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First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah during the inauguration of an emergency medical clinic at the Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Building at the Ministry of Interior.

1st Deputy PM brings emergency care at Interior Ministry's doorstep

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah opened Monday an emergency medical clinic at the Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Building at the Ministry of Interior.

The ministry said in a statement that the clinic was opened as part of cooperation and integration between the Ministries of Interior and Health to enhance healthcare

services for ministry personnel.

The opening was attended by Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt. Gen. Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib and Health Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah, along with senior officials from both ministries.

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Ministry of Interior photos

Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Thank you, Kuwaiti judiciary ... You have saved families from homelessness

"FAMILY and life stability is part of public interest." This statement summarizes the ruling on a lawsuit filed against the decision of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) to terminate the usufruct contracts and evacuate the houses occupied by families and belong to the citizens who sold their houses.

According to the reasoning behind the ruling, public interest cannot be determined by the administration acting independently of the judiciary.

The justice upon which Kuwaiti court rulings are based is a path that no one can deviate from.

The reasoning is clear, emphasizing the inviolability of legal status based on laws, as it is fundamental to achieving justice.

As per the ruling of the court, the eviction of 509 families from their homes is contrary to justice. The fate of these families cannot be subject to the mood of an official or to an inaccurate interpretation that contradicts the purpose of the law.

Therefore, it would have been more appropriate for the beneficiaries to stay in their homes until the PAHW provides suitable options.

In fact, there are several criticisms of the current housing welfare process, most notably its failure to consider developments over the past 40 years, particularly those experienced by neighboring Gulf and non-Gulf countries.

Housing in Kuwait is based on the 'land and loan' model. This approach pushes citizens into the complexities of construction and borrowing from commercial banks.

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and Oman, there are more beneficial ap-

proaches for both the state and its citizens. The government undertakes the construction of cities and identifies beneficiaries, providing diverse financing and housing options.

The available options include allowing beneficiaries to build their own homes, purchase homes in state-built cities, receive plots, and access affordable housing for the most vulnerable. In all cases, the state provides the plots.

These countries have overcome what used to be a complex housing crisis until recently, while the housing issue in Kuwait remains, as the number of housing applications far exceeds the capacity to address the issue under the current system. At one point, the political situation dictated the crisis, which delayed concluding solutions.

However, the situation has changed, meaning we must work on two tracks. First is adopting a modern vision that aligns with developments in the region and the world, moving away from outdated housing practices. Second is learning from the experience of neighboring countries that resolved their housing crisis within a few years.

Kuwait has been doing well since the liberation, with the state aiming to strengthen the citizens' feeling of social stability as a foundation for development.

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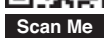
Ahmed aljarallah

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Day by Day

THERE are seven types of people I pray to God Almighty to keep away from us - the oppressor, the spiteful, the envious, the hypocrite, the liar, the ingrate, and the backbiter.

Wise men and physicians state that the cure lies in nine things - reading the Holy Quran, drinking plenty of water, sleeping at night, walking daily, eating healthy food, getting sunlight at appropriate times, and consistently remembering God and trusting in Him.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Kuwait's AMAN task force team with officials from NEMA during a visit to exchange expertise on emergency, crisis and disaster management.

Kuwait AMAN task force taps New Zealand's crisis expertise

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): Kuwait's AMAN task force, responsible for establishing the National Center for Emergency, Crisis and Disaster Management, met with New Zealand's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to review its emergency management experience.

During the visit, the AMAN team met New Zealand Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery Mark Mitchell and NEMA Chief Executive Dave Gawn to learn about the country's approach to managing emergencies and disasters.

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Newswatch

RIYADH: Saudi Foreign Minister Prince **Faisal bin Farhan** and Sudanese Foreign Minister and Minister of International Cooperation **Muhyiddin Ibrahim** signed Monday a document establishing the Saudi-Sudanese Coordination Council.

The Saudi Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the document, signed in Riyadh, reflects the two countries' keenness to enhance cooperation and coordination and establish an institutional platform to develop and strengthen bilateral relations.

The council will bring together relevant bodies from both sides to work on tangible outcomes through initiatives, projects and clear objectives, strengthening cooperation and integration and meeting the aspirations of the two countries'

leaderships and peoples. (KUNA)

MUSCAT: Omani authorities, in cooperation with international experts, are continuing rescue and containment operations to address an oil leak from the vessel **Caroline Bizengi**, which has been stranded on a rocky reef in the **Hallaniyat Islands** off Dhofar Governorate amid difficult weather and sea conditions.

Oman's Transport Ministry Director General of Maritime Affairs **Mohammed Al-Rawahi** said Monday that the kha-reef season has brought strong winds of around 40 knots and waves reaching four meters, creating exceptional technical and operational challenges and making safe access to the vessel extremely difficult. (KUNA)

74 swept up in residency blitz

Kuwait uncovers 'booked' meth shipment

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The Ministry of Interior conducted an inspection campaign Monday in Fahaheel covering the industrial area and commercial markets, arresting 74 residency and labor law violators and wanted

persons.

The ministry said in a statement that the campaign, carried out by the Criminal Security Sector's General Department of Criminal Investigations, represented by the Residency Affairs Investigations Department, was part of ongoing efforts to apprehend residency and labor law violators and wanted individuals.

Continued on Page 5

Reiki, 'energy healing' barred under new rules

Kuwait tightens reins on psychotherapy, counseling

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi issued a comprehensive decision regulating the licensing and practice of psychotherapy and psychological counseling in the public and private sectors.

Decision No. 225/2026, which was published Sunday in the official gazette, 'Kuwait Al-Yaum', prohibits the practice of psychotherapy or the provision of psy-

chological counseling without obtaining a professional license from the Ministry of Health.

The decision also prohibits the impersonation or use of professional titles, such as 'psychotherapist', 'psychologist' or 'psychological consultant' by unlicensed individuals. It defines the scope of practice for each professional title to ensure that no one exceeds their qualifications or provides services requiring training or a license that the practitioner lacks.

It stipulates that psychologists

are not permitted to conduct independent therapy sessions, develop or modify treatment plans or make diagnostic or treatment decisions independently. The work of psychologists is limited to the boundaries and powers specified in the decision and it is subject to supervision.

It mandates that serious cases or those requiring medical intervention be referred to a qualified doctor or hospital.

Continued on Page 4

New rules can turn tide on youth smoking: specialists

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Smoking is no longer an individual habit whose effects are limited to the smoker and his health, as it has become one of the most difficult global health challenges due to the continuous spread of tobacco products and the development of their forms and marketing methods.

According to the latest data from the World Health Organization (WHO), around 1.2 billion people use tobacco worldwide, while to-

bacco claims the lives of more than seven million people annually, including more than 1.6 million non-smokers due to exposure to second-hand smoke.

The phenomenon is even more dangerous for children and adolescents, as nicotine is a highly addictive and potent substance, especially on developing brains. The WHO data indicate that around 88 percent of cigarette smoking initiations occur before the age of 18.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwaiti expert urges Gulf to redraw oil export routes

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Former Board Member of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), former Minister of Housing and oil expert Yahya Al-Sumait called for re-drawing the map of Kuwaiti and Gulf oil export routes.

