactured the popular Hoosier cabinets more than a century ago. The cabinet name was coined after its largest producer, the Hoosier Manufacturing Co.

Dubbed the world’s largest Hoosier cabinet, the replica built against a brick background is equipped with stairs leading to a loft that visitors to the town of Napanee can look out from. It overlooks Coppes Commons, the site of the original Coppes Napanee factory that has been converted to an indoor marketplace, artisan hub



A 30-foot replica of a Hoosier cabinet stands in Napanee, Ind., Thursday, Aug. 6, 2026. (AP)

and museum. The company still produces custom cabinets next door.

Wesley Mast, owner and president of Coppes Napanee, said he typically hears two types of responses when visitors first see the giant cabinet.

“There’s the one extreme where people are like,

‘Why? Why such a big cabinet?’” Mast said. “And my response is always like, ‘Why not?’

“The other response we get is like, ‘That’s so cool. Where did you get this idea? I love it.’”

Mast said the cabinet “brings us another level of attention and branding and makes this place more of a destination than just a pass-through.”

The Hoosier cabinet is a freestanding kitchen workstation and storage area that centralized and sped up food preparation. The cabinets were popular from the 1890s through the 1930s but waned after World War II as built-in, wall-to-wall cabinetry became the norm in new home construction.

A century ago, “this was the kitchen,” Mast said. “This was kind of the first piece of furniture that went into the house as a kitchen and was considered all-in-one, the kitchen itself in just one piece.”

There were 5,000 dealers of Hoosier cabinets across the country, said Mary Figueroa, curator of History at the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, which has four Hoosier cabinets in its collection.

Technology

iPhone keyboard secrets to make typing faster & easier

NEW YORK, Aug 13, (AP): Texting friends, replying to a business email, tapping out some text for a social media post. We do a lot of writing on our smartphones, which are increasingly essential for our work and personal lives.

But did you know about the many keyboard tips and tricks that can help raise your smartphone skills? If you own an Apple iPhone, there are a host of little-known shortcuts that could maximize your typing.

These features, usually buried in lengthy instructions, are easy to overlook though they often come to wider attention through videos by social media influencers.

Here are few texting and typing tips for iPhones. Some features may vary depending on the version of iOS.

Typing is not the only way to enter text into an iPhone. Apple’s Quickpath feature lets you write by sliding your finger around the screen’s digital keyboard, instead of tapping and lifting your fingers on the electronic letters.

If it’s not already activated, turn it on by going into Settings, General, and Keyboard, and toggle on Slide to Type.

To use it, touch the first letter of the word and then, while still touching the screen, slide your finger to the following letters. For example, to type the word “yellow,” tap on the letter Y, then slide your finger to E, and so on. Don’t hold your finger down too long on the first letter and lift it from the screen when finished.

Pressing delete right away will erase the entire word you’ve typed this way, instead of just a letter.

You wrote a sentence and realized you forgot a word and want to add it in? Or perhaps you wrote a long paragraph and want to make edits before hitting send?

To move the cursor to the part of the text you want to modify, hold your thumb down on the space bar until the letters disappear, or hold it down inside the text bubble. Now you can now move the cursor around the text by sliding your finger around the screen like it’s a trackpad.

If you want to select text that you’ve typed on your iPhone for copying and pasting, there are a few options.

You probably know you can tap twice on a word to highlight it, or three times to highlight a whole paragraph.

For more precision, use the trackpad method. While holding your thumb down on the space bar, tap anywhere on the keyboard. Now you can select text by moving your finger.

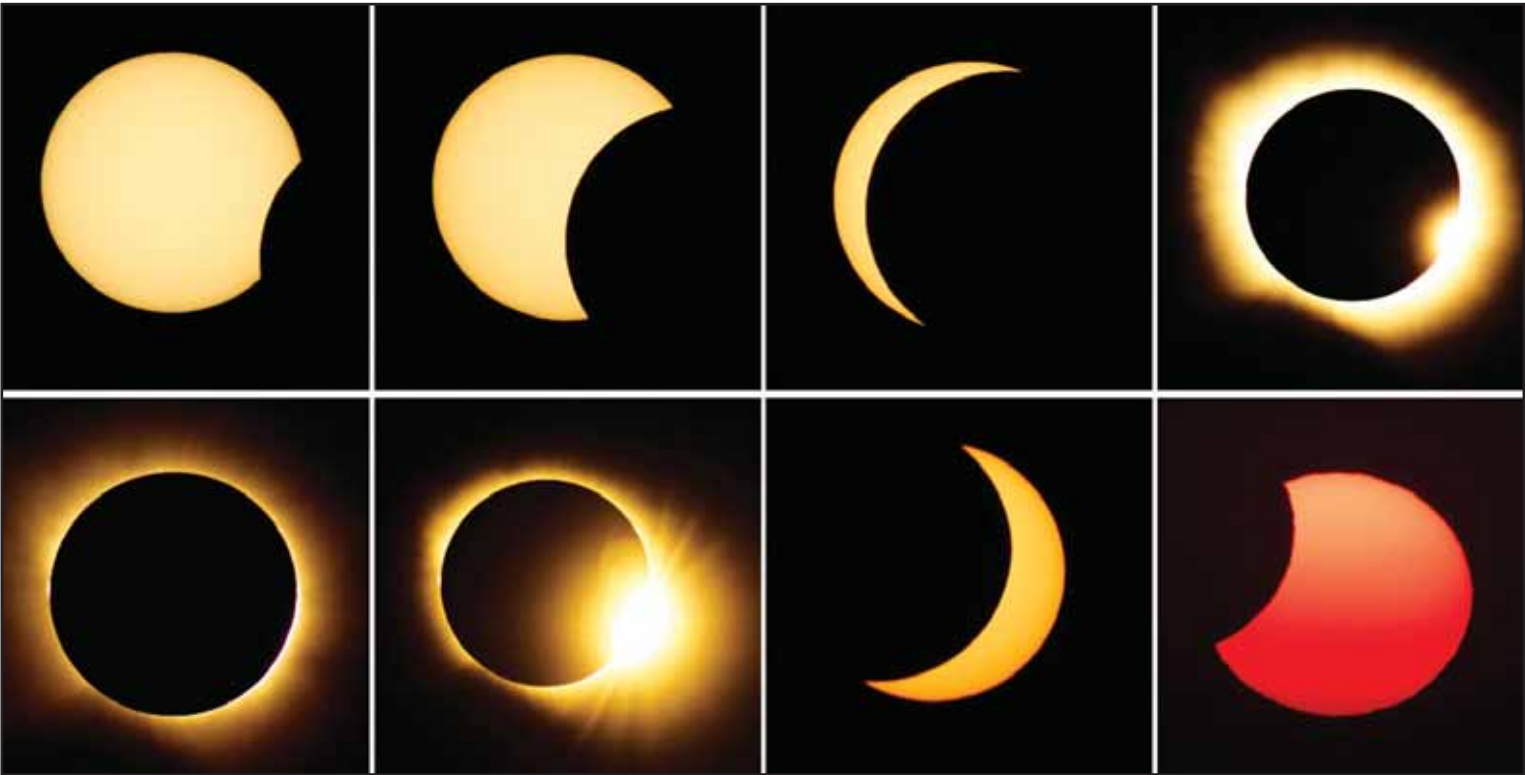
This feature allows you to both select and deselect text in the Notes app or when writing emails. But when writing in chat apps like iMessage or WhatsApp or typing in some app text windows, it only allows you to select text but not deselect it if you’ve highlighted more than you wanted. So use a slightly different method: hold a finger down on the shift key and hold down the space bar.

To copy and paste the highlighted text, you could use the pop-up options that appear onscreen. Or you can use gestures. Use three fingers to pinch closed the highlighted selection to copy. To paste somewhere else, do the opposite gesture by pinching or spreading three fingers open. This can also be used with photos.

However, these shortcuts didn’t always work smoothly for me when I tried them out on some short snippets of messaging text on my iPhone. They might work better on a device with a bigger screen, like an iPad.



IPhones are seen in Phoenix on May 12, 2026. (AP)



This combination photo shows the sequence of the moon covering the sun in a total solar eclipse seen from Berlanga de Duero, central Spain on Aug 12. (AP)



People observe a partial solar eclipse with special protective glasses at the former airport Tempelhof in Berlin, Germany on Aug 12. (AP)



People gather at a viewpoint in Lisbon to watch a solar eclipse on Aug 12. (AP)



People observe a partial solar eclipse on the banks of the Thames river in London on Aug 12. (AP)



A person dressed as DARTH VADER stands in front of the Hallgrímskirkja church after a solar eclipse on a cloudy day in Reykjavik, Iceland on Aug 12. (AP)

‘Dramatic celestial spectacle for millions across Europe’

Millions crowd Spanish cities to see country’s first total solar eclipse in over century

MEDINACELI, Spain, Aug 13, (AP): Millions of people crowded cloudless cities and towns in Spain on Wednesday in search of the best views of a total solar eclipse, when the alignment of the sun, moon and Earth briefly plunged parts of the planet into darkness.

The crowds brought lawn chairs and umbrellas as they eagerly awaited the celestial spectacle, which began early in the evening. As the sky darkened, gradually at first and then quickly, people broke into applause and cheered. It was the country’s first total solar eclipse in more than a century.

“It’s simply impossible to imagine,” Rosa Celiberti, a language teacher who watched from Medinaceli, a Roman-era hilltop town in northeast Spain, said with tears in her eyes. “No matter how many photos or videos you’ve seen, nothing comes even close to what it actually feels like.”

Across a wide band of northern and central Spain and Portugal, millions of people enjoyed some of mainland Europe’s best views of the eclipse. It also passed over slivers of Greenland and Iceland.

Totality - when the moon completely covers the sun’s light - was expected to last less than 2½ minutes, reaching its maximum duration off Iceland’s west coast. By the time it got to a small patch of Portugal and then to Spain, just before sunset, totality dwindled to a minute or so. The total eclipse then ended over the Mediterranean.

The eclipse was expected to draw at least a half-million additional visitors, Spanish authorities said. Demand for hotel rooms along the path of totality, including in the northern cities of A Coruña, Bilbao and Santiago de Compostela, soared.

The event unfolded against the backdrop of scorching summer temperatures and wildfires, and Spanish officials rolled out a large public safety campaign.

Temperatures across much of Spain climbed above 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) in many areas where the eclipse was observed. Some 350 official viewing sites were set up across the sparsely populated interior, and more than 33,500 law enforcement officers were deployed to observation areas and access points, the Interior Ministry said.

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 Ávila, in central Spain. Several smaller wildfires remain active elsewhere in southern and central parts of the country.

In Reykjavik, clouds did not prevent hundreds of people from gathering in bright raincoats in front of the landmark Hallgrímskirkja church as the skies darkened.

With rain falling, the disk of the sun was barely perceptible and then, suddenly, the lights went out. Only the glow of phones held aloft could be seen.

The crowd cheered the darkness as it rained harder and roared even louder when the first light returned. They did not wait to watch the remainder of the partial eclipse and quickly cleared out of the square.

Special eclipse glasses were essential for safe viewing, even if only a sliver of the sun remained visible. The glasses are made with special filters that block solar radiation that can damage the eyes.

For months, supermarkets, department stores, museums and planetariums across Spain had sold or distributed the glasses, with many pharmacies running out of stock ahead of Wednesday.

On Tuesday evening in downtown Madrid, a long line formed outside a photo shop where a sign read, “We carry eclipse glasses.”

One woman emerged triumphantly and reassured those waiting: “He has boxes and boxes of them!”

Sverre Rud, captain of the MS Spitsbergen, was circling the waters of Rypefjord in eastern Greenland trying to make sure he was perfectly positioned for his 126 passengers to view the spectacle. All day, people came up to Rud to ask if he had nailed the right spot, with no clouds.

“I will do my best,” Rud said. “I will pull out my superman powers.”

The eclipse may have been startling for the passengers, who had been experiencing 24 hours of daylight on a 17-day cruise in locations mostly north of the Arctic Circle.

Suddenly, for two minutes it was dark.

Even so, the mood on the polar ship had been pure anticipation.

“Everyone is very enthusiastic,” Rud said. “When we were down for breakfast earlier, it was almost like a little bit of a Christmas Eve feeling here.”

Rooms in Reykjavik, Iceland’s capital, averaged more than \$1,000 for

Wednesday night as Icelanders prepared for their first total solar eclipse since 1954 and the first visible from the capital since 1433.

Prices were roughly double 2025 rates, according to data group Lighthouse Intelligence. Many tourists made bookings years in advance. But cloudy skies prevailed across much of the island.

Authorities expected up to 20,000 additional overseas visitors during an already busy peak tourist period. Iceland is home to fewer than 400,000 people.

The 70-room Hotel Keflavik in the Reykjanesbaer municipality was fully booked, with guests hoping to see around one minute and 45 seconds of totality.

“Eclipse time, of course, has been very demanding, and many people came to us early, like last year,” said Steinþór Jónsson, the hotel’s owner and manager.

Jónsson said he had seen nothing like it since 1986, the year the hotel opened, when U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev held a summit in Reykjavik.

“When I opened the hotel, we had Reagan and Gorbachev meeting. It was very hectic here,” he said with a smile. “Besides Reagan and Gorbachev, the eclipse is the biggest.”