In a statement to the newspaper, Al-Sumait explained that the current security developments requires immediate abandoning of traditional patterns and adoption of flexible strategies that protect national economies from the fluctuations of critical maritime routes, especially since the current volume of trade among the

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries is expected to double if the exchange rate risks and currency differences among GCC countries are eliminated.

He affirmed the significance of creating new outlets and markets for oil and petroleum product exports to Europe and Africa, instead of limiting Kuwaiti energy markets to Asian countries.

He pointed out that the almost total reliance on Asian markets comes with complex logistical and geo-political challenges, as these routes require oil tankers to pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

Continued on Page 5



Al-Sumait

Trump urges Iran to 'surrender' as ceasefire expires

WASHINGTON, Aug 17, (KUNA): US President Donald Trump said Monday that Iran should "raise the white flag and surrender" as the deadline for the ceasefire agreed between the two countries expired, allowing time for negotiations under a memorandum of understanding signed in June.

In an interview with Fox News, Trump said Iran "cannot achieve victory over the United States."

Asked whether he intended to extend the deadline, Trump said he had "no specific timetable" and was "in no hurry."

In a post on Truth Social, Trump said the "number one goal - and always will be - is that Iran does not have a nuclear weapon in any form, shape or way."

Trump signed the memorandum of understanding on June 17 at the Palace of Versailles in Paris during the G7 summit, granting Washington and Tehran up to 60 days, unless extended by mutual agreement, to negotiate a final accord addressing sanctions, Iran's nuclear program and other outstanding issues.



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Prayer Timings	
Fajr	03:54
Sunrise ..	05:18
Zohr	11:52
Asr	15:27
Maghrib ..	18:26
Isha	19:50

Amir condolences with China Pres. ex-PM’s death; commiserations over Jakarta temblor

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Monday a cable of condolences to Chinese President Xi Jinping, over the death of former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji.

His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathy to President Xi, wishing the deceased’s family and relatives patience and solace.

Crown Prince offers condolences

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Monday a cable of condolences to Chinese President Xi Jinping over the death of former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, expressing his sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathy.

PM offers condolences

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Monday a cable of condolences to Chinese President Xi Jinping over the death of former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji.

INDONESIA

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince

sent on Monday a cable of condolences to Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto over the earthquake that struck East of Indonesia.

His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathy over the victims of the earthquake, which claimed lives,

injured hundreds and caused damage to property and public facilities.

He wished the injured a speedy recovery and expressed hope that the Indonesian authorities would successfully contain and overcome the impact of the natural disaster.

Crown Prince condoles

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable of condolences to Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto over the earthquake that struck East of Indonesia.

His Highness the Crown Prince expressed his sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathy over the victims of the earthquake, which claimed lives, injured hundreds and caused damage to property and public facilities, and wished the injured a speedy recovery. (pickup

PM condoles

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable of condolences to Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto over the earthquake that struck East of Indonesia.

Teaching youth sustainability, and environment awareness

EPA, KPTC promote sustainable transport

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): The Environment Public Authority (EPA) affirmed Sunday that the “Blue Leader” camp offers students an integrated environmental and educational experience introducing them to Kuwait’s environment and its components through a diverse program combining awareness, practical and field activities.

Speaking to KUNA on the launch of the camp’s second edition, organized by the EPA in cooperation with the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), EPA spokesperson and Public Relations and Media Director Sheikha Al-Ibrahim said the camp promotes environmental awareness and sustainability among young people.

Al-Ibrahim said the camp focuses on experiential learning, allowing students to acquire knowledge and skills interactively while fostering a sense of responsibility toward the environment and the importance of conserving natural resources.

She noted that the camp, targeting students aged 11 to 13, combines learning, exploration and teamwork through visits to various sites and institutions in Kuwait, allowing participants to learn firsthand about their roles in environmental protection.

The program includes visits to the Scientific



Sheikha Al-Ibrahim



Nouf Behbehani

Center to learn about marine life and biodiversity, the fish market to explore fish species and their handling, and EPA laboratories, where students will take part in collecting and analyzing environmental samples.

It also includes a visit to the Ahmad Al-Jaber Oil and Gas Exhibition, affiliated with Kuwait Oil Company, to learn about the oil and gas sector and its links to sustainability, as well as visits to the Coast Guard to learn about marine environmental protection and maritime safety, and Aquamarine to explore the marine environment and its organisms.

Al-Ibrahim said cooperation with ROPME highlights the importance of partnership among environmental organizations and provides specialized content enriching participants’ experience, particularly in marine environmental protection and sustainability.

She stressed the EPA’s keenness to expand partnerships with government and private entities to offer quality environmental programs for youth, noting that building an environmentally

aware generation is among the most important investments in achieving a more sustainable future.

Meanwhile, the Environment Public Authority (EPA) stressed Monday the importance of cooperation between environmental and transport bodies and promoting sustainable transport solutions that support Kuwait’s environmental and development goals.

EPA spokesperson and Public Relations and Media Director Sheikha Al-Ibrahim told KUNA following an EPA visit to Kuwait Public Transport Company, headed by Acting Director General Nouf Behbehani, that the visit aimed to review the company’s latest public transport projects.

She said the delegation reviewed new electric buses, their operating mechanisms and key features, and their role in supporting environmentally friendly transport.

Al-Ibrahim said the visit also highlighted the company’s efforts to develop public transport and encourage collective transportation, helping reduce traffic congestion and emissions while improving air quality.

She noted that cooperation between the two sides will also focus on environmental awareness and encouraging the public to use public transport and eco-friendly buses.

The two entities plan to organize joint awareness campaigns and activities on sustainable transport, pollution and emissions reduction, and the benefits of electric buses in improving air quality and reducing the transport sector’s environmental footprint.



Sheikh Jarrah Jaber



Prince Faisal bin Farhan

Kuwait, Saudi, Qatar FM’s hold talks on regional development

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held a phone call with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud.

During the call, the two sides touched on the latest regional developments and diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalating tensions and promoting security and stability in the region.

Qatar FM

Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held a phone call Monday with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani.

The two sides reviewed the latest regional developments and discussed diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalating tensions and promoting security and stability in the region, Kuwait’s Foreign Ministry said.

Bahrain FM

Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also held a phone call Monday with Bahrain’s Foreign Minister Dr. Abdulatif Al-Zayani. The two sides reviewed the latest regional developments and discussed diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalating tensions and promoting security and stability in the region.

Other Voices

An author speaks on my behalf

By Ahmad alsarraf

DAVID Epstein is an American journalist and author of the book “Expand Your Horizons,” which has been translated into Arabic and published by Dar Al-Tanweer.

The book is engaging, entertaining and informative, offering valuable advice, especially for those who are fed up with searching for the best, most perfect and most exceptional.

The book’s theme can be understood from its subtitle, “Why Do People with General Knowledge Succeed in an Increasingly Specialized World?” This aligns with the familiar saying, “Jack of all trades, master of none.”

Despite the negative connotations of this saying, it is actually quite fitting and applies to many people, particularly those who are successful in life. We all interact with people from diverse backgrounds, but when we need a specialist’s opinion, we typically seek out the best lawyer, doctor or wealth manager, rarely settling for anything less.

From my own experience in the banking sector, I have observed that the most successful people are often those who possess a broad range of knowledge in many important areas, rather than those who are experts in a single field or activity. The latter can sometimes appear naive when they are faced with issues outside their specific profession.

Epstein’s central argument is to challenge the common belief that success requires early specialization and intensive training in a single field from a young age. He cites the example of legendary golfer Tiger Woods, whose parents instilled in him a deep understanding of the game, which he went on to master. However, Woods struggled in other aspects of life and was generally unhappy after experiencing several setbacks, partly due to his intense focus on the sport he had mastered so thoroughly.

Therefore, early specialization in a profession or activity is the exception rather than the rule. This is why we find that almost all highly successful athletes, artists, musicians, inventors and scientists have one or more managers who look after their affairs and compensate for areas where they may lack experience.

Consequently, when we broaden our horizons and move away from narrow specialization, we are, in fact, preparing ourselves to face the unpredictable.

The author argues that a diverse range of experiences can foster creativity and innovation, encourage critical thinking and effective problem-solving, and enhance our ability to adapt to a rapidly changing world. Narrow specialization, on the other hand, can hinder our ability to adapt, particularly when faced with new developments.

Epstein offers reassurance to anyone who has ever felt that they were spreading their efforts by learning a little about many things rather than focusing on a single area.

We live in a complex and rapidly changing world that often rewards those who can connect different fields, rather than those who specialize in only one.

If you frequently guide your decisions by seeking the best, as many people do, you may be approaching things in the wrong way and, as a result, become less happy. In an age of information overload and endless choices, we assume that we can find the best option for everything if we search extensively and diligently.

Psychologists refer to this tendency as “greatness.” But the pursuit of the best has proven to be a misguided goal, one that can be difficult and costly, both financially and emotionally.

Herbert Simon, a pioneer of artificial intelligence, cognitive psychologist and Nobel laureate in economics, observed that people often struggle to accurately evaluate the options available to them because of their sheer number, limited information and the constraints of our minds. As a result, we often resort to mental shortcuts.

Simon coined the term “satisficing” to describe how we consider a limited set of choices and then select what we deem suitable, without spending excessive time and effort trying to determine whether it is the absolute best option.

Therefore, highly ambitious individuals who constantly strive for the best tend to be less satisfied with their decisions and lives. They may consequently be less happy, more prone to regret and more likely to compare themselves with others. However, someone who is satisfied with what is simply good enough does not necessarily have low standards. Their standard is typically “good enough” rather than “absolutely the best.” As a result, they tend to feel more content with their choices and are less likely to regret the better options they did not choose.



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Sudanese returning to their homes.

Kuwait-funded 1st flight with Sudan refugees returns home

KHARTOUM, Aug 17, (KUNA): Carrying 150 refugees, the first direct flight under an initiative to back the voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees from Uganda, financed by the Kuwait Direct Aid Society, landed at Khartoum International Airport on Sunday.

Departing from Entebbe International Airport, the flight marks the start of a relevant program expected to transport over a thousand refugees. It represents the first direct voluntary return journey between Uganda and Khartoum under the initiative, which aims to repatriate around 200 refugees weekly. More flights are scheduled to continue in the coming weeks.

Speaking to KUNA, Kuwait’s Ambassador to Sudan Dr. Fahad Al-Dhafiri said that the voluntary return support project comes under the directives of the wise political leadership and serves as a continuation of the humanitarian role Kuwait has played since the outbreak of the war in Sudan.

Al-Dhafiri noted that the project marks a successful model of humanitarian work to be built upon and replicated in the future by Kuwaiti, Arab and international charities and organizations.

He added that the initiative aims to reunite families scattered by the war and respond to appeals from Sudanese refugees in camps across neighboring countries, wishing to return voluntarily and safely to their homeland, since security and stability are back in several Sudanese states and regions.

The Kuwaiti ambassador went on saying

that the State of Kuwait, through the Direct Aid Society, took the initiative to back this effort in order to answer these needs, commending the charity’s role in charitable and humanitarian work in Sudan and across the African continent.

For his part, Sudanese Ambassador to Uganda Ahmad Ibrahim told KUNA that the support provided by the Kuwaiti Direct Aid Society for the project comes at a “critical juncture” and marks a “qualitative leap” in assistance offered to Sudanese refugees.

He lauded the charity for covering the cost of a large number of airline tickets and organizing direct flights from Entebbe International Airport to Khartoum.

Ibrahim elaborated that the flights include students, employees, and families who had spent long periods in Uganda and had lost their means of sustaining their stay there.

Director of the Direct Aid Society’s office in Uganda Nour Al-Huda Al-Ajab told KUNA that the initiative was carried out in response to the growing humanitarian needs of Sudanese refugees, with many of them wishing to return to Sudan as conditions gradually improve in several states and cities.

Al-Ajab added that the project aims to facilitate the safe and dignified repatriation of refugees and to reunite families separated by war and displacement, noting that the beneficiaries include the elderly, the sick, women, children, and university and school students willing to resume their education.

He explained that between 200 and 230 Sudanese refugees would be repatriated from Uganda to Sudan on a weekly basis as part of a program purposed to expand the voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees.

Uganda has hosted as many as 95,000 Sudanese refugees since the outbreak of the civil war in Sudan in April 2023.

Call to maintain discipline, enforce work ‘biometrics’

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila emphasized the importance of strengthening work discipline, adhering to attendance policies, implementing the fingerprint attendance system, and fulfilling job responsibilities to enhance performance at the Supreme Council for Family Affairs.

This came during a follow-up on the progress of work at the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, where mechanisms in place following the restructuring of the organization.

Dr. Al-Huwaila met with several officials to discuss various departmental efforts to improve efficiency and enhance the quality of services provided. The meeting also discussed the restructuring of the organization.



Dr. Al-Huwaila

Dr. Al-Huwaila stressed the importance of regularly monitoring the work of these centers and developing and improving their efficiency to ensure a safe and comprehensive environment for beneficiaries.

She directed the continued modernization of work mechanisms and the strengthening of coordination and integration among departments, along with the development of the services and programs provided by the Council.

Technical fault cause of Rumaithiya power shut

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy announced on Monday that three sub-feeder power plants at the Rumaithiya (B) main substation went out of service due to a technical malfunction.

The incident resulted in a power outage affecting some parts of Rumaithiya, Block Two.

The ministry confirmed that the emergency teams worked hard to restore power as quickly as possible.

Bid to smuggle drugs foiled

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Customs inspectors assigned at Terminal Four in Kuwait International Airport thwarted an attempt to smuggle 228 sheets of A4 paper suspected to be saturated with synthetic drug (chemical).

The papers were found in the possession of a British visitor arriving from the United Kingdom.

The seizure occurred after the passenger and his luggage underwent customs inspection procedures, during which inspectors discovered the papers suspected of being saturated with the narcotic substance. A report was filed, and the passenger and the seized items were referred to the Drug Control General Department for legal action.



Dr. Al-Dhafiri

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HH the Amir HH the Crown Prince HH the Prime Minister

Amir congratulates Indonesia, Gabon on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug. 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a congratulatory cable to the President of Indonesia Prabowo Subianto on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the Indonesian President health and wellbeing, along with continued success and prosperity for Indonesia and its people.

Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Monday a congratulatory cable to the President of Indonesia Prabowo Subianto on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the Indonesian President health and wellbeing.

Prime Minister

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GABON

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a congratulatory cable to President of the Republic of Gabon Brice Oligui Nguema in celebration of his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the Gabonese President's health and wellbeing, along with continued success and prosperity for

Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Monday a congratulatory cable to President of the Republic of Gabon Brice Oligui Nguema in celebration of his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the Gabonese President's health and wellbeing.