Across Britain, where the sun was more than 90% obscured, people flocked to hilltop parks and anywhere with an open view of the sky to see the best eclipse since 1999.

In Greenwich Park, with views of the River Thames and central London, the sky turned an eerie gray as a sliver of light sat atop the moon like a hat.

Veronica Orozco popped open a bottle of champagne to share with neighbors as she witnessed the second eclipse of her life.

“I was in Venezuela and I was young and I thought that the sun would not come back. My dad said, ‘It is science, of course it will come back,’” she recalled. “Now sitting here at the age of 41, it is still magical.”

Aja Lilit, who turned 24 on Tuesday, said the eclipse was like a “birthday present from the universe.”

She said the rare event made her think of how small she was at a “cosmic level.”

Radiation vest tested on NASA moonshot can cut astronauts’ exposure in solar storms: study

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Aug 13, (AP): A new study suggests a protective vest tested on a manikin during NASA’s first Artemis moonshot could drastically cut the radiation exposure of lunar astronauts during severe solar storms.

Scientists reported Wednesday on the radiation-shielding vest worn around the moon by a female test dummy in 2022. No one was aboard that Artemis I debut flight, which paved the way for humanity’s long-awaited return to the moon in April by a flyby crew of four.

Radiation remains one of the biggest threats to astronauts as NASA works toward a moon base. Shielding garments could keep lunar crews safe when solar storms strike and even allow them to venture beyond their shelters if necessary, the US, German and Israeli team reported in the journal Science Advances.

A version of the vest was previously tested on the International Space Station. It didn’t travel with the Artemis II astronauts since it was a short 10-day mission with limited room, but may wind up a carry-on for future moon crews.

Meant to be worn only during high-radiation and potentially cancer-causing solar events, the vest covers the most vulnerable human organs and tissue: lungs, stomach, bone marrow, breasts and ovaries. Women are believed to be especially susceptible to radiation-induced cancer.

Artemis I carried two female manikins that spent nearly a month flying to the moon and back. Dubbed Zohar and Helga, the manikins - each a life-size 3 feet from head to lower torso - were strapped into the passenger seats of NASA’s Orion capsule.

Zohar wore the 57-pound (26-ki-



In this photo provided by NASA, Helga and Zohar, two female manikins in the Matroshka AstroRad Radiation Experiment investigation, undergo post-flight payload inspections, Jan 17, 2023, inside the Space Station Processing Facility at Kennedy Space Center on Merritt Island, Florida. (AP)

logram) AstroRad vest, developed by the US-Israeli startup StemRad and Lockheed Martin. The companies had already tested a prototype on the space station for comfort and function, modeling it after gear worn by nuclear disaster teams.

Helga flew vest-less, but like its companion contained thousands of radiation sensors.

The study’s lead author, Stem-

Rad’s Jordan Hourii, called it “the largest experiment ever conducted to determine astronaut radiation exposure beyond low-Earth orbit.” NASA, the German Aerospace Center and the Israel Space Agency provided the funding. Radiation exposure is much less for space travelers closer to home, thanks to Earth’s protective atmosphere and magnetic field.

Congo’s Ebola outbreak on track to surpass deadliest one in history: WHO

CONGO, Aug 13, (Agencies): The ongoing Ebola outbreak in Congo is on track to surpass the deadliest one in history, which erupted over a decade ago and killed over 11,000 people, the head of the World Health Organization said Wednesday.

“At its current pace, it’s on track to eclipse the West African Ebola outbreak of 2014 to 2016,” Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters. That outbreak horrified the world and jolted efforts to develop a vaccine.

The outbreak in eastern Congo, considered the fastest-growing one yet, has killed over 2,000 people out of more than 4,300 cases. The outbreak was declared on May 15, but health authorities now say sequencing showed it began months earlier, in February.

It is unlike recent Ebola outbreaks because the rare Bundibugyo virus responsible for it has no approved vaccines or treatments, though efforts to address that are underway.

Experts say this outbreak is moving faster than efforts to track and manage it in a remote part of eastern Congo facing ongoing conflict, near the borders with South Sudan, Uganda and Rwanda.

Most new cases and deaths are being reported in communities outside the reach of health workers in a region of poor infrastructure and ill-equipped health centers. Some workers have gone on strike over lack of pay. Misinformation about the virus circulates in communities where some are wary of outsiders, keeping some people from clinics.

“The outbreak had a big head start, still way ahead of us, and we’re playing catch-up,” Tedros said.

Dr. Abdirahman Mahamud, WHO’s director for health emergency alert and response operations, said the agency expects the peak of the outbreak to be reached in six months.

“But ... that’s the moderate scenario,” Mahamud said. “There is a one-case scenario where this outbreak may last nine months to 12 months.”

This Ebola outbreak has killed more people at a faster rate than any other, including the 2014-2016 outbreak that had at least 28,000 cases. That one took about eight months to reach 1,000 deaths.

Ebola is rare but highly contagious and can be contracted from bodily fluids such as vomit, blood or semen, and from contaminated surfaces and materials such as bedding and clothing. The disease it causes is severe and often fatal.

Clinical trials of two possible treatments for this type of Ebola began last month in Ituri, the most affected of the five provinces in Congo where cases have been re-



A health worker sprays disinfectant in a freshly dug grave for the body of Jacques Lobo Dhen, who died of Ebola, in Bunia, Ituri province, eastern Congo on Aug 12. (AP)

ported.

Two vaccines developed specifically for the Bundibugyo virus are now being tested in people for the first time, Tedros said Wednesday.

WHO also plans to test whether an existing Ebola vaccine could protect people against the virus after studies in animals showed promising results.

The origins of the outbreak are becoming increasingly clear.

A study published in Nature Medicine on Monday added evidence that the outbreak began when the virus jumped from an infected animal to a person, rather than stemming from earlier outbreaks. Researchers found the virus is genetically different from versions seen in Bundibugyo Ebola outbreaks in 2007 and 2012.

Also:

LONDON: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) authorized on Monday Orforglipron (Fundayo), a weight management and type 2 diabetes tablet, making the UK the first country in Europe to approve the product.

A statement by the MHRA revealed, “Alongside a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity, orforglipron is authorised for weight loss and weight maintenance in adults in the UK with a BMI of 30 or above, or a BMI of between 27 and 30, and at least one weight-related comorbidity.”

It added, “It is also authorised to improve glycaemic control for patients with insufficiently controlled type 2 diabetes.”

Mirza: Retirement was difficult, but I’m proud of my legacy

‘I had the honor of wearing the Bahrain jersey’

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Bahraini handball star Mohammed Mirza has brought the curtain down on a distinguished playing career filled with titles, international appearances and lasting memories.

The Bahrain international announced his retirement after years of representing both the national team and several leading clubs, leaving behind an impressive legacy in Bahraini handball.

In a farewell message to the fans, Mirza said wearing the Bahrain jersey had always been a source of pride, responsibility and belonging.

“Today, I announce my retirement from handball after years of giving. I had the honor of wearing the Bahrain jersey and representing my country at international events,” he said.

Mirza added: “Goodbye to the courts, but not goodbye to handball.”

He earned widespread admiration throughout his career for his sportsmanship, commitment and strong character, while maintaining close relationships with teammates, coaches, administrators and fans.

Mirza began his career with Al-Tadhamon before moving to Al-Ahli and Al-Najma, eventually returning to Al-Ahli for the final chapter of his playing career. With Al-Najma, he won the Asian Club Handball Championship in editions held in India and Iran.

At international level, Mirza re-

resented Bahrain from the youth ranks through to the senior national team. One of the defining moments of his career came when he helped Bahrain qualify for the 2011 World Championship in Sweden for the first time.

That break-paved the way for a series of World Championship appearances and helped establish Bahrain as a force in Arab and Asian handball.

Mirza also shared the court with several generations of Bahraini handball stars, including Jaafar Abdulqader, Mohammed and Ahmed Abdulnabi, Saeed Jawhar, Hussein Al-Sayyad and Ali Mirza, before playing alongside members of the current generation.

Beyond his achievements, Mirza was respected for his fighting spirit

and leadership. He was particularly keen to support younger players, offering advice and sharing his experience both on and off the court.

Mirza also spoke fondly of his relationship with Kuwait, describing the ties between the two countries as strong and deeply rooted, particularly through sport.

His career in handball allowed him to become familiar with Kuwaiti handball, its stars and legends, as well as officials and administrators at the federation and club level.

He said he had developed many friendships in Kuwait that he greatly valued, adding that sport has a unique ability to bring people and nations closer together.

After years of training, competing and representing Bahrain at major tournaments, Mirza admitted that deciding to retire was extremely difficult.

“After all these years, you become accustomed to the court, training and matches, and suddenly you say: That’s it, the journey is over. There is certainly sadness, but at the same time there is satisfaction and pride in everything I have given,” he said.

Mirza revealed that he had been considering retirement for some time as the physical demands of the sport increased.

“I wanted to stop while I was still capable of giving, rather than wait until my body made the decision for me,” he said.

“It was never an easy decision. It took a lot of thought because handball was such a big part of my life. But eventually, you have to know when it is time to stop, and I believe I made the right decision at the right time.”

“If I could go back in time, I would choose handball again without hesitation. It gave me everything—not just championships, but friends, memories, and experiences. It introduced me to so many people whom I will never forget,” he said.



Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa presents a gift to Mohammed Mirza.



Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa welcomes Mohammed Mirza.



Mohammed Mirza celebrates with trophies.

Lynx survive 29-point collapse to beat Fire

Hayes’ 22 points lift Valkyries over Sky

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug 13, (AP): Tiffany Hayes scored a season-best 22 points off the bench to go with six rebounds and five assists, Veronica Burton had 13 points and six rebounds, and the Golden State Valkyries overcame a slow start to beat the Chicago Sky 91-71 for their fifth straight win.

Kaila Charles added 15 points and five rebounds off the bench and Gabby Williams scored 13 as Golden State won for the 14th time in its last 16 games. The Valkyries (24-9) could clinch a playoff berth by week’s end after becoming the first expansion team to reach the postseason in its inaugural year in 2025. Hayes also had three of her team’s franchise-record 16 steals.

Golden State was without starting center Kiah Stokes as she goes through the concussion protocol and also top reserve Janelle Salaun because of soreness in her right knee.

Kamilla Cardoso scored 20 points on 7-for-13 shooting as Chicago lost for the fourth time in five games.

Courtney Vandersloot made her initial three shots as the Sky jumped out to a quick lead, but they couldn’t keep up after halftime and she didn’t score again to finish with six points. Rachel Banham contributed 11 points and four rebounds off the bench.

Dijonai Carrington went 1 for 9 for three points in her second road game since being ejected with a Flagrant 2 for a hard foul on Sophie Cunningham during a 90-86 home loss to Indiana

on Saturday then afterward posted “WHITE PRIVILEGE” on social media and tagged the Fever.

Carrington later said she never claimed that the Flagrant 2 foul was the result of white privilege. She is Black and Cunningham is white.

Golden State started the game 7 for 20 and 3 of 10 from 3-point range.

Lynx 85, Fire 81

In Portland, Napheesa Collier had 20 points and nine rebounds, Kayla McBride scored 19 points, and the WNBA-leading Minnesota Lynx nearly squandered a 29-point lead before holding off the Portland.

Minnesota built a big lead by starting the second quarter on a 23-4 run for a 49-27 edge. The Lynx extended the lead to 64-35 - their largest of the game - with 8:16 left in the third.

Portland rallied by scoring the opening 13 points of the fourth - capping a 29-4 run spanning the third-quarter break - to get within 68-64. The Fire had a chance to tie it at 78 with 1:44 remaining, but Emily Engstler went 1 of 2 at the free throw line to keep it a one-point deficit.

McBride made a driving layup with 1:25 remaining for an 80-77 lead, and neither team scored again until Minnesota’s Olivia Miles sank two free throws with 26.5 seconds left for a five-point lead.

Minnesota (28-7), which has already clinched a playoff berth, has won 13 of its last 14 games.

Miles finished with 13 points and Natasha Howard had 14 points and 12 rebounds for Minnesota. McBride, coming off a career-high 43-point performance with 10 3-pointers on Sunday, made three of Minnesota’s six 3-pointers.

Bridget Carleton led Portland (13-20) by scoring 16 points against her former team. Megan DiLeo added 12 points and Teja Oblak had 11 points, six rebounds and nine assists.

Portland had 10 players score in the first half, but none of them had more than four points.

Wings 94, Tempo 88

In Arlington, Paige Bueckers scored all 22 of her points in the second half, and the Dallas Wings beat Toronto 94-88 on Wednesday, handing the expansion Tempo their 10th consecutive loss.

Bueckers went 4 of 4 from the field and from the free-throw line in a 13-point third quarter after missing all seven of her shots in the first half. The Wings ended a three-game skid, their longest of the season.

Arike Ogunbowale scored 21 with season highs in free throws and attempts, going 13 of 14, and Alanna Smith had 13 points and 11 rebounds. Awak Kuier scored 14 points.

Dallas played without All-Star Jessica Shepard and rookie No. 1 overall draft pick Azzi Fudd. Shepard injured an ankle in the previous game against Minnesota, and Fudd has missed three with a knee injury.