Prime Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Monday a congratulatory cable to President of the Republic of Gabon Brice Oligui Nguema in celebration of his country's Independence Day.

Pledge to support Kuwaiti farmers, push local goods

Governor lauds 'Dates and Figs' festival organizers



By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Governor of Farwaniya and acting Governor of the Capital Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi on Monday inaugurated the fourth Dates and Figs Festival for Al-Abdali farmers at the Livestock Transport and Trading Company hall in Al-Rai.

Present at the event were several officials, ambassadors and individuals interested in the agricultural sector.

The festival will run for three weeks, taking place every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm or until all the products on display are sold.

A total of 45 farmers from Al-Abdali are participating in this year's event.

Sheikh Al-Athbi toured the exhibition and examined the different varieties of dates, figs and locally produced agricultural goods on display. He praised the farmers and the excellent organization of the festival, while underscoring the importance of supporting Kuwaiti farmers and promoting local produce.



Farwaniya Governorate photos
Top and above: Governor of Farwaniya and acting Governor of the Capital Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi visits the Dates and Figs festival organized by Kuwaiti farmers.

He pointed out that local agricultural production plays a vital role in strengthening food security, and showcasing the quality and diversity of the agricultural products in the country.

Meanwhile, Al-Abdali Farmers Supervisor Faisal Al-Zoubi told the newspaper that the festival, held annually for the past four years, is now a major agricultural platform for marketing pre-

mium dates, figs and other related products from Al-Abdali farms.

Al-Zoubi confirmed that 45 farmers are taking part in the festival this year, an increase of five participants compared to last year. He said this proves the growing interest among farmers in joining the event.

He also affirmed the high demand from the citizens and residents for the products on display, attributing it to the high quality, wide variety and affordable prices of these products.

He expressed his gratitude to the Governor for attending and inaugurating the festival, and for his unwavering support for Al-Abdali farmers.

He lauded CEO of the Livestock Transport and Trading Company Ahmed Abdul Latif Al-Ateeqi for providing the company's hall in Al-Rai free of charge to host the event.

He then stressed that agricultural exhibitions and similar events play an important role in promoting locally produced crops, and motivating farmers to expand production and exert more efforts, all of which contribute to achieving the desired food security.

Kuwait, Bahrain to advance sports

MANAMA, Aug 17, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma and Bahrain's General Sports Authority's CEO Dr. Abdulrahman Askar discussed Sunday ways to develop their sports sector, including the exchange of technical, administrative and organizational experiences.

riences.

The meeting was part of Dr. Al-Jalahma's visit to the Kingdom, during which he said he looked forward to widening the scope of partnership and the exchange of expertise between both sides to support sports development and attain shared goals.



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Jahra Governorate photo
Jahra Governor Hamad Jassim Al-Habashi meets with Director of the Research and Strategic Planning Office and Head of the Sustainability Team at the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Dr. Hanan Al-Sarawi.

'Sustainable Governorate' move discussed in EPA, Governor talk

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Jahra Governor Hamad Jassim Al-Habashi on Monday met with Director of the Research and Strategic Planning Office and Head of the Sustainability Team at the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Dr. Hanan Al-Sarawi to coordinate efforts on the implementation of the 'Sustainable Governorate' initiative.

During the meeting, they discussed the

initiative, its objectives and implementation requirements.

The Governor expressed his gratitude to Al-Sarawi for her cooperation and responsiveness to the queries. He also commended EPA and the Ministry of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs for exerting tremendous efforts to support the initiative and achieve its goals.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait tightens

This includes cases of active suicidal ideation, severe agitation or acute symptoms related to substance abuse.

It prohibits unauthorized practitioners of psychotherapy and psychological counseling from prescribing or dispensing medications and supplements or modifying medication plans.

It prohibits the administration of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and neurostimulation techniques, except by licensed professionals authorized to perform them according to the regulations.

It subjects certain terms and practices, such as 'life coach', 'self-development', 'emotional intelligence' and 'thought and behavior regulation' to regulated procedures whenever the activity involves interference with psychological, behavioral or emotional conditions.

It prohibits the promotion or provision of psychological services under misleading names or changing the name of the activity to circumvent licensing requirements. It regulates the practice of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), while clearly defining these titles -- Senior Applied Behavior Analyst, Applied Behavior Analyst and Assistant Applied Behavior Analyst. It specifies the qualifications, training, supervision and specializations required for each title.

It states that practitioners must have training, clinical experience, direct professional supervision and academic qualifications to obtain certain professional licenses and titles. It mandates that when providing psychological services to children, they must have documentation and training in line with the nature and needs of such age group.

It requires practitioners to fully document interviews, assessments, tests, scales, treatment plans, interventions and follow up of cases, and to maintain these records in approved registers. It affirmed the protection of

the confidentiality and privacy of clients, prohibiting the disclosure of their psychological and health data, even after the termination of the professional relationship.

According to the decision, obtaining "informed consent" is a prerequisite for commencing services. It stipulates controls for online services, including verifying the client's identity and handling emergency cases.

It mandates the presence of a full-time senior psychologist at the psychological counseling center, responsible for the technical supervision of the services provided.

It specifies spatial requirements for the facilities, indicating that the consultation room must be at least nine square meters, and there must be at least two rooms for providing services. Privacy, proper ventilation and adequate lighting must be ensured.

It limits the installation of surveillance cameras to waiting areas and corridors, with recordings to be stored for a minimum of three months, while respecting the privacy of clients.

It requires the provision of a system for psychological records, data protection and access management. Means of requesting immediate assistance must be available within the service rooms.

It grants existing offices and companies a grace period of six months to comply with the requirements. Facilities that do not meet the transitional requirements must cease providing psychological services until they obtain the necessary license.

It grants practitioners in the public sector an 18-month grace period to comply with the new requirements.

It prohibits the offering or practice of a range of methods and practices that are not based on established scientific principles as follows: energy healing, reiki, crystal healing, law of attraction, neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), chakras and auras, astral projection, color therapy, handwriting analysis, vibration therapy, and certain spiritual practices.

Continued from Page 1

Thank you,

There is much that can be done to achieve sustainable development, one that is not subject to the whims of any official or to misinterpretations that threaten the legal status of Kuwaiti families, especially the ones affected by the ‘those who sold their homes’ law.

Citizens who sold their homes took this step under harsh circumstances, which forced them to move from owning a home to renting a property through usufruct rights.

The court stated in its recent ruling that repealing an article of the law does not necessitate terminating legally concluded contracts.

The court ruling is clear in establishing rights that cannot be disputed, because doing so is a violation of Article Nine of the Constitution.

This ruling sets a precedent that should be built upon to achieve justice in its best form.

Thank you, Kuwaiti judiciary for saving families from homelessness.

1st Deputy

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef reviewed the clinic’s facilities and departments and was briefed on its operations and medical services for military and civilian Interior Ministry personnel.

He praised the Health Ministry’s efforts and continued cooperation, stressing the importance of joint work to improve healthcare and facilitate access to emergency medical services for ministry personnel.

Sheikh Dr. Salman said the clinic adds to the healthcare system serving Interior Ministry personnel, reaffirming the Health Ministry’s commitment to facilitating their access to medical care and improving the quality of services provided.