Ledecky wins 1,500 freestyle gold medal on home soil

IRVINE, Calif., Aug 13, (AP): Katie Ledecky won the 1,500-meter freestyle on opening night of the Pan Pa-

cific Championships, earning the first international medal of her storied career on home soil. The U.S. concluded

a dominant night with a world record in the 4 x 100 mixed medley relay.

Ledecky, a two-time Olympic champion in the 1,500, was under her own world-record pace in the early stages of the 30-lap race, with young fans holding signs at the outdoor pool in Irvine, California, on their feet cheering throughout.

Ledecky touched in 15 minutes, 36.09 seconds. Lani Pallister of Australia gave chase early before Ledecky opened a body-length lead over her closest pursuer. Pallister took silver in a personal best 15:38.62. Moesha Johnson of Australia earned bronze.

“Not quite the time that I wanted, but again, you can’t complain with gold and getting my hand on the wall first,” Ledecky said. “It’s great to be in an environment like this.”

In the mixed medley relay, the American team of Will Modglin, Van Mathias, Gretchen Walsh and Kate Douglass won in 3:36.70. They beat the old mark of 3:37.43 set by the U.S. at the 2024 Paris Olympics.



Katie Ledecky, of the United States, competes in the women’s 1500-meter freestyle final at the Pan Pacific Swimming Championships in Irvine, Calif. (AP)

Change Name

I, Hussain, holder of indian Passport No.: V7430099 Permanent address: Saify Mohalla Badi Masjid Dungarpur, Rajasthan India Pin: 314001, Do hereby change my name to Given name: Hussain Surname: Tailor

Westbrook retires with farewell video narrated by Michael B. Jordan

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Aug 13, (AP): Russell Westbrook, the NBA’s career leader in triple-doubles and the 2017 MVP, announced Wednesday he’s retiring after 18 seasons during which he was selected to the league’s 75th anniversary team.

The two-time scoring champion shared his decision on social media in a post featuring a video

narrated by actor Michael B. Jordan where the guard never says a word.

“Sometimes you don’t even know when you’ve already watched the end,” Westbrook wrote. “You had to be there. And now it’s over.”

Westbrook was the No. 4 pick in 2008 out of UCLA by the Seattle SuperSonics, just before

they moved to Oklahoma City. He played his first 11 seasons with the Thunder and spent this past season with the Sacramento Kings.

Westbrook led the NBA in assists three times and was a two-time MVP of the All-Star Game. He won an Olympic gold medal in the 2012 London Games.

Westbrook leaves with 209

triple-doubles, the last on March 15.

Nikola Jokic ranks second in that category with 198 going into this season. Westbrook also holds the NBA mark for most triple-doubles in a season with 42 in 2016-17, when he earned his only MVP award.

He averaged double figures for points and assists in five of six sea-

sons starting in the 2015-16 season.

Westbrook also played for Houston, Washington, the Lakers and Clippers - splitting the 2022-23 season between the Los Angeles teams and Denver.

Last season, Westbrook started 58 of the 64 games he played for Sacramento.

He averaged 15.2 points and 6.7 assists.

Fourth year running supporting one of the largest sporting events uniting Kuwaitis abroad

Zain backs another exciting edition of BPC TOUR in Marbella



Waleed Al-Khashti and Mohammad Al-Nassar award the tournament winners.



Group photo with the finalists.

KUWAIT CITY Aug 13: Zain Kuwait continued its presence at sporting events that bring together Kuwaiti youth abroad through its sponsorship of the fifth edition of the annual BPC TOUR padel tournament, held in Marbella, Spain, with strong participation from local padel enthusiasts and amateur players.

The fifth edition of the tournament featured a highly competitive atmosphere that reflected padel’s growing popularity among youth in Kuwait and across the region.

The tournament concluded with Khalifa Al-Khalifa and Fahad Al-Husayan crowned champions, with Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti and Head of the Consular Office in Malaga Mohammad Al-Nassar presenting the winners with their

awards.

Zain’s support of the tournament for the fourth consecutive year reflects its continued commitment to supporting sporting initiatives that bring young people together and create opportunities for positive competition and interaction, particularly as padel continues to grow rapidly and establish itself as one of the most popular sports among young people in the region.

Zain views sports as a platform that extends beyond competition, playing an important role in strengthening connections between communities and promoting the values of teamwork, positive competition, and social belonging.

BPC TOUR embodies these values by bringing together padel enthusiasts from Kuwait in Marbella each year.

The step also reflects Zain’s commitment to supporting the presence of local youth at sporting events outside the region, while contributing to experiences that bring them closer together and strengthen social and cultural ties among members of the community in a vibrant sporting environment.

Zain is proud of its continued partnership with BPC TOUR for the fourth consecutive year and remains committed to supporting events and initiatives that provide young people with positive and inspiring experiences, promote active and healthy lifestyles, and reinforce the role of sport as an effective means of fostering connection and bringing youth closer together.

Hudson-Smith wins 400m title as English breaks European championships record

Zapletalova claims historic 400m hurdles gold for Slovakia

BIRMINGHAM, England, Aug 13, (AP): Matthew Hudson-Smith willed himself down the final straightaway on his home track to win his third European Championships 400-meter gold medal.

The 31-year-old British star went out fast, held a big lead around the final bend and crossed the line in 44.17 seconds as France’s Muhammad Abdallah Kounta (silver) and Jonas Pijffers (bronze) of the Netherlands closed in.

Hudson-Smith, who also won the 400 at the 2018 and 2022 editions, has trained at Alexander Stadium since his youth and has a section of the stands named after him.

“I’ve been here since I was 9 years old, so to do it here in front of my friends and family is extra special,” Hudson-Smith said. “It’s most likely my last European champs, so there’s no better place or way to go out.”

The 400-meter silver medalist at the Paris Olympics is already eyeing the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

“The Europeans is always something I target. I know



Britain's Matthew Hudson-Smith reacts after winning the men's 400 meters final at the European Athletics Championships in Birmingham, England. (AP)

there’s always a gold there for me, and it’s a good stepping stone to LA,” he said. “Every race and every win is another step towards that ultimate goal of winning the Olympics.”

Emma Zapletalova became the first Slovakian woman to win a gold medal at the European championships. She won the 400-meter hurdles final in a time of 52.91 seconds.

The 26-year-old Zapletalova was considered the favorite after Dutch star Femke Broeders-Bol switched to the 800.

“I am endlessly happy that I managed it and was not affected by the pressure,” she said.

The only other Slovakian athlete to win a medal at the European championships was Libor Charfreitag, who took the men’s hammer title in 2010.

“This is a precious medal for Slovakia - gold after a long 16 years,” Zapletalova said. “I still have to digest it.”

Britain’s Emily Newnham took silver, and Portugal’s Fatoumata Binta Diallo was third.

Irish middle-distance runner Mark English broke a long-

standing European championships record in the 800 meters when he won his semifinal heat.

English finished in 1 minute, 43.49 seconds to eclipse Olaf Beyer’s championship record of 1:43.84 set in 1978 in Prague.

“It is nice to have the record, for sure, and I felt really good doing it. But there will be a lot of really good guys in the final tomorrow, a lot of really talented runners, so I’ll need to discuss tactics now after this,” the 33-year-old Englishman said as he looked ahead to Thursday’s final.

Beyer, who represented East Germany, had upset British stars Steve Ovett and Sebastian Coe for the title 48 years ago.

“I saw the record before the race, and I thought it would probably be broken by someone at these championships,” said English, a two-time bronze medalist at the European championships.

English gave a shoutout to the Irish fans at Alexander Stadium: “I heard them before the race, I heard them during the race, I heard them after it. I think close to 15 percent of tickets sold went to Irish fans, so it’s amazing to be running in front of such a crowd.”

Britain’s Ben Pattison finished second in the English heat, crossing in 1:43.72.

Kuwait drawn in balanced group at Asian Junior Handball Championship

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Kuwait has been placed in a balanced Group B for the 11th Asian Men’s Junior Handball Championship, which will be held in Jordan from August 20 to 31.

Kuwait will face Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar and Syria in the group stage, while Group A features host Jordan, South Korea, Bahrain, India and Uzbekistan.

The draw was held at the Asian Handball Federation headquarters in Kuwait, with AHF President Bader Al-Dhayab welcoming the participating teams and delegations.

Al-Dhayab expressed his best wishes for a successful tournament and praised the teams for maintaining their commitment to compete despite the current circumstances in the region.

The draw was conducted again following the withdrawals of Japan and Chinese Taipei. It was supervised by AHF Technical Director Jassem Al-Dhayab.



AHF President Bader Al-Dhayab

The tournament carries added significance as it serves as a qualifier for the 2027 IHF Men’s Youth World Championship. The 10 participating teams will compete for four places at the global tournament.

Best of the Rest

Barthez reunited with Zidane: France coach Zinedine Zidane reunited with Fabien Barthez after he was named the national team’s new goalkeeper coach on Thursday.

Zidane was hired as coach last month on a four-year deal.

Zidane and Barthez played together when France won the 1998 World Cup and the 2000 European Championship.

Barthez appeared 87 times for France and his last game was the 2006 World Cup final, where Zidane was sent off in extra time for headbutting defender Marco Materazzi. (AP)

Kuwait Club revamps squad with Rubin appointment and Marcus Junior signing

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Kuwait Club has strengthened its men’s volleyball team ahead of the 2026-27 season with the appointment of Argentine coach Rubin Velochin and the signing of Brazilian outside hitter Marcus Junior.

Rubin is expected to arrive in Kuwait on August 23, while Marcus Junior will join the squad on August 20 as preparations for the new season continue.

The Argentine coach brings extensive international experience, having previously worked with the national teams of Bahrain, Pakistan and Venezuela. He has also coached clubs in Germany and Hungary.

Marcus Junior arrives with experience of playing in the Arab region,



Kuwaiti player returns a ball during Kuwait match against Bahrain.

having represented Qatar’s Al-Rayyan, UAE’s Al-Nasr and Libya’s Al-Ahly. Kuwait Club is hoping the Brazilian will add quality and experience to the squad.

The club has also made two domestic additions, signing Abdulaziz Shaker from Kazma and Talal Al-Salman from Al-Arabi, both on free transfers.

Kuwait began their preseason training earlier this month as they target a strong campaign and aim to compete for all available titles.

Meanwhile, Kuwait’s national youth volleyball team suffered a third consecutive defeat at the ongoing Arab Championship in Bahrain, losing 3-0 to the hosts.

The Blues face Jordan today at 5 p.m. before meeting Algeria tomorrow in their final preliminary-round match.

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Al-Qadsia coach Mohammed Ibrahim and Talal Al-Fadel at training.

Sports

Draw on Tuesday

Al-Qadsia earns home advantage in AFC Challenge League

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Al-Qadsia has secured AFC approval to host the matches of its group in the AFC Challenge League, with the games scheduled to take place from October 17 to 23.

Al-Qadsia and Al-Arabi will learn their group-stage opponents when the AFC Challenge League draw is held on August 18 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The group stage is scheduled to begin on October 17 following the completion of the preliminary and

playoff rounds.

Al-Qadsia qualified for the competition after finishing third in the Zain Premier League, while Al-Arabi joined the tournament after suffering a 4-1 defeat to India's East Bengal in the AFC Champions League Two playoff at Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata.

Kuwait Club, the reigning AFC Challenge League champion, earned direct qualification for the AFC Champions League Two.

The Challenge League will feature separate West and East regions, with the group matches played in a centralized format at venues selected by the AFC.

The West region consists of 12 teams, including Al-Qadsia and Al-Arabi, Syria's Homs Al-Fidaa and Ahli Aleppo, Lebanon's Al-Ansar and Al-Najmeh, India's Goa, Tajikistan's Istiklol and Regar-TadAZ, Turkmenistan's Ahal, Kyrgyzstan's Muras United, Bangladesh's Fortis and Bhutan's Paro.

The East region includes Indonesia's Borneo, Philippines' One Taguig, Myanmar's Shan United and Yangon United, Taiwan's Tainan City and Hang Yuen, Mongolia's FC Ulaanbaatar, and the winner of the East playoff for the AFC Champions League Two.

Kazma reinforces team with German & Brazilian signings

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 13: Kazma has strengthened its first-team handball squad ahead of the 2026-27 season with the signing of German international Christian Dissinger and Brazilian player Leonardo Dutra.

The two foreign signings form part of Kazma's preparations for the new campaign as the club looks to build a competitive squad capable of challenging for domestic titles.

The coaching staff is counting on the experience and quality of Dissinger and Dutra to add greater depth and provide an extra boost to the team alongside the existing squad.

Yarmouk has also bolstered its handball squad by signing Jerah Al-Enezi on a free transfer.

The move is part of Yarmouk's efforts to add experience to the team and strengthen its squad ahead of the new season.

Al-Enezi is well acquainted with



Players fighting for the ball.

Kuwaiti handball, having previously played for Al-Sulaibikhat, Khaitan, Al-Qurain, Al-Salmiya, Al-Arabi and Burgan.

Yarmouk hopes his experience across several Kuwaiti clubs will provide a valuable addition as the team steps up preparations for the upcoming campaign.

Netherlands hires Xavi as first foreign-born coach since 1978

AMSTERDAM, Aug 13, (AP): Spain great Xavi Hernandez was hired as Netherlands coach, becoming the first foreign-born leader of the national team in nearly 50 years.

Xavi was a member of the Spain team that beat the Dutch in the World Cup final in 2010, marking their third defeat in the title match.