74 swept

It said those arrested included 36 violators of Article 18, 30 violators of Article 20, six absconding cases subject to arrest warrants under Article 20, one violator of Article 14 and another of Article 22.

Legal and administrative procedures were initiated against all violators in preparation for their referral to the relevant authorities.

Meanwhile, the General Traffic Department’s Security Control Department conducted a traffic campaign that resulted in the issuance of 115 direct and five indirect traffic violations.

Also, 115 vehicles were impounded for 30 days, and the necessary legal measures were taken against their drivers.

The General Traffic Department affirmed its commitment to continuing its

monitoring campaigns to ensure compliance with traffic rules and regulations and safeguard the safety of road users.

Separately, the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) thwarted an attempt to smuggle approximately two kilograms of methamphetamine (crystal meth) and arrested an Asian resident after establishing his involvement in bringing the shipment from an Asian country with the intent to traffic it in Kuwait.

The Ministry of Interior explained in a press release that investigations revealed the drugs had been shipped to Kuwait concealed inside several books.

The necessary legal procedures were taken against the accused, who, along with the seized drugs, was referred to the competent authorities. Coordination was also established with the relevant authorities in the country from which the shipment originated to take the necessary measures.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed its continued efforts to combat the smuggling and trafficking of narcotics and its commitment to dealing firmly with anyone who attempts to bring drugs into Kuwait or traffic them.

Kuwaiti expert

He emphasized the necessity of activating the oil pipeline network among the GCC countries, adding that this step is late for almost 50 years.

He believes that such an ambitious regional project is a genuine and vital safety net for the Gulf economies for several reasons, foremost of which is bypassing critical maritime straits.

He stated that the collective oil pipeline project allows the transport of Kuwaiti and Saudi oil through a more extensive and secure land network, enabling supplies to reach Omani ports on the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, such as the port of Duqm, and Emirati ports on the Gulf of Oman, such as the port of Fujairah.

He added that this method ensures the continuous flow of energy and oil to global markets in a safe and stable manner, far removed from any security disturbances or threats that might surround the Strait of Hormuz.

He asserted that the economic interdependence among GCC countries necessitates, now more than ever, accelerating the pace of joint strategic projects and overcoming all inter-regional obstacles to ensure the building of a robust economic bloc capable of protecting the interests of the people, and overcoming regional and international challenges in a highly efficient manner.

He added that the countries in the region are bearing a heavy economic burden as a result of the ongoing regional tensions and escalating conflict between the United States of America

and Israel on one side, and Iran on the other side.

He cited the negative impact of this conflict on development paths and the significant overload on budgets due to heightened security and military preparedness, as well as the disruption of global supply chains.

He warned that delaying the economic integration and implementation of structural integration projects in the energy, railway, food security, water and other sectors will increase the cost of future risks for the countries in the region.

He confirmed that coordination will bring economic benefits to all GCC countries, unify strategic efforts, nationalize oil technology, and strengthen the Gulf bloc’s negotiating power in global energy markets.

New rules

This underscores the importance of Ministry of Health Resolution No. 237/2026, which regulates tobacco and nicotine products and nicotine delivery systems. This comes at a time that the debate is expanding regarding ways to protect the young generation from traditional and modern products, particularly e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products, as the tobacco industry changed its tools and marketing methods to reach younger consumers.

Doctors and specialists confirmed to the newspaper that the resolution is an important health step to protect society. However, the most significant challenge lies in its implementation and keeping pace with the industry’s continuous development of its products and marketing methods.

Will regulating tobacco use be a turning point in protecting society? What does Kuwait need to ensure the effective implementation of the resolution?

Public Health, Occupational and Environmental Medicine Consultant and Director of the Child Protection Center at the ministry Ahmad Al-Shatti stated that the importance of the decision is increasing with the rapid evolution of tobacco and nicotine consumption methods, which include traditional and electronic cigarettes, heated tobacco products, nicotine pouches, and smokeless and oral tobacco products, in addition to the products that may emerge in the future.

Al-Shatti explained to the newspaper that one of the greatest strengths of the resolution is its proactive approach, as it does not wait for a health problem to arise, but rather establishes a regulatory framework that encompasses new products, thus, protecting children, adolescents and young adults from early nicotine exposure.

He pointed out that prohibiting the sale or distribution of tobacco and nicotine products to those who are below 21 years old, while requiring retailers

to verify age, is a crucial preventative measure. He said this is in addition to banning the sale or distribution of these products in schools, universities, educational institutions, health facilities, government agencies, sports clubs, youth centers, and facilities designated for children and young people.

He underscored the importance of prohibiting direct and indirect advertising, promotion and marketing, including through websites, social media platforms, influencers and content creators, as well as free samples, gifts, discounts, promotional offers and sponsorships.

He emphasized that the real challenge after the issuance of the resolution is moving from legislation to actual implementation. He called for leveraging the transitional period until the implementation of the resolution on Jan 1, 2027, to launch a national awareness campaign, activate regulatory bodies, tighten control over imports and border crossings, and combat online sales, delivery services and digital platforms.

He also stressed the necessity of strengthening smoking cessation services in parallel with regulatory measures through the provision of treatment, psychological and behavioral support services.

He indicated that the success of the implementation is not measured solely by the number of violations uncovered, but rather by the extent to which smoking rates and initiation among youths decline, increase opportunities for quitting, and the resulting reduction in illnesses, premature deaths, and health and social burdens.

He commended Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi for paying attention to this issue, affirming that protecting future generations from the dangers of tobacco and nicotine is a shared national responsibility.

Moreover, Director of the Health Promotion Department at the ministry Dr. Abeer Al-Bahwa stated that the resolution is a crucial step that is part of the ongoing efforts of the ministry to protect society, particularly the children, adolescents and youths, from the health effects of exposure to and promotion of tobacco products.

Al-Bahwa disclosed that the ministry does not treat the tobacco issue solely as the subject of an awareness campaign, because it continuously studies and analyzes the health and social impacts associated with various tobacco products. She said the ministry closely monitors developments in the industry and the methods it uses to reach younger age groups, including electronic products and heated tobacco.

She indicated that the Research and Studies Department in the Health Promotion Administration conducted an online survey recently to assess the awareness and knowledge of adults in Kuwait regarding the tobacco industry’s targeting methods and the impact

on children. She revealed that the survey had 820 participants, and the results showed a high level of awareness among a huge segment of the population regarding the dangers of new products. She said 74.5 percent of the participants confirmed their awareness of the harms associated with electronic cigarettes containing nicotine, while 58.4 percent believe that heated tobacco is unsafe for smokers and those around them.

She added that the survey results also underscored the need for continuous awareness campaigns, especially since only 35 percent of the participants were able to identify the slogan for World No Tobacco Day 2024, and only 35.9 percent know that e-cigarette users are three times more likely to use regular cigarettes later.

She asserted that protecting children from tobacco industry interference requires integrated legislation, oversight and awareness campaigns, while affirming the commitment of the ministry to continuously monitor the situation.

She added that the ministry is reviewing scientific evidence and studies, as well as updating its awareness and prevention programs to keep pace with new developments and support measures aimed at reducing access to tobacco products for children and adolescents.

Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Anti-Smoking Society, praised the recent measures taken by the Ministry of Health to limit access to tobacco products and their derivatives among children and adolescents, including setting the legal age for purchasing tobacco products at 21.