The 46-year-old Xavi, who has been out of work since leaving his job as Barcelona coach in May 2024, takes over from Ronald Koeman after his departure following the World Cup.

The former midfielder said he felt a "special connection to Dutch football" after coming through a Barcelona academy influenced by Johan Cruyff and Rinus Michels.

"You could say that I am a bit of a son of Dutch football," said Xavi, who has signed a deal through to the 2030 World Cup. "Other great coaches, especially Louis van Gaal, under whom I made my debut at Barcelona, and Frank Rijkaard, also played an important role in shaping me as a player and coach."

The last foreign-born coach of the Netherlands was Ernst Happel from 1977-78.

Xavi said the Dutch soccer culture - "attacking football, based on possession, with creativity, passion, and conviction" - appealed to him.

"Of course, the most important goal is and always will be to win, but I prefer to do so in a way that reflects those characteristics and that people can enjoy," he said. "The potential for this is there, as well as a solid foundation to build upon."

PSG 'holds off' Villa to retain UEFA Super Cup

Doué scores winner

SALZBURG, Austria, Aug 13, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain won the UEFA Super Cup for a second straight year by beating Aston Villa 2-1 thanks to Désiré Doué's second-half goal in the annual curtain-raiser to the European soccer season.

Doué's 61st-minute strike after running onto Ousmane Dembélé's pass was initially ruled out for off-side, only for the goal to be awarded following a video review.

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's powerfully struck opener in the 20th was canceled out by a volley from Brian Madjo, a 17-year-old striker making

his competitive debut for Villa days after getting approval to play following a dispute with FIFA over his registration.

It's the first of a possible six trophies this season for PSG, which became the first team to win back-to-back Super Cup titles since Real Madrid (2016 and '17).

The Super Cup is an annual early-season match between the most recent winners of the Champions League (PSG) and Europa League (Villa).

The game in Salzburg, Austria, was refereed by Omar Artan, the Somali who was barred by the United States from officiating at the World Cup days before the start of FIFA's tournament because of vetting concerns. U.S. officials claimed Artan

had connections to terror organizations, though without providing proof.

UEFA responded by picking Artan - a referee judged the best in Africa last season - to take charge of the Super Cup in a powerplay by European soccer's governing body amid its increasing disconnect with FIFA.

That disharmony has increased since, with UEFA leading the campaign to oust Gianni Infantino from the FIFA presidency over his recent - aborted - plan to sell an interest in the World Cup.

Artan was the first non-European referee to take charge of the Super Cup.

After winning five titles last season, PSG is back on the trophy trail already - and could pick up a second in the 2026-27 campaign when it takes on Lens in the Trophée des Champions on Sunday. That's a match between last season's league and cup winners in France.

Doué was one of the PSG players who only returned to training on Monday following the World Cup, but he was handed a start by coach Luis Enrique and proved to be the matchwinner.

The 21-year-old forward ran through unchallenged after latching onto Dembélé's pass behind the Villa defense and curled a left-foot shot into the far corner. The offside flag was then raised but a check by the VAR showed that Villa right back Matty Cash was keeping Doué onside.

Artan awarded the goal after the review and Doué punched the air in delight.



PSG's Marquinhos and PSG's Achraf Hakimi lift the trophy during celebrations at the end of the UEFA Super Cup soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Aston Villa in Salzburg, Austria. (AP)

Kuwait artistic gymnastics teams begin training camps in Georgia



Kuwait women's artistic gymnastics delegation.

TBILISI, Aug 13: Kuwait's men's and women's artistic gymnastics teams have launched training camps in Georgia as part of their preparations for the upcoming West Asian Championships in Jordan.

The camps, which run from August 12 to 30, are designed to enhance the gymnasts' technical and physical readiness ahead of the regional competition.

Both delegations arrived in Tbilisi to begin their preparations. The men's delegation is headed by Kuwait Gymnastics Federation

Treasurer Nasser Al-Halafi and includes team administrator Khaled Al-Muthen, Ukrainian coaches Vitaly Arseniev and Vitaly Arseniev, and 11 gymnasts: Abdullah Behbahani, Saud Al-Radaini, Ahmed Al-Radaini, Mohammed Al-Radaini, Al-Sanawi, Othman Al-Hajil, Fazza Al-Hajil, Hassan Al-Sarraf, Abdulaziz Al-Sarraf, Abdullah Al-Farhan and Youssef Al-Mazid.

The women's team is also holding its camp in Georgia over the same period. The delegation is led by federation Assistant Secretary-General

Dhaar Al-Shammari and includes administrator Rabab Al-Hares and eight gymnasts: Al-Zain Al-Qattan, Jouri Bouhamad, Kadi Al-Awad, Shawq Al-Houli, Maha Al-Najdi, Fatima Behbahani, Bibi Abbas and Maria Al-Mazid.

The federation said the camps reflect its commitment to providing the national teams with comprehensive preparation. The intensive program focuses on refining technical skills, improving fitness and enhancing stability, accuracy and consistency in executing routines.

'Honored for the opportunity to become stewards of the LA Lakers'

Kushner, Iger agree to buy Lakers in blockbuster \$12.5B deal

LOS ANGELES, Aug 13, (AP): The Los Angeles Lakers are being sold for the second time in a year, going to businessmen Josh Kushner and Bob Iger for a record-breaking price.

This sale agreement is \$12.5 billion, according to a person familiar with the terms who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Wednesday because neither side revealed specific details of the latest stunning development with one of North America's marquee sports teams.

ESPN first reported that Kushner and Iger are buying the NBA's most valuable franchise. The Lakers were valued last year at \$10 billion - a record for a pro sports team - when Mark Walter purchased a controlling stake from the Buss family, which had owned the team since 1979.

"As lifelong NBA fans, we are deeply honored for the opportunity to become stewards of the Los Angeles Lakers, one of the most iconic sports franchises in the world," Iger and Kushner said in a statement. "We have immense respect for the leadership and vision of Jerry and Jeanie Buss. Our long-term commitment is to build on that foundation, compete at the highest level, and serve this

extraordinary team, its fans, and the city of Los Angeles."

Kushner, a venture capitalist, and former Walt Disney Company CEO Iger had been working together on landing a possible NBA expansion team for Las Vegas. By buying the Lakers, they don't have to wait until the possibility of expansion in the 2028-29 season at the earliest.



In this file photo, Disney chief executive Bob Iger arrives at the 96th Academy Awards Oscar nominees luncheon in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

Lakers icon Magic Johnson, a partner in Walter's ownership of baseball's Los Angeles Dodgers, praised the deal on social media.

"Laker fans, you couldn't have two better owners," Johnson wrote. "I've known Bob personally for over 40 years - he has always loved the Lakers and basketball and he will bring championships back to LA."

The sale still will need approval from the NBA's board of governors, and that process can take several weeks. The next board meeting is set for September in New York.

The \$12.5 billion price tag is not only a record for U.S. pro sports but a new summit in skyrocketing NBA franchise values. Only three years ago, Michael Jordan sold his majority stake in the Charlotte Hornets for a \$3 billion valuation, while the Boston Celtics were sold last year to private equity mogul Bill Chisholm at a valuation of just over \$6 billion.

Walter's agreement to purchase a controlling stake in the Lakers at the \$10 billion valuation last summer obliterated that mark, and now Iger and Kushner have pushed the bar even higher.

The 66-year-old Walter's shocking decision to sell after just 10

months of official ownership is reverberating throughout the team's massive fan base, which appeared to be uniformly excited about the purchase last year. Walter has stewarded the Dodgers into the most successful stretch in franchise history, with three World Series championships in the past six seasons as the most aggressive spenders in baseball.

Multiple media outlets last month reported that Walter's business empire is under scrutiny from both federal prosecutors and the Securities and Exchange Commission in tax fraud investigations.

The Lakers are 17-time NBA champions who won their most recent title in 2020. They've made the playoffs in each of the past four seasons, and their current roster is built around NBA scoring champion Luka Doncic, who is signed through the 2028-29 season. The Slovenian superstar has become passionate about Los Angeles and the Lakers less than two years after his arrival.

"Being a Laker means everything to me, and I'm excited to get back on the court and bring a championship to LA," Doncic wrote on social media after hearing of the sale.

León beats Miami as Messi returns after father's death

MIAMI, Aug 13, (AP): Daniel Arcila scored twice, including the go-ahead goal in the 83rd minute, and Club León advanced to the Leagues Cup knockout stage with a 3-2 win over Inter Miami, which saw star Lionel Messi return following the death of his father.

Messi started the second half and received a loud ovation from fans at Miami's Nu Stadium. It was his first match since his father, Jorge, died Saturday at 68. Messi shared a tribute to his father on social media earlier Wednesday, saying he wasn't sure about his playing future.

"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 played a fundamental role in the soccer star's career, serving as his agent and managing his business affairs. Messi returned to his native Argentina over the weekend, missing Miami's 2-1 loss to Monterrey on Saturday, but was dressed and on the bench before subbing in for Daniel Pinter at the start of the second half.

Juan Pablo Domínguez also scored for León, which used a three-goal second half to overcome a 1-0 deficit after Pinter put Miami ahead in the 42nd on an assist from Ian Fray. It was the second straight blown second-half lead for Inter Miami. Arcila scored with a right-footed shot from the center of the box in the 50th, then whipped the go-ahead goal past Óscar García for his fourth goal of the tournament.

Yannick Bright also scored for Inter Miami, which was eliminated after winning the Leagues Cup in 2023 and reaching the final last year.

The Herons' chances of advancing were already bleak after entering the match 12th in the MLS standings following their loss to Monterrey. Only the top four clubs from the MLS standings and the top four from Liga MX will advance to the quarterfinals.

León, after winning its first two matches of the tournament, moved to first in the Liga MX standings.



Ambassador's Message

On the joyous occasion of India's 80th Independence Day on 15 August 2026, I extend warm greetings to all members of the Indian community and friends of India in Kuwait.

As India celebrates eight decades of independence, we do so with immense pride in our nation's remarkable journey and confidence in the opportunities ahead. India after 80 years of independence, stands transformed, economically stronger, technologically more capable, socially more confident and increasingly consequential on the global stage.

India is the fastest-growing major economy, with growth of 7.4 per cent in 2025-26. Yet India's story is not simply one of numbers or economic growth. It is a story of a billion-plus aspirations being transformed into opportunity.

The Vision of Viksit Bharat 2047

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has articulated this national aspiration through the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, envisaging an India that is developed, prosperous, inclusive, technologically advanced and sustainable.

The transformation is visible across India, from modern infrastructure and manufacturing to a thriving digital economy and global services sector. Highways and expressways are shrinking distances; new airports and metro systems are changing the way people travel; ports and dedicated freight corridors are strengthening connectivity and logistics. India has become a major manufacturing centre for automobiles, pharmaceuticals, electronics and mobile phones, while its services sector, start-ups and technology companies are increasingly serving global markets.

The digital transformation has been particularly profound. Digital payments, financial inclusion and online public services have brought technology into the daily lives of Indians. From a small merchant accepting a digital payment to a rural citizen accessing government services online, India's digital public infrastructure demonstrates how technology can be an instrument of inclusion. India's progress is equally visible in renewable



H.E. Mrs Paramita Tripathi
The Ambassador of the Republic of India to the State of Kuwait

energy and space technology. Solar and wind capacity has expanded rapidly, while India's space programme has demonstrated that sophisticated scientific capability can be combined with cost-effective innovation.

India: A Trusted Partner

India's transformation also carries an international responsibility. Guided by the principle of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family), India believes that its rise must contribute to a more peaceful, stable and prosperous world. India has emerged as a Global First Responder, demonstrating its commitment to humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and emergency response across borders.

India has consistently advocated dialogue, diplomacy, and peaceful resolution of disputes, while upholding the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and respect for international law.

India has stood firmly with Kuwait as a trusted partner and friend, expressing steadfast solidarity with Kuwait during the ongoing conflict. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, through regular

phone calls with H.H. the Amir and H.H. the Crown Prince, has consistently reaffirmed support for Kuwait's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity. The visit of External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar to Kuwait on 8 July 2026 was an expression of this solidarity towards Kuwait.

India has remained a reliable partner of Kuwait by establishing a food corridor and ensuring the supply of fresh produce and essential food commodities during the ongoing conflict.

India and Kuwait: From Historic Bonds to Strategic Partnership

As India celebrates its 80th Independence Day, India-Kuwait bilateral ties relations also mark 65 years of diplomatic ties, a partnership rooted in centuries-old bonds of civilisation, maritime links, trade and people-to-people connections.

As Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi noted during his historic visit to Kuwait in December 2024, "The relationship between India and Kuwait is one of civilisations, seas and commerce." His visit, the first by an Indian Prime Minister to Kuwait in 43 years, marked a landmark moment, with the two countries elevating their relationship to a Strategic Partnership.

As our multi-faceted Strategic Partnership continues to grow, India and Kuwait look ahead to a more diversified, dynamic and future-ready partnership, expanding cooperation across trade, investment, technology, connectivity, innovation and new frontiers of growth.

The Indian Community in Kuwait: A Living Bridge

The one million-strong Indian community in Kuwait is another defining pillar of our relationship. Indians have contributed to Kuwait's development in virtually every sector, from construction, engineering and healthcare to education, finance, information technology and entrepreneurship. The Indian community in Kuwait is an integral part of Kuwait's social and economic fabric, and is a living bridge that brings our two countries closer.

India's Role in a Changing Multilateral Order

India and Kuwait share a strong commitment to maritime security, international law and secure sea lanes, including the Strait of Hormuz. India's support for United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and co-sponsorship of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2817 (2026) reflect this commitment. For both countries, the Strait is vital to energy security, trade, connectivity and global prosperity.

This aligns with India's vision of MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions), placing maritime security at the heart of shared growth and prosperity.

As India has presented its candidature for the United Nations Security Council for the 2028-29 term guided by SHANTI (Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity), it remains committed to strengthening dialogue, international law, multilateralism and the voice of the Global South.

India: A Partner for the Global Good

The India of 2026 is confident of its capabilities but conscious of its responsibilities, with a vision for the greater good of the world. That vision has particular meaning in our relationship with Kuwait. As our two countries enter a new phase of Strategic Partnership, there is immense scope to create new opportunities in trade and investment, energy transition, technology, defence, food security, education, healthcare and human resource development.

On India's 80th Independence Day, we celebrate eight decades of India's journey and look ahead to a future of peace, security, connectivity and shared prosperity with Kuwait, our valued friend and strategic partner.

May India-Kuwait friendship continues to flourish.

Jai Hind!

India's Space Sector: A Launchpad for Global Partnerships

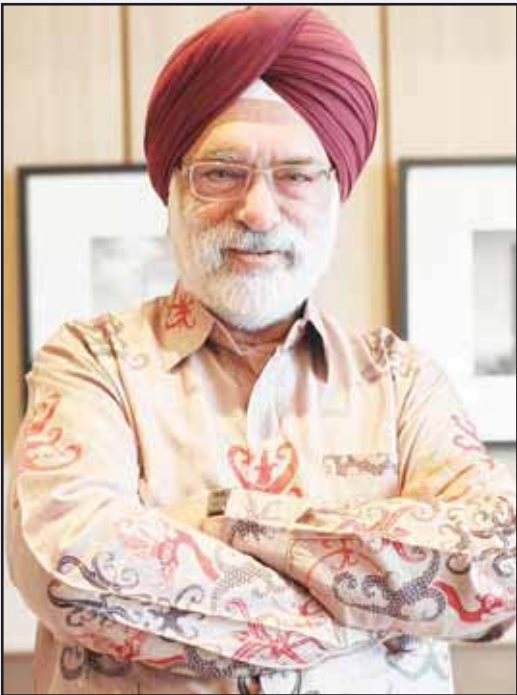
By Gurjit Singh
Former Ambassador and author

Growing competition in outer space provides India with a unique opportunity to shape a narrative in which collaboration, rather than confrontation, drives space exploration. Recognised as a trustworthy and cost-effective spacefaring nation, India is now well placed to transform its technological advances into enduring international partnerships that contribute to scientific progress, economic growth, and sustainable development.

India's journey into space has been distinctive. Unlike many space programmes that emerged from Cold War rivalries, India's programme was conceived as an instrument of national development. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai anchored India's space vision in practical applications that would improve the lives of ordinary people. Under his leadership, satellites were developed to strengthen communications, weather forecasting, disaster management, healthcare, agriculture and education. This development-oriented philosophy remains central to India's space programme and resonates strongly with the needs of countries in the Global South, which seek practical applications of space technology rather than prestige alone.

Today, India's achievements extend beyond developmental applications. The Chandrayaan missions, the Mars Orbiter Mission, the Aditya-L1 solar observatory, and the forthcoming Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme have established India as a nation capable of executing sophisticated and reliable space missions. Chandrayaan-3's successful soft landing near the Moon's south pole placed India among an exclusive group of space powers while demonstrating that world-class innovation can be achieved at comparatively modest cost.

India's growing credibility comes at a time when the global space economy is expanding rapidly. Valued at over US\$600 billion today and projected to approach US\$1.8 trillion by 2035, the sector is increasingly driven by commercial activity in satellite communications, Earth observation, navigation, climate services, broadband connectivity, and emerging fields such as in-orbit servicing and lunar exploration. Many countries aspire to participate but lack indigenous capabilities.



Gurjit Singh
Former Ambassador and author

ties. They seek dependable long-term partners rather than merely launch providers.

India possesses the capabilities to meet these requirements. The liberalisation of the space sector in 2020 transformed the ecosystem by opening it to private participation. The establishment of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPaCe), the expanding commercial role of NewSpace India Limited, and the growth of private enterprises have created one of the world's most dynamic emerging space ecosystems. Indian startups are developing launch vehicles, satellite platforms, geospatial applications and propulsion technologies that are attracting global investment and customers. Companies such as Skyroot Aerospace, Pixxel and Agnikul Cosmos have demonstrated that Indian private enterprise can compete internationally in advanced space technologies.

The next step is to internationalise this ecosystem. Rather than positioning itself only as a low-cost launch destination, India will offer comprehensive partnerships encompassing satellite design, launch services, mission operations, ground stations, astronaut training, capacity building and downstream applications in agriculture, disaster management and maritime security. Such integrated partnerships would be valuable for countries across the Global South and the Indo-Pacific seeking affordable, customised and

reliable technologies to meet their development priorities.

India has demonstrated the diplomatic value of such cooperation. Through the South Asia Satellite, it provided communication and developmental benefits to neighbouring countries. Indian launch vehicles have successfully placed hundreds of foreign satellites into orbit for governments, universities and commercial operators around the world. India's decision to join the Artemis Accords reflects its willingness to participate in the peaceful exploration of the Moon through international collaboration. Cooperation with NASA, the European Space Agency and JAXA has strengthened India's scientific and technological capabilities.

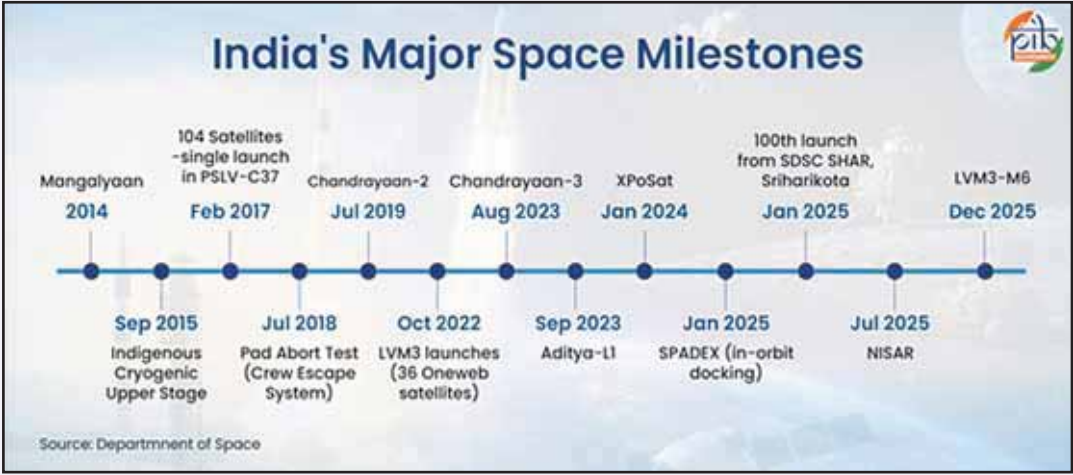
These partnerships reinforce India's standing as a leading voice of the Global South. India offers development partnerships based on affordability, reliability and mutual respect rather than creating technological dependence. Space cooperation has therefore become an increasingly important instrument of Indian diplomacy, strengthening bilateral relationships while delivering tangible developmental benefits.

To realise its full potential, India will aim to sustain the momentum of reform. Faster regulatory approvals, greater access to venture capital, stronger intellectual property protection, and closer collaboration among research institutions, industry and academia will be essential. Public procurement policies would continue supporting Indian startups, enabling them to scale up, innovate and integrate into global supply chains.

India is positioned to play a larger role in shaping the governance of outer space. Orbital congestion, space debris, responsible resource utilisation and equitable access to emerging space opportunities are becoming pressing international concerns. As space activities expand, there will be an increasing need for countries capable of building consensus on responsible norms and practices. India's long-standing commitment to the peaceful uses of outer space, combined with its growing technological capabilities, equips it to contribute meaningfully to the development of rules that promote transparency, sustainability and equitable access.

The coming decade will determine not only which countries lead in space but also how space is governed. With its scientific capabilities, entrepreneurial ecosystem and international credibility, India is uniquely placed to bridge the gap between established and emerging space nations. By building collaborative partnerships founded on inclusivity, mutual benefit and innovation, India can transform its space programme into a major pillar of its global engagement.

In an increasingly divided world, India's space sector offers a powerful reminder that the greatest achievements in space are those that bring nations together. That may well become India's most enduring contribution to humanity's next frontier.



Source: Department of Space



When freedom becomes a mirror

THERE is a particular kind of silence that falls over a nation on the morning of August 15 — not the silence of an empty street, but the hush before a flag is raised, before a song is sung, before eighty years of a promise are counted once more. India's Independence Day asks something more of us than applause. It asks for an honest look in the mirror.

Freedom, after all, is easy to wave and harder to practice. It is not a finished achievement handed down once and preserved forever untouched — it is a daily negotiation between what we are allowed to do and what we choose to do. The chains that colonial rule once forged are gone. But new tests have taken their place: The freedom to speak responsibly rather than carelessly, to disagree without hatred, to pursue ambition without trampling another's dignity.

This is the deeper meaning of liberty — not merely the absence of a ruler, but the presence of conscience. A free people are not those who can do as they please, but those who choose, unforced, to do what is right: To act with integrity, to extend empathy and to carry a quiet sense of duty toward neighbor and nation alike.

Every culture and political system frames liberty differently, yet strip away the language and one truth remains constant everywhere: To be free is to live with dignity, to stand as an equal among equals and to hold on to hope for what tomorrow might still become.

So today is not only a tribute to those who bled for a flag — it is a quiet audit of what we have done with what they won. Justice, equality, fraternity: These were never meant to be museum pieces of history. They were meant to be lived, argued over, protected and renewed by every generation that inherits them.

*May our flag always fly high,
our spirit remain unbroken,
and our hearts beat as one.*

One Nation. One Heart. One Pride

S. Mubashshir Alam
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ALSAYER & Toyota Introduce the All-New RAV4, Designed for Your Journey



Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. W.L.L and Toyota have launched the all-new RAV4, marking a full model change for one of Toyota's most popular vehicles worldwide. The latest generation introduces a refined design, enhanced driving performance, advanced safety technologies, and a more connected driving experience, while continuing to balance everyday usability with a spirit of adventure.

Since its debut in 1994, the RAV4 has played a pioneering role in shaping the recreational SUV category. It was designed to bridge the gap between city driving and outdoor exploration, combining the comfort and accessibility of a passenger vehicle with the versatility and confidence of an SUV.

With this latest generation, Toyota builds on that legacy through a model developed around the philosophy of "Life is an Adventure." The all-new RAV4 is designed to support drivers across both daily routines and extraordinary moments, offering greater capability, efficiency, intelligence, comfort, safety, and peace of mind.

Electrification remains central to the RAV4 story. As one of Toyota's earliest and most successful hybrid platforms, RAV4 has helped advance electrified mobility in line with Toyota's multi-pathway approach. The new model is equipped with Toyota's 5th generation hybrid electric system, delivering stronger acceleration, improved fuel efficiency, and a smooth-

er driving experience without the need for external charging.

The hybrid system combines the convenience and familiarity of a petrol vehicle with the benefits of electrification. Drivers can enjoy responsive performance and confident power delivery, while also benefiting from excellent fuel efficiency for both urban commuting and longer journeys.

Commenting on the model, Yoshinori Futonagane, Chief Engineer at Toyota Motor Corporation, said the development challenge was "exactly an adventure," reflecting the RAV4 philosophy of "Life is an Adventure." He added that the team focused on the values of "Go anywhere" and "Do anything," aiming to provide comfort and peace of mind.

Visually, the all-new RAV4 introduces a refined yet confident design that reflects its evolved capabilities. The model is offered in two renewed styles: Core and Adventure. The Core style emphasizes a clean, modern appearance suited to urban environments, while Adventure adopts a more rugged design language, highlighting readiness for light off-road use and outdoor exploration.

Inside, the RAV4 focuses on functionality and driver engagement. The updated cabin groups key controls and displays more intuitively, helping reduce eye movement and improve ease of operation. High-quality materials, improved ergonomics, and a thoughtful

layout create a welcoming interior for daily driving. Enhanced body rigidity and platform refinements also contribute to improved ride comfort and a more composed driving feel.

Select variants are equipped with a Head-Up Display, which projects essential driving information directly onto the windshield, helping drivers access key data while keeping their eyes on the road. A Panoramic Moon Roof is also available, bringing natural light into the cabin and creating a more open atmosphere.

Driving performance has been further elevated through platform improvements and intelligent control systems. The RAV4 benefits from enhanced body rigidity, optimized suspension tuning, and strengthened off-road capability. Features such as Trail Mode support confident progress on uneven or low-grip surfaces, helping the vehicle remain stable and composed on highways or light off-road terrain.