Dr. Al-Saleh stated that limiting access to tobacco products among younger age groups can contribute to delaying the age at which smoking begins, thereby reducing the number of smokers in the future.

He pointed out that the importance of these measures is underscored by the findings of scientific studies indicating the prevalence of smoking among students and young people in Kuwait.

Dr. Al-Saleh explained that a study by researcher Waleed Al-Ali, published in 2021, showed that the average age at which people in Kuwait begin smoking is approximately 17.5 years.

Another study by researcher Abdul Salam Nasser, published in 2020, showed that Kuwait ranks second in the Arab world in the percentage of smokers among university students, at 46 percent. This reflects the magnitude of the challenge associated with combating smoking among young people and university students.

A study by researcher Musaad Sheikh in 2020 highlighted the use of tobacco among adolescent school students in Afghanistan, Oman, and Kuwait. The study showed that 10.6 percent of students in Afghanistan, 9.3

percent in Oman, and 28.8 percent in Kuwait had smoked cigarettes and/or used other tobacco products in the 30 days preceding the survey. The study emphasized the crucial role of the family in preventing tobacco use. Adolescents whose parents monitored their problems, leisure time, and homework were less likely to use tobacco in all three countries.

The findings of these studies confirm that smoking begins at a young age and that prevention efforts should extend beyond the university level, alongside strengthening health education programs in schools and universities.

Dr. Al-Saleh called for setting the legal age for purchasing tobacco products at 21 to be accompanied by effective monitoring measures and ongoing awareness programs, particularly in schools and universities.

He affirmed that the society is working to support anti-smoking efforts by providing services to help smokers quit.

Dr. Al-Saleh revealed that the society has opened a specialized smoking cessation clinic and is seeking to establish cooperation agreements with Kuwaiti universities to raise awareness of the dangers of smoking and tobacco products, encourage students to quit, and prevent them from starting.

Al-Saleh emphasized that combating smoking among children, adolescents, and young adults requires concerted efforts from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, as well as universities, families, and civil society organizations, in addition to legislation and oversight of tobacco product sales.

He concluded his statement by commending the efforts of Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi and the Ministry of Health in taking these measures.

Kuwait AMAN

In a press statement Monday, AMAN said the team reviewed national monitoring and coordination mechanisms, early-warning systems, risk-assessment methodologies, disaster scenario planning, and measures to enhance preparedness and response capabilities.

The two sides also discussed ways to exchange expertise and benefit from New Zealand’s experience in supporting Kuwait’s efforts to establish an integrated national emergency management system.

The Cabinet-affiliated AMAN team is tasked with establishing a comprehensive national framework for emergency, crisis and disaster management, coordinating national efforts, developing an integrated risk-management framework, and enhancing preparedness and crisis-response capabilities.

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US soldier’s wife removed from deportation flight, released from custody

Democrats disagree over abolishing or reforming ICE at DNC meeting

AUSTIN, Texas, Aug 17, (AP): Democrats on Saturday approved dueling messages on whether US Immigration and Customs Enforcement should be abolished or reformed, reflecting sharp opposition to President Donald Trump’s crack-down but revealing disagreement in the party ahead of the midterms.

The Democratic National Committee, gathered for a summer meeting, also signed off on a raft of policy positions, including one that calls for “concrete reforms” of ICE and another for abolishing the agency that’s been at the center of several fatal encounters.

ICE has been at the heart of a progressive rallying cry since 2018 during the first Trump administration, and has been renewed among some in the party after two recent fatal shootings by the agency in July.

Saturday’s vote isn’t binding and doesn’t set the party’s platform, which will be determined at the 2028 convention, but it reflects the party’s differing views on a major issue. Candidates and lawmakers will continue to determine their own positions on the issue.

Michele Johnson, a DNC member from Louisiana who proposed the measure to abolish ICE, said it’s time for Democrats to take a stand and pointed to the dissolution of ICE’s predecessor agency, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, as a precedent.

“I think one of the reasons why people are not trusting the party is because we sound so academic,” she said. “We sound focus group tested, we sound poll tested because we’re worried about saying the wrong thing or doing the wrong thing and not just like, just stand on business, like take a position.”

Not every DNC member was convinced, though. Yvonne Reeves-Chong voted against the measure, saying it would only gain support from a part of the party’s base, while drawing “fire” from another group of voters.

“I would strongly suggest we get to the business of winning races so we can make the policies that make a difference,” she said.

DNC Chairman Ken Martin, who’s from Minnesota, where Renee Good and Alex Pretti were fatally shot amid the immigration crack-down earlier this year, said in an



Democratic National Committee Vice Chair Artie Blanco speaks at the Hispanic Caucus meeting during the DNC Summer Meeting on Aug 13 in Austin, Texas. (AP)

interview that the takeaway is that Democrats find the administration’s handling of immigration, including by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, unacceptable.

“Clearly, the one thing that unites Democrats, regardless of their position on reform versus abolish

or Iran, according to a poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research released this month, even after three people were killed in encounters with Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the span of under a week in July.

Overall, the survey found that only 39% of U.S. adults approve of his performance on immigration, down from 49% at the beginning of his second term.

Meanwhile, a U.S. soldier’s wife who spent more than a month in federal immigration detention said she is back home after officers removed her from a deportation flight to Brazil.

Earlier this month, The Associated Press highlighted Maisa Lopes Eliaser as one of dozens of spouses or parents of U.S. troops who had been detained after President Donald Trump’s administration rolled back protections for military families amid its push for mass deportations. Following the AP’s reporting, a group of Congressional Democrats launched an investigation into deportations of military service members and their families.

Eliaser was placed on a deporta-

tion flight Wednesday to her native Brazil when U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers on the plane received a phone call about her midflight, she told the AP. She said she was then asked by an ICE officer whether she wanted to continue on to Brazil or go back to the U.S.

“Who made the call? We don’t know,” said Eliaser’s husband, Army Staff Sgt. Alexis Jaramillo. “But someone made the phone call, and then she came back.”

While other detainees were led off the plane in Brazil, Eliaser stayed on board and returned to Louisiana. ICE officers told her that she was “famous” because there were videos about her case, she said.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Democratic Sen. Mark Kelly of Arizona, a former Navy officer, directly contacted the ICE field office involved in Eliaser’s detention, according to his spokesperson. He has also spoken out on behalf of two other detained military family members in the past year.

America

Kentucky shooting kills 1, injures 4: A shooting at a Kentucky park on Saturday killed one person and injured four others, police said.

Lexington police officers responded just before 7 p.m. to a report of shots fired and found five victims, according to a department statement. One person was declared dead at a hospital while the other four were believed to have non-life-threatening injuries, police said.

Local news outlets reported that Police Chief **Lawrence Weathers** said two children, aged 4 and 14, were among those shot at Charles Young Park in downtown Lexington.

Weathers declined to share any information about a suspect but told reporters he did not believe there was an ongoing threat to the public.

“If you know of somebody who might be inclined to use a weapon, please let us know,” Weathers said. “Anything that you can do to let us know before something happens, we’ll greatly appreciate.”

The chief urged anyone with information about Saturday evening’s shooting to call police. (AP)



Lawrence

“The winds are really bad, people’s shingles are falling off the roofs,” Channels said.

Green said its not clear if a vehicle wreck that killed one person Saturday in the South Point area of the Big Island was storm related.

Honolulu, on Oahu, was bearing the brunt of the tropical storm conditions spreading westward over the island chain. The Honolulu Fire Department had received more than 600 weather-related responses by noon local time Sunday, including 147 reports of downed trees. There were also roofs blown off, downed power lines and one swimmer who had to be rescued, a city statement said.

Much of the state remained under a flash flood warning, though the National Hurricane Center downgraded the Big Island to a flood advisory Sunday.

“Basically, the best thing to do right now is just stay home for a bit longer,” weather service meteorologist Stephen Parker said. “The storm won’t last forever and once those kind of threats get cleaned up, it will be safe to be out and about again.”(AP)

Ex-Democratic legislator convicted: A former high-ranking New Mexico Democratic legislator has been convicted of dozens of federal charges stemming from a yearslong scheme to divert money from public schools to a friend’s company in exchange for kickbacks.

Jurors reached the verdict Friday, following a trial that included testimony from Sheryl Williams Stapleton’s former colleagues, investigators and tax experts. Williams Stapleton, who declined to testify, could face decades in federal prison when sentenced. Her attorney said all options were being considered, including an appeal.

“We’re obviously very disappointed with respect to the verdict rendered by the jury,” defense attorney Ahmad Assed told The Associated Press via a text message. “Based on the evidence we put forward, we were hopeful for a different outcome.”

A grand jury indicted Williams Stapleton, 69, in March 2024 on more than three dozen counts that included bribery, mail fraud, money laundering and conspiracy to defraud the federal government.

Those were on top of money laundering, racketeering and other charges filed in 2021 by state prosecutors. A trial in that case is scheduled for October. (AP)

Prez boosts GOP candidates at NY police academy

Trump focuses on violent crime reduction

GARDEN CITY, NY, Aug 17, (AP): US President Donald Trump highlighted his record on crime and safety during a visit to New York on Friday, pivoting to one of his strongest issues as he looks to boost Republicans in battleground races ahead of the November midterms.

Trump was visiting the Nassau County police academy in suburban Long Island, where he was expected to promote new FBI crime statistics being released Friday showing a decrease in violent crime for 2025. But despite the setting and an array of uniformed local police officers behind him on stage, the event was overwhelmingly a political one, with Trump lashing Democrats and promoting his record and his party’s candidates.

Trump’s visit aimed at boosting Republicans in closely contested races across his home state, but just how much his presence will help is in question as he faces lagging approval ratings and a deeply unpopular war in Iran with no end in sight.

Trump briefly touched on the new crime statistics, but before long he was returning to familiar attacking lines, calling his opponents “Radical left Democrats” and his predecessor, former President Joe Biden, “Sleepy Joe.”

“We call them Dumb-ocrats now



US President Donald Trump speaks at the David Mack Center for Training and Intelligence on Aug 14, in Garden City, NY. (AP)

because their policies are so dumb. Fighting to defund the police. Does that play well in this room?” Trump said at one point, turning around to look at the officers behind him.

He criticized the state’s Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul and insulted the state’s Attorney General, Letitia James, as “a real slob” and “a disgrace.”

James successfully sued the president and his companies for financial

fraud. The Justice Department last year secured a mortgage fraud indictment against James, but the case was dismissed after a judge concluded that the prosecutor who charged her and another Trump adversary, former FBI Director James Comey, was illegally appointed.

He touted his deployment of the National Guard to cities around the U.S., including in the nation’s capital.

Ukraine’s energy company facilities damaged after 13 Russia strikes in a week

KYIV, Ukraine, Aug 17, (AP): Russia attacked facilities of Ukraine’s Naftogaz Group 13 times over the past week and has targeted its premises almost 300 times since the start of the year, the state energy company said Monday.

Russia has repeatedly battered the Ukrainian power grid since its all-out invasion more than four years ago. Moscow hopes to sap Ukraine’s will to fight by denying civilians light, heating and running water during the bitter winter months.

Ukrainian officials, who say Russia is “weaponizing winter,” fear Moscow will pursue its campaign through the coming winter, too.

Russian drones and missiles struck facilities in several regions of the country, with one asset hit multiple times during the week, Naftogaz said, reporting serious damage to equipment and production capacity. No employees were hurt in the attacks, the company said.

With troops largely bogged down by drones and robots along the roughly 1,250-kilometer (780-mile) front line, both Russia and Ukraine are expanding their aerial campaigns and devising new long-range weapons.

Ukrainian long-range attacks on Russia killed seven people, while four civilians died in Ukraine after strikes by Moscow’s forces, officials said Monday as they collated overnight attacks.

Ukraine depended heavily on foreign military aid after Russia’s full-scale invasion of February 2022 but has gradually increased its domestically produced firepower, firing a salvo of more than 800 long-range drones at Russia on Sunday.

Ukraine also has successfully targeted depots owned by Wildberries, Russia’s main online retailer, as far as 2,000 kilometers (1,242 miles) from Ukraine’s border.

Russian forces have increasingly hit apartment blocks, ports, schools and hospitals, among other urban targets, killing close to 17,000 civilians, according to the United Nations. The

death toll of 437 Ukrainian civilians in July was 70% higher than the same month in 2025, it said last week, as Russia’s barrages intensified.

Russia has exploited Ukraine’s severe shortage of U.S.-made Patriot air defense interceptors, which are the only way of countering ballistic missiles.

But Kyiv is swiftly innovating, with Ukraine now developing its own ballistic missile to hit back at Russia and working with European countries on developing more anti-ballistic air defenses.

Meanwhile, the attacks began on a July weekend and have continued for a month, stretching from Moscow and St. Petersburg, to cities in the south, and eastward to the Ural Mountains. The targets weren’t oil refineries, maritime hubs or arms plants hit by other Ukrainian strikes, but warehouses that bring the convenience of online shopping across the breadth of Russia.

Ukraine’s drones have pummeled the giant depots belonging to Wildberries, Russia’s biggest online retailer, burning billions of dollars’ worth of merchandise and bringing the war home to the broad public.

The attacks on about 20 Wildberries facilities have underlined Kyiv’s ability to strike far and wide inside Russia and posed a new challenge to President Vladimir Putin nearly 4½ years into his full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

They have badly shaken the empire built by Tatyana Kim, the country’s richest female entrepreneur, whose fortune has been estimated at \$8.1 billion.

Hundreds of thousands of individual sellers have lost their merchandise, sending shock waves across Russia’s economy. Wildberries has drawn massive loans from VTB and other banks as it expanded and likely will have trouble repaying them, putting more pressure on the financial system.



A fire following a Russian missile attack is seen in Kyiv, Ukraine on Aug 16. (AP)



A view of a burned area a day after a wildfire in Peristeria village on the island of Salamina, west of Athens, Greece on Aug 17. (AP)

Firefighters battle massive wildfires in Belgium and Greece; two killed

BAELEN, Belgium, Aug 17, (AP): Firefighters battled a massive wildfire that scorched a nature reserve in eastern Belgium and another on a Greek island near Athens where two people were killed on Sunday as hot and dry conditions fueled fires across parts of Europe.

A blaze in eastern Belgium burned about 30 square kilometers (12 square miles) in the High Fens, a large nature reserve, in one of the country’s worst wildfires in recent history.