Technology plays a key role in the new RAV4's evolution. The model is equipped with the all-new Toyota Safety Sense TSS4, offering enhanced detection capabilities and broader operational support across a wide range of driving scenarios. Improvements to systems such as the Pre-Collision System and Dynamic Radar Cruise Control contribute to smoother assistance, helping support the driver in avoiding hazards and reducing fatigue on longer journeys.

The latest Audio Multimedia system provides a more personalized and connected experience. Available with a 10.5-inch or 12.9-inch display, paired with a 12.3-inch combination meter, the system offers improved graphics, faster responsiveness, and enhanced customization for driver preferences.

Everyday convenience is also improved through enhanced parking assistance. The new RAV4 offers a Panoramic View Monitor with 3D view, helping drivers better visualize their surroundings in tight spaces. Auto Parking functionality further supports stress-free maneuvering, reinforcing the RAV4's suitability for city life.

Customers can personalize the all-new RAV4 through a wide range of interior and exterior color options. Both styles are offered with two interior color choices and nine mono-tone exterior finishes, including the all-new Urban Rock. The Core style also offers five Bi-tone exterior combinations.

Through this full model change, Toyota has ensured that the RAV4 continues to evolve with customer expectations while preserving the qualities that made it a global success. By combining electrification, advanced safety, updated design, connected technology, and versatile capability, the all-new RAV4 remains equally at home in the city and beyond it, ready to confidently support every journey wherever life may lead, while staying true to its adventurous character.



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Viksit Bharat 2047: A roadmap to become a developed nation

It is creditable that the Government of India has set for itself and the nation a crucial goal: That India should become Viksit Bharat by 2047, which would be the one hundredth year anniversary of India's independence. While there is general agreement that the term Viksit Bharat denotes a developed country, it is still necessary for public policy purposes to break the concept down to know what it entails. What follows is an attempt to do so.

A 10 trillion-dollar economy: While India can be legitimately proud of being the fourth largest economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the world, the fact remains that for a population that is approaching 1.5 billion, the present GDP of \$4.5 trillion is a little below par. So, if India must become "Viksit" in the real sense of the term, the GDP must grow significantly to attain the figure of at least 10 trillion dollars. This is entirely achievable if we can do a couple of things. First, 40 per cent of our GDP is foreign trade, so our share of international trade

must simply double. In particular, our share of global exports, which hovers around 2 per cent, should rise to 10 per cent. Second, our Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which for the latest year is a little short of \$ 100 billion, must also grow manifold. In order for the above two things to happen, Government of India must carry out deep seated economic reforms in areas such as land, labour, power, agriculture, infrastructure and regulatory obstacles.

Inclusive Economic Growth: While there is no question that the GDP must accelerate, as mentioned above, that alone is not enough. Growth must be inclusive which is to say that it must percolate to the downtrodden people who are at the bottom of the pyramid. The government has conceived excellent schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. But going beyond that, job creation for the youth must become a national mantra for both the Central and State Governments. Since it is not possible for the Government alone or even the organized sector to provide all the jobs that are necessary, it is vitally impor-

tant to enable an ecosystem where the youth become entrepreneurs and job creators rather than be mere job seekers. Present levels of economic inequality are unsustainable and efforts must be made to make the society much more egalitarian.

Skilling: It is well recognized that our education system relies heavily on rote learning and it churns out thousands of graduates every year who may not be immediately employable. In this context, skilling and re-skilling of graduates becomes crucial. The idea of vocational training, industry-academic collaboration and imparting tech skills (including Artificial Intelligence) for our graduates must assume mission-mode importance. Spending on education, in both the public and private sector must increase exponentially, especially in states that lag the national average. In parallel, Research and Development must be given prime importance in all relevant institutions. It is indeed true that a population that is close to 1.5 billion can be a demographic dividend for India. But that is true only if the population is skilled enough to face the challenges of a knowledge economy.

Health: India's healthcare system is undergoing dramatic transformation, driven by digitalization and by infrastructure expansion. But challenges remain on account of rising medical costs and a growing chronic disease burden. Government has undertaken significant efforts such as Ayushman Bharat and Ayushman Arogya Mandir schemes which have made a big impact on providing healthcare in the country. Medical college seats have more than doubled since 2014, in an attempt to bridge the doctor-patient gap. Successful attempts have also been made to promote India as a global hub for medical tourism. Despite all this, serious challenges remain.

Public spending on healthcare still lags desired levels. India also runs the risk of becoming the global capital for heart disease and diabetes. India therefore needs to continue its massive transformation of public health infrastructure to make it accessible, affordable and quality-driven for the vast majority of its population. The National Health Mission is doing a commendable job. It simply needs to be strengthened and streamlined.



India: A Global Destination for Medical Tourism

India has emerged as one of the world's leading destinations for medical tourism, attracting hundreds of thousands of international patients every year. Combining high-quality healthcare, advanced medical technology, internationally trained specialists, and affordable treatment costs, the country offers a compelling alternative to many developed healthcare systems. Patients from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and North America increasingly choose India for a wide range of medical procedures, from routine surgeries to highly specialized treatments. As healthcare becomes more globalized, India's medical tourism sector continues to expand, contributing significantly to both the economy and the country's international reputation.

One of the primary reasons patients travel to India is affordability. Medical procedures in India often cost a fraction of what they do in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, or many parts of Europe, without compromising on quality. Treatments including cardiac surgery, orthopedic procedures, organ transplants, fertility treatments, cosmetic surgery, and cancer care are available at substantially lower costs. Even after accounting for travel, accommodation, and recovery expenses, patients frequently find that undergoing treatment in India is considerably more economical than receiving similar care in their home countries.

India's healthcare infrastructure has undergone remarkable transformation over the past two decades. Modern hospitals equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment, robotic surgical systems, advanced imaging technologies, and specialized intensive care units now operate in major cities across the country. Many hospitals have earned international accreditation, reflecting their adherence to globally recognized standards of patient safety, clinical quality, and hospital management. These facilities are capable of handling complex medical cases that require multidisciplinary expertise and advanced technology.

The expertise of India's medical professionals is another major strength. Many Indian doctors, surgeons, and specialists have received training or professional experience at leading institutions around the world. They are recognized internationally for their skills in areas such as cardiology, oncology, neurology, orthopedics, nephrology, organ transplantation, and minimally invasive surgery. English proficiency among healthcare professionals also facilitates communication with international patients, ensuring clear consultations, informed decision-making, and effective follow-up care.

India has become particularly well known for specialized medical services. Cardiac surgery, joint replacement, spinal surgery, organ transplantation, ophthalmology, reproductive medicine, and advanced cancer treatments attract patients from across the globe. In recent years, the country has also established itself as a center for robotic

surgery, precision medicine, and complex neurological procedures. Many hospitals provide comprehensive treatment packages that include diagnosis, surgery, rehabilitation, accommodation, airport transfers, and patient coordinators, making the entire healthcare journey convenient for international visitors.

The integration of traditional systems of medicine further distinguishes India's medical tourism industry. Alongside modern healthcare, patients can access Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy, collectively promoted under the AYUSH framework. Many visitors seek these therapies for wellness, rehabilitation, stress management, chronic pain, and preventive healthcare. The combination of evidence-based modern medicine with traditional wellness practices appeals to patients looking for holistic recovery and long-term well-being.

Government support has also accelerated the growth of medical tourism. Policies aimed at simplifying medical visas, improving healthcare infrastructure, encouraging investment in hospitals, and promoting India as a healthcare destination have strengthened the sector. Dedicated facilitation services for international patients, multilingual support staff, and improved digital health systems have enhanced the overall patient experience. Public and private sector collaboration continues to improve accessibility and international outreach.

Another important advantage is the relatively short waiting time for treatment. In several countries with publicly funded healthcare systems, patients often face lengthy delays for elective surgeries and specialist consultations. In contrast, Indian hospitals can frequently schedule consultations and procedures within days or weeks. For patients requiring timely interventions, this rapid access to medical care can significantly improve health outcomes and reduce anxiety associated with prolonged waiting periods.

Medical tourism also generates broader economic benefits. Beyond healthcare services, international patients contribute to sectors such as hospitality, transportation, pharmaceuticals, wellness, and tourism. Many patients combine treatment with visits to India's cultural landmarks, natural attractions, or wellness retreats during their recovery period. This creates employment opportunities across multiple industries and supports local economies, while reinforcing India's image as a destination that combines quality healthcare with rich cultural experiences.

Despite its impressive growth, India's medical tourism sector faces ongoing challenges. Maintaining consistent quality across healthcare providers, ensuring transparent pricing, strengthening post-treatment follow-up for overseas patients, and addressing ethical concerns related to organ transplantation and medical regulation remain important priorities. Continued investment in healthcare infrastructure, international accreditation, digital health technologies, and patient safety will be essential to sustaining long-term growth and global confidence.

As healthcare becomes increasingly international, India is well positioned to remain a preferred destination for medical travelers.



Anchored for Growth: How India's Shipping Industry Is Steering Regional Trade and Global Influence

India's shipping industry has emerged as one of the most significant pillars of the country's economic growth and strategic influence. With a coastline stretching over 7,500 kilometers, 12 major ports, more than 200 non-major ports, and a location at the crossroads of major international sea routes, India is uniquely positioned to shape maritime trade in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). As global supply chains evolve and geopolitical dynamics increasingly revolve around maritime connectivity, India's shipping sector is playing a crucial role in strengthening trade, enhancing regional cooperation, and reinforcing the nation's strategic ambitions.

Nearly 95 per cent of India's trade by volume and around 70 per cent by value is carried through maritime transport, highlighting the industry's indispensable contribution to the economy. Ports such as Mumbai, Jawaharlal Nehru Port, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Kochi, and Mundra have evolved into critical gateways connecting Indian manufacturers and exporters with markets across Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Continuous investments in port modernization, cargo handling technology, and logistics infrastructure have significantly improved operational efficiency, enabling India to compete more effectively in global trade.

The government has also placed maritime development at the center of its infrastructure agenda. Initiatives such as the Sagarmala Programme aim to modernize ports, enhance port connectivity, promote coastal shipping, and encourage port-led industrialization. By integrating ports with industrial corridors, highways, rail networks, and inland waterways, India seeks to reduce logistics costs, improve supply chain efficiency, and boost exports. These efforts complement the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, which focuses on integrated infrastructure planning and multimodal connectivity across sectors.

India's strategic location in the Indian Ocean gives it an undeniable regional advantage. The Indian Ocean carries a substantial share of global maritime trade, including much of the world's energy shipments. Situated near vital sea lanes such as the Strait of Malacca, the Gulf of Aden, and the Arabian Sea, India occupies a central position in ensuring uninterrupted movement of goods and energy resources. This geographic advantage has elevated the country's importance in regional maritime security and commercial shipping.

Beyond commerce, India's shipping industry contributes significantly to regional stability and diplomatic engagement. Through initiatives such as SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), India has sought to strengthen maritime cooperation with neighbouring countries by promoting capacity building, disaster relief, coastal surveillance, and sustainable ocean governance. Indian ports increasingly serve as important transshipment and logistics hubs for South Asian nations, facilitating trade and fostering economic integration within the region. Enhanced maritime connectivity also supports India's Act East Policy by strengthening

commercial ties with Southeast Asia while expanding economic engagement with Africa and the Middle East.

The growth of coastal shipping and inland waterways has further diversified India's maritime transport ecosystem. Shifting freight from congested roads to waterways not only lowers transportation costs but also reduces carbon emissions and fuel consumption. The development of inland waterways along major rivers and improved coastal shipping networks supports domestic trade while easing pressure on existing transport infrastructure. Such initiatives contribute to India's broader commitment to sustainable and environmentally responsible economic growth.

India is also investing in strengthening its domestic shipbuilding and ship repair capabilities. Expanding indigenous maritime manufacturing reduces dependence on foreign shipyards while creating skilled employment and supporting technological advancement. Public and private sector investments in modern shipyards, digital port management systems, and green shipping technologies reflect India's long-term vision of becoming a globally competitive maritime nation. The adoption of cleaner fuels, automation, and digitalization is expected to enhance efficiency while aligning the industry with international environmental standards.

Nevertheless, the shipping industry faces several challenges. Global freight market volatility, rising fuel costs, environmental regulations, infrastructure bottlenecks, and intense competition from well-established regional hubs such as Singapore, Dubai, and Colombo continue to test India's competitiveness. Climate change also poses risks through rising sea levels and increasingly frequent extreme weather events that can disrupt port operations and shipping routes. Addressing these challenges will require sustained investments, regulatory reforms, skilled workforce development, and greater adoption of advanced technologies.

Despite these obstacles, the long-term outlook for India's shipping industry remains highly promising. As global businesses seek diversified supply chains and resilient trade networks, India is well positioned to emerge as a preferred maritime and logistics hub. Its expanding port infrastructure, strategic location, growing economy, and proactive maritime policies provide a strong foundation for future growth.

By strengthening shipping capacity, enhancing regional connectivity, and embracing innovation, India is not only facilitating its own economic transformation but also contributing to greater stability and prosperity across the Indian Ocean Region. In the decades ahead, the country's shipping industry is set to become an even more powerful engine of trade, strategic cooperation, and sustainable development, reinforcing India's position as a leading maritime nation in the Indo-Pacific.



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80th Happy
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Al-Rashed International Shipping Co. K.S.C.C extends warm wishes on India's Independence Day.

This day reminds the courage, sacrifice, and determination of the people who dreamed of a free India. Many freedom fighters devoted their lives to the cause of independence. Remember them with deep respect and gratitude. Celebrate the day with unity and pride, moving the nation further at a graceful stride. May the tricolour flag always fly high and touch the sky.



BASSIM SAUD A. AL-RASHED



RAVI VARRIER



PRADEEP MENON

Independence is not only freedom from foreign rule. It also means living with dignity, following democratic values, and working for the progress of the nation. Respect diversity and treat one another with kindness and responsibility.

AL-RASHED INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING CO. K.S.C.C in association with proactive, reliable global partners, and equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure and after-sales, is positioned to lead the way in offering shipping and logistics solutions across the world. Treating each challenge as an opportunity that can be turned to better service to their customers, the company leads the way in providing services that are unique to the industry, leaving competition far behind in its wake.

Elaborating on the company's strategies, **Mr. Ravi Varrier, CEO of Al-Rashed Intl. Shipping Co. K.S.C.C** said "to meet the challenges in a highly competitive business environment, we constantly assess our objectives and business activities to consistently provide innovative solutions and services to our customers. In association with proactive, reliable, professional global partners, and equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure and after sales, we are positioned to lead the way in offering shipping and logistics solutions across the world".

Recent volatilities and disrupted logistical routes made us stronger. Our new policies mindset isn't just about reacting to the crisis, but rather creating and operating business that are permanently crisis-ready.

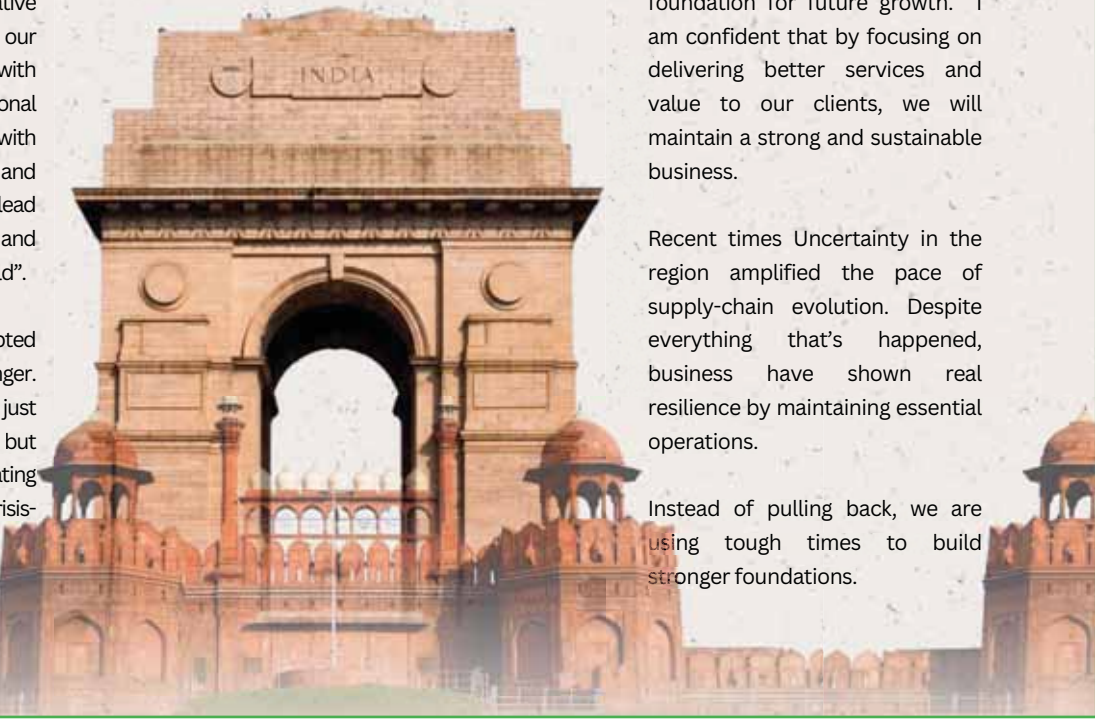
To fix logistical disruption, and to support customers with their cargo was a Herculean task which we faced in the recent times. Quick decisions and planning helped us to balance the supply-chain.

The challenge isn't just managing today's disruption; it's planning for tomorrow with confidence.

After all, small things make a big difference, says **Mr. Pradeep Menon, CEO of Al-Rashed International Shipping Co. K.S.C.C** He adds, "Today, we are an established player in our own space and have created a strong foundation for future growth. I am confident that by focusing on delivering better services and value to our clients, we will maintain a strong and sustainable business.

Recent times Uncertainty in the region amplified the pace of supply-chain evolution. Despite everything that's happened, business have shown real resilience by maintaining essential operations.

Instead of pulling back, we are using tough times to build stronger foundations.



India: A Rising Global Power in Science and Technology

India has emerged as one of the world's leading nations in science and technology through continuous investment in research, innovation, education, and technological development. Since independence, the country has made remarkable progress in fields such as space exploration, information technology, biotechnology, nuclear energy, medicine, and digital technology. Today, India is recognized globally for its scientific achievements and its growing contribution to solving complex global challenges. With a large pool of skilled scientists, engineers, and researchers, India is steadily strengthening its position as a major scientific and technological power.

One of India's greatest achievements is in the field of space technology. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has gained worldwide recognition for developing cost-effective and reliable space missions. Successful satellite launches, lunar exploration, and Mars missions have demonstrated India's ability to compete with leading space agencies. These achievements have also supported communication, weather forecasting, disaster management, navigation, and agricultural planning, benefiting millions of people across the country.

India has also established itself as a global leader in information technology and digital innovation. The country's strong software industry, combined with a large workforce of highly skilled engineers and technology professionals, has made it a preferred destination for software development and IT services. In recent years, India has rapidly adopted emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, data analytics, blockchain,



and the Internet of Things. These technologies are being used to improve healthcare, education, agriculture, finance, manufacturing, and public services.

Scientific research in healthcare and biotechnology has also advanced significantly. India is one of the world's largest producers of generic medicines and vaccines, supplying affordable healthcare products to numerous countries. In-

dian scientists and pharmaceutical companies played an important role in developing and manufacturing vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating the country's research capabilities and manufacturing strength. Advances in biotechnology, medical research, and genetic sciences continue to contribute to better healthcare and disease prevention.

The government has played a major role in promoting scientific development through initiatives such as Digital India, Startup India, Atal Innovation Mission, and the National Quantum Mission. These programs encourage innovation, entrepreneurship, research collaboration, and the development of advanced technologies. Investments in research institutions, technology parks, and higher education have created an environment that supports scientific discovery and technological progress. At the same time, the growing startup ecosystem has encouraged young entrepreneurs to develop innovative solutions for both domestic and global markets.

Despite these achievements, India faces several challenges in the science and technology sector. Investment in research and development as a percentage of GDP remains lower than that of many developed countries. Greater collaboration between universities, industries, and research institutions is needed to accelerate innovation and commercialize scientific discoveries. The country also needs to strengthen advanced manufacturing capabilities, improve access to modern research infrastructure, and increase the number of highly skilled researchers. Bridging the digital divide and ensuring equal access to technology across rural and urban areas remain important priorities.

Beyond Fossil Fuels: India's Bold Shift to Renewable Energy

India's transition towards renewable energy has become one of the defining features of its economic and environmental journey in the twenty-first century. As one of the world's fastest-growing economies and the third-largest energy consumer, India faces the dual challenge of meeting rising energy demand while addressing climate change and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. By investing heavily in solar, wind, hydropower, bioenergy, and green hydrogen, the country is positioning itself as a global leader in clean energy. Renewable energy is no longer viewed merely as an environmental necessity but as a strategic driver of economic growth, energy security, technological innovation, and sustainable development.

India has made remarkable progress in expanding its renewable energy capacity over the past decade. Large-scale solar parks, onshore wind farms, rooftop solar installations, and renewable energy projects across several states have significantly increased the share of clean energy in the country's electricity generation mix. States such as Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra have emerged as renewable energy hubs due to their favourable climatic conditions and proactive policy support. This rapid expansion has enabled India to become one of the world's leading producers of renewable energy while attracting substantial domestic and foreign investment.

Solar energy has been the cornerstone of India's renewable energy revolution. Blessed with abundant sunlight throughout the year, the country possesses immense potential for solar power generation. The establishment of large solar parks and widespread adoption of rooftop solar systems have contributed to declining electricity costs and increased access to clean energy. The International Solar Alliance, co-founded by India, has further strengthened the nation's global leadership by promoting solar energy cooperation among countries located in the sun-rich regions of the world. These initiatives have demonstrated India's commitment to making renewable energy both affordable and accessible.

Wind energy has also played an important role in diversifying India's energy portfolio. Coastal states and regions with strong wind resources have witnessed significant investments in wind farms that contribute clean electricity to the national grid. Alongside solar power, wind energy helps reduce dependence on imported coal and petroleum while supporting a more resilient and diversified energy system. The increasing integration of hybrid renewable energy projects combining solar, wind, and energy storage technologies is expected to improve reliability and optimize power generation throughout the year.

Renewable energy offers substantial economic benefits beyond electricity production. The sector has created thousands of employment opportunities in manufacturing, installation, maintenance, research, and project management. The expansion of domestic manufacturing under initiatives such as "Make in India" has encouraged the production of solar modules, batteries, and renewable energy equipment within the country. These developments not only strengthen industrial capacity but also reduce dependence on imported technologies, thereby enhancing India's energy security and economic resilience.

The transition to renewable energy also contributes significantly to environmental sustainability. By replacing fossil fuels with clean sources of energy, India can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and minimize the health impacts associated with pollution. Renewable energy projects consume less water than conventional thermal power plants, making them particularly valuable in a country where water scarcity remains a growing concern. As India pursues its climate commitments under international agreements, expanding renewable energy capacity remains central to achieving long-term sustainability goals.

In addition to environmental and economic gains, renewable energy strengthens India's strategic position in the global energy landscape. The country has emerged as a strong advocate for clean energy cooperation, technology sharing, and climate action. Investments in green hydrogen, battery storage systems, electric mobility, and smart grids demonstrate India's ambition to become a leader in next-generation energy technologies. These innovations are expected to support decarbonization across industries such as transportation, manufacturing, and heavy engineering while opening new opportunities for exports and international collaboration.

Despite impressive progress, several challenges remain. Integrating intermittent renewable energy into the national grid requires significant investments in transmission infrastructure and energy storage technologies. Land acquisition, financing constraints, supply chain dependencies, and the need for advanced manufacturing capabilities continue to pose obstacles to rapid expansion. Ensuring affordable renewable energy access for rural communities while maintaining grid stability will require coordinated policy measures, technological innovation, and sustained public and private sector investment.

Nevertheless, the future of renewable energy in India remains exceptionally promising. With abundant natural resources, supportive government policies, increasing technological innovation, and growing public awareness of environmental sustainability, India is well positioned to become a global clean energy powerhouse. As the nation continues to expand its renewable energy capacity, it is not only securing its own energy future but also contributing to global efforts to combat climate change. Renewable energy has become far more than an alternative source of power-it is a catalyst for economic transformation, environmental stewardship, and long-term national development. By embracing clean energy on an unprecedented scale, India is laying the foundation for a more sustainable, prosperous, and resilient future for generations to come.





Factory to the Future:

How India Is Emerging as a Global Industrial Power

India has emerged as one of the world’s fastest-growing industrial economies, driven by a combination of a vast domestic market, skilled workforce, technological advancement, and supportive government policies. From traditional sectors such as textiles and steel to cutting-edge industries like pharmaceuticals, information technology, renewable energy, and electronics manufacturing, India’s industrial landscape has undergone a remarkable transformation. Today, the country is not only a major producer for its own population but also an increasingly important supplier to global markets.

Manufacturing forms a significant pillar of India’s economy and contributes substantially to employment and exports. The government has placed renewed emphasis on strengthening manufacturing through initiatives such as “Make in India,” Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, and investments in industrial corridors and logistics infrastructure. These efforts aim to increase the manufacturing sector’s contribution to the economy while positioning India as a preferred destination for global production and supply chains.

The automobile industry is one of India’s greatest industrial successes. India is among the world’s largest producers of two-wheelers, tractors, and passenger vehicles. Major domestic companies and global automobile manufacturers operate extensive production facilities across the country, serving both domestic and international markets. India’s growing electric vehicle ecosystem is further enhancing its position in the global automotive industry.

The pharmaceutical industry has earned India the reputation of being the “pharmacy of the world.” Indian pharmaceutical companies are among the largest manufacturers of generic medicines and vaccines, supplying affordable healthcare products to more than 200 countries. During the COVID-19

pandemic, India demonstrated its manufacturing strength by producing and exporting millions of vaccine doses, reinforcing its importance in global healthcare.

India also occupies a leading position in the information technology (IT) and software services sector. Although IT is primarily a services industry, it has played a major role in supporting industrial growth through digital transformation, automation, artificial intelligence, and software development. Indian technology firms provide services to businesses across the globe, making the country one of the world’s foremost digital economies.

The textile and apparel industry remains one of India’s oldest and largest industries. India is among the world’s leading producers of cotton, silk, jute, and garments. The sector generates employment for millions of people and contributes significantly to export earnings. Traditional craftsmanship combined with modern manufacturing techniques has helped Indian textile products maintain a strong presence in international markets.

Steel, cement, chemicals, and engineering goods are other major industrial sectors where India enjoys considerable global standing. India ranks among the world’s largest producers of crude steel and cement, supporting rapid urbanization and infrastructure development. The engineering sector exports machinery, industrial equipment, electrical products, and transport equipment to numerous countries, reflecting the growing competitiveness of Indian manufacturing.

The electronics industry has expanded rapidly in recent years. India has become one of the world’s largest mobile phone manufacturing hubs, with both domestic and multinational companies establishing production facilities in the country. Government incentives and increasing domestic demand have



encouraged investments in semiconductor manufacturing, consumer electronics, and electronic components, strengthening India’s role in global supply chains.

Renewable energy equipment manufacturing is another promising area of industrial growth. India is investing heavily in solar panels, wind energy components, battery manufacturing, and green hydrogen technologies as part of its transition toward clean energy. These sectors are expected to create new opportunities for industrial expansion while supporting global climate goals.

Globally, India is regarded as one of the leading emerging industrial powers. It is among the world’s largest economies by gross domestic product and has become an increasingly attractive destination for foreign direct investment. International companies are diversifying their manufacturing bases, and India is benefiting from this shift through increased investments, technology transfers, and export opportunities. Its large consumer market, improving infrastructure, democratic institutions, and youthful workforce provide significant long-term advantages.

Despite these achievements, India continues to face challenges such as infrastructure gaps, high logistics costs, skill shortages in certain sectors, and the need for greater investment in research and innovation. Addressing these issues will be essential for sustaining industrial growth and improving global competitiveness.

As the global economy undergoes major changes, India is well positioned to strengthen its role as a manufacturing and industrial hub. With continued reforms, technological innovation, and investment in human capital, the country has the potential to become one of the world’s foremost industrial powers, contributing not only to its own economic development but also to the resilience and diversification of global supply chains.

Beyond Oil:

How India’s Expanding Trade with the Gulf Is Shaping a New Economic Partnership

India’s relationship with the Gulf countries has evolved into one of its most significant economic partnerships, extending well beyond the traditional trade in crude oil. Today, the Gulf region - which includes the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain - is a vital destination for Indian exports, a major source of energy supplies, an important investment partner, and home to millions of Indian expatriates. As global trade patterns shift and economic diversification accelerates across the Gulf, India’s commercial ties with the region are becoming broader, deeper, and increasingly strategic.

The Gulf countries collectively account for a substantial share of India’s external trade. The UAE has emerged as India’s third-largest trading partner, while Saudi Arabia remains among the country’s leading suppliers of crude oil and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Qatar is India’s principal supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG), helping meet the nation’s growing energy demands. Although energy imports continue to dominate trade, the relationship has diversified significantly over the past decade.

Indian exports to the Gulf now include engineering goods, gems and jewelry, textiles, pharmaceuticals, food products, chemicals, machinery, and electronic equipment. In return, India imports petroleum products, natural gas, fertilizers, petrochemicals, precious metals, and other industrial raw materials. This balanced expansion reflects the growing complementarities between the two economies, with India offering manufacturing capabilities and skilled human resources, while the Gulf provides capital, energy, and access to international markets.

A landmark development in recent years has been the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between India and the UAE, which came into force in 2022. The agreement has significantly reduced tariffs, simplified customs procedures, and created new opportunities for businesses on both sides. Bilateral trade has witnessed impressive growth since the implementation of the pact, with both countries aiming to substantially increase non-oil trade

in the coming years. The CEPA has also encouraged investments in logistics, digital commerce, renewable energy, and advanced manufacturing.

India’s engagement with Saudi Arabia has also strengthened through strategic initiatives under Saudi Vision 2030. As the Kingdom diversifies its economy beyond hydrocarbons, Indian companies have found opportunities in sectors such as information technology, healthcare, construction, infrastructure, and renewable energy. At the same time, Saudi investments in India’s energy, petrochemical, and infrastructure sectors continue to grow, reflecting mutual confidence in long-term economic cooperation.

Beyond merchandise trade, services and remittances form another crucial pillar of India-Gulf economic relations. More than nine million Indians live and work across the Gulf region, contributing significantly to sectors such as healthcare, engineering, education, hospitality, and construction. Their remittances provide valuable foreign exchange for India while strengthening people-to-people ties that support commercial relations. The presence of a large Indian diaspora has also facilitated business networks and investment flows between the two regions.

Emerging sectors are adding fresh momentum to the partnership. Renewable energy, green hydrogen, food security, digital technology, fintech, artificial intelligence, and logistics are increasingly becoming areas of collaboration. Gulf sovereign wealth funds are investing heavily in Indian infrastructure, start-ups, renewable energy projects, and digital enterprises, while Indian companies are expanding their presence in the Gulf’s rapidly diversifying economies.

Despite the strong trajectory, certain challenges remain. Volatility in global energy prices, geopolitical tensions in West Asia, shipping disruptions, and changing international trade regulations can affect bilateral commerce. Both India and the Gulf countries are therefore focusing on strengthening supply chain resilience, expanding local currency cooperation, improving connectivity, and reducing dependence on a narrow range of products.



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HAPPY Independence Day

With deep respect and gratitude, we honour the soldiers who sacrificed their lives to protect the country.

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India: The Trusted First Responder

When a giant wave of sea-water struck Chennai's Marina Beach on the morning of 26 December 2004, pulling in its wake fisherfolk and a group of children playing cricket, little did their brethren know that an entire region had been struck and that, across the Bay of Bengal, local people and foreign tourists on Thai and Indonesian beaches had also been swept away.

The Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 2004 was a natural catastrophe of a magnitude not experienced by humanity in recent times. It resulted in the death of almost a quarter million people and displacement of a couple of million people in 14 countries of the Indo-Pacific.

It also marked the coming of age of India's HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) institutional capacity. India not only dealt with death and destruction in its mainland, particularly in the coastal states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu as well as major devastation in its island territories of Andaman & Nicobar (A&N) islands but also provided speedy assistance to countries in south and south-east Asia including Sri Lanka, Maldives, Thailand and Indonesia. Simultaneously, India launched five HADR operations, two national and three international – Operation Madad (coastal south India), Operation Sea waves (A&N), Operation Castor (Maldives), Operation Rainbow (Sri Lanka) and Operation Gambhir (Indonesia). These involved the three defence services and the Indian coast guard – more than 40 ships, several transport aircraft and helicopters as well as more than 20,000 military personnel were deployed.

India's actions led to its recognition as a credible first responder in the Indo-Pacific region. Soon thereafter, the Disaster Management Act of 2005 was adopted by the Indian parliament providing the legal and institutional framework for disaster preparedness, mitigation and response, a three-layered structure at the national, state and district level and the establishment of a dedicated force, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to respond to such calamities.

The 2004 Tsunami also saw the coming together of the navies of four countries – Australia, India, Japan and the US – to coordinate the delivery of assistance in a collaborative effort that eventually evolved into the Quad.

India has handled several major natural disasters in the last few decades both in its immediate neighbourhood as well in distant lands.

In December 2014, India undertook one of its most complex humanitarian missions, Operation Neer, to supply drinking water to the Maldives after that country's only desalination plant broke down. Indian Air Force



Suchitra Durai
Former Ambassador of India to Thailand and Former High Commissioner of India to Kenya

aircraft and Indian naval ships worked round the clock to supply more than 1,500 tonnes of drinking water to the Maldives becoming the first country to respond to the request from the Maldives.

In April 2015, when a massive earthquake hit Nepal, India launched a comprehensive rescue and relief mission in the form of Operation Maitri within six hours of the initial tremors. Several thousand stranded Indians and foreign nationals were evacuated by air and land routes and hundreds of tons of essential material were delivered. Several field hospitals were set up. After the relief operations were completed, India launched a major rehabilitation and reconstruction package of around USD 2 billion for Nepal.

Following a devastating earthquake that struck Myanmar in end March 2025, India launched Operation Brahma, a huge tri-services combined with NDRF mission that supplied over 750 MT of materials and equipment including essential medicines and food aid. Field hospitals were set up in Mandalay, while engineering teams were deployed for reconnaissance and assessment of structural damage. Op Brahma was a classic whole-of-government HADR endeavour by the Government of India.

In end 2025, India provided massive support under Operation Sagar Bandhu to Sri Lanka that was hit by cyclone Ditwah. Food, equipment, medicines and other essential items were provided and more than 1000 tons of dry rations were supplied.

Beyond its immediate neighbourhood, India also responded with alacrity to requests from Turkiye and Syria when they were struck by earthquakes in 2023. Under Opera-

tion Dost, India was a first responder sending large Search and Rescue (SAR) teams of more than 250 personnel along with medical teams and dog squads to both countries as well as materials support.

In March 2019, India provided HADR to cyclone-hit Mozambique and in 2023 provided assistance to Malawi which was affected by a tropical cyclone.

Recently, on 26 June, 2026 India undertook its most ambitious HADR initiative when 30 tons of humanitarian relief materials accompanied by a 41-member team comprising experienced rescue personnel and medical professionals arrived in two C-17s to earthquake hit Venezuela.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, India supplied 300 million doses of vaccine to 99 countries and 2 United Nations entities under the Vaccine Maitri initiatives since January 2021, along with essential medicines and medical support.

For India, HADR has moved from being an episodic activity to a continuous global engagement. It is an essential feature of India's foreign and security policy that was formally enunciated in the Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) doctrine announced by Prime Minister Modi during a visit to Mauritius in March 2015 which underpins India's approach to the Indian Ocean Region; it became an intrinsic part of our Indo-Pacific Vision and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) announced in 2019 and evolved into the MAHASAGAR vision outlined by PM Modi in March 2025.

India's approach is not merely reactive. It has also put in place frameworks for international cooperation in the area of prevention and mitigation through contributing towards the setting up of an international tsunami warning system as well as the launch of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). The CDRI (comprising 60 member states) works with 25 small island developing states to build disaster resilient infrastructure including schools, hospitals and homes.

By providing need-based and rapid assistance during emergencies and through its efforts to develop capacities for mutual benefit, India is seen as a reliable first responder and a force for global good.



India's Rise as a Global Leader in Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence



INDIA has established itself as one of the world's leading powers in the information technology (IT) industry while steadily emerging as an influential player in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). Over the past three decades, the country has transformed from being primarily a destination for outsourcing services to becoming a global hub for software development, digital innovation, and technology-driven entrepreneurship. With a large pool of skilled professionals, a thriving startup ecosystem, and strong government support for digital transformation, India is well positioned to play a significant role in shaping the future of AI and advanced technologies.

The Indian IT sector has been a major contributor to the country's economic growth and global reputation. Companies such as Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, Wipro, HCL Technologies, and Tech Mahindra provide software development, consulting, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and digital transformation services to businesses around the world. The sector generates millions of jobs and contributes substantially to India's exports. Indian IT professionals are highly regarded for their technical expertise, adaptability, and ability to work on complex global projects, making India a preferred destination for technology services.

In recent years, India has also made remarkable progress in artificial intelligence. AI is being applied across industries such as healthcare, agriculture, education, finance, manufacturing, and transportation. In healthcare, AI-powered systems assist doctors in disease diagnosis,

medical imaging, and patient care. In agriculture, AI helps farmers monitor crop health, predict weather conditions, and improve productivity. Financial institutions use AI to detect fraud, automate customer service, and enhance decision-making. These applications demonstrate how AI is contributing to economic development and improving the quality of life for millions of people.

India's strength in AI is supported by its large talent pool. Every year, Indian universities and engineering colleges produce thousands of graduates in computer science, data science, electronics, and related fields. In addition, many professionals continuously upgrade their skills through online learning platforms and industry certification programs. This growing workforce provides the expertise needed for AI research, software development, and innovation. India is also home to numerous startups working on AI-based products and solutions, attracting significant investment from both domestic and international investors.

Government initiatives have played an important role in strengthening India's digital and AI capabilities. Programs such as Digital India, Startup India, and initiatives promoting innovation and research have encouraged technology adoption across sectors. Public digital infrastructure, including digital identity systems, digital payment platforms, and online public services, has created a strong foundation for AI-driven applications. Policymakers are also working to develop ethical guidelines and regulatory frameworks to ensure the responsible use of AI while encouraging

innovation.

Despite these achievements, India faces several challenges in becoming a global AI leader. High-quality research and development still require greater investment, and stronger collaboration between universities, research institutions, industry, and government is needed. Access to advanced computing infrastructure, high-performance processors, and large datasets remains limited for many organizations. There is also a need to address concerns related to data privacy, cybersecurity, algorithmic bias, and the potential impact of AI on employment. Bridging the digital divide between urban and rural areas is equally important to ensure that the benefits of AI reach all sections of society.

Looking ahead, India's prospects in the IT and AI sectors remain highly promising. The country's youthful population, expanding internet penetration, growing digital economy, and entrepreneurial spirit provide a solid foundation for sustained technological growth. As businesses increasingly adopt AI, cloud computing, automation, and emerging technologies, India is expected to strengthen its position as a global innovation hub. By investing in education, research, digital infrastructure, and responsible AI governance, India can not only maintain its leadership in IT services but also become one of the world's foremost innovators in artificial intelligence. The combination of technical expertise, policy support, and a vibrant technology ecosystem positions India to make significant contributions to the future of the global digital economy.

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