About 600 residents in the nearby municipalities of Waimes and Bütingenbach, in Liège province near the German border, were told to evacuate on Saturday as winds shifted and smoke spread through the area. Authorities also advised tourists to leave, while a nearby gymnasium was opened to receive evacuees.

Liège provincial governor Hervé Jamar said in a statement Sunday that more than 250 emergency personnel have been deployed, including over

100 Belgian and German firefighters, as well as police and military officers and civil protection staff. Firefighting helicopters operated by Belgium’s federal police and the Netherlands also helped.

In Greece, two people were killed in a wildfire Sunday on the island of Salamina, west of Athens, Greek firefighters said.

The bodies were recovered in the village of Peristeria, where strong winds fueled the rapidly spreading blaze. A second blaze was reported in the Selini area. Firefighting and coast guard vessels evacuated some 500 beachgoers in the area.

Some 260 firefighters were responding to the blazes, including 15 ground teams, 10 aircraft and eight helicopters.

The island had been placed at high wildfire risk on Sunday, with near gale-force winds. “These conditions enabled the fire to quickly reach dangerous proportions and spread rapidly within seven minutes toward

nearby residential areas,” said Fire Brigadier General Vasileios Vathrakogiannis.

The blaze now torching Belgium has far surpassed a 2011 fire that burned nearly 14 square kilometers (5.4 square miles) in the same area and was previously the country’s largest wildfire on record, according to data from the European Forest Fire Information System.

Nicolas Yernaux, a spokesperson for the Public Service of Wallonia, said conditions were much worse this time. “We’re dealing with something much deeper because we have very dry soil,” he said.

René Dahmen, chief engineer at the Department of Nature and Forest, said the fire was still spreading Sunday in an area that was difficult for crews to reach.

“On the eastern flank, there’s a line at least a kilometer long where the fire is slowly advancing toward a municipal forest,” Dahmen said. “That’s the first priority now.”

Thousands in Indonesia await earthquake aid, overshadowing Independence Day

REO, Indonesia, Aug 17, (AP): Thousands of people were still waiting for aid on the Indonesian island of Flores as the country marked its 81st Independence Day on Monday, days after a powerful earthquake killed at least 68 people, injured more than 200 others and damaged hundreds of homes and other buildings.

Many residents on Flores island in East Nusa Tenggara province spent the day mourning victims and waiting for aid to arrive to communities still cut off by the deadly quake.

During Indonesia's Independence Day ceremony in the capital Jakarta, President Prabowo Subianto asked participants to pray for people affected by disasters in East Nusa Tenggara and other parts of the country, while leading a nationwide moment of silence honoring the nation's independence heroes.

More than 1,300 homes were damaged when the quake struck East Nusa Tenggara province on Saturday, with nearly 250 destroyed on Flores alone. Some 5,000 people were forced into temporary shelters and 213 people were injured, according to the National Disaster Management Agency or BNPB.

The province's governor declared a 14-day state of emergency on Sunday.

The quake occurred at a depth of 10 kilometers (6 miles) shortly before 6



In this photo released by the Indonesian National Search and Rescue Agency (BASARNAS), rescuers inspect an earthquake-damaged building in North Lamba Leda, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia on Aug 17. (AP)

a.m. Saturday, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, and residents fled in panic as tsunami warnings were issued but later lifted. Authorities have since recorded 1,576 aftershocks into Monday, though only a small proportion were felt by residents.

Thousands of people on Flores camped outside collapsed homes under tarpaulin tents overnight into Monday, sleeping outside because of the danger of more aftershocks.

An Associated Press photojournalist saw widespread devastation across the island, with fallen trees blocking roads, giant boulders hurled down slopes by landslides, and homes left shattered or heavily damaged. Buildings collapsed onto parked cars.

For many residents, the disaster revived painful memories of a powerful earthquake and tsunami that struck Flores in 1992, killing about 2,500 people.

Myanmar's president visits Russia to deepen strategic ties with Moscow

BANGKOK, Aug 17, (AP): The head of Myanmar's military-backed government embarked on an official visit to Russia to hold talks with President Vladimir Putin aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and strategic cooperation, state media said.

President Min Aung Hlaing departed from the capital Naypyitaw on Monday morning accompanied by members of his cabinet. They will meet with Putin and other top Russian officials and discuss bilateral ties and economic, security and social affairs, state-run MRTV television reported.

Russia, along with China, is a major supporter and arms supplier to Myanmar. Russian-made fighter jets are used in attacks on territory under the control of ethnic minority groups, including many allied with pro-democracy resistance forces.

Min Aung Hlaing previously met with Putin on the sidelines of Moscow's World Atomic Week Forum in September. Putin has never visited Myanmar.

The visit is among Min Aung Hlaing's latest in a series of trips to foreign countries, including neighboring China, India, Laos and Thailand as he seeks to



In this photo released by Myanmar President Office, Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing, right, shakes hands with a Russian diplomat upon his departure to Russia, at the Naypyitaw international airport on Aug 17, in Naypyitaw, Myanmar. (AP)

strengthen international recognition and a return to the diplomatic standing. Despite the visits, he has remained largely isolated internationally.

Min Aung Hlaing also will attend a Myanmar-Russia Business Forum during the trip, MRTV said.

Min Aung Hlaing was inaugu-

rated president in April following a general election judged by United Nations experts and rights groups to be neither free nor fair. Critics dismissed the polls, held in phases in December and January, as a sham designed to consolidate the military's grip on power while ostensibly restoring civilian rule.

South Korea hopes for talks between US and North Korea

Trump orders Pentagon to scale back joint exercises with S.Korea

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug 17, (AP): South Korea on Monday expressed hopes for resumption of diplomacy between the US and North Korea to ease animosities on the Korean Peninsula, hours after U.S. President Donald Trump said he ordered annual US military exercises with South Korea to be scaled back.

Trump cited his good relationship with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for the decision. The announcement baffled many in South Korea, a key US ally in Asia where national security is a top priority due to threats from nuclear-armed North Korea.

The 11-day, summertime Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises began Monday morning as scheduled and it wasn't known which parts of the training were being downsized.

North Korea did not immediately respond to the announcement. North Korea previously threatened strong responses to the US-South Korean exercises, which it views as an invasion rehearsal.

Experts say Trump's step signals

his willingness to reengage with Kim, but the North Korean leader, now emboldened by his advancing nuclear arsenal and expanding military cooperation with Russia, won't likely return to talks unless he is assured of serious US concessions.

Trump said in a social media post that the exercises are not only costly but "send a signal that is totally inappropriate and hostile" to North Korea, which he said "has been unthreatening and respectful" during his time in the White House.

Trump instructed Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to "substantially reduce" the exercises, he said, adding that he recently asked South Korean President Lee Jae Myung if they would join the U.S. in the "denuclearization" of Iran, "and they said, 'No thanks!'"

Trump's move is the latest example of the American president appearing to turn against an ally in favor of a leader cast by previous administrations as an adversary. Trump and others in his administration also



US Army's armored vehicles gather to cross a river at a training field in Yeoncheon, South Korea, near the border with North Korea on Aug 17. (AP)

have railed against NATO allies over a perceived lack of support for his war against Iran, even as they seek to confront an increasingly aggressive Russia in the Baltic region.

The trust many South Koreans have in the US has eroded following

a tariff war instigated by Trump's administration and his transactional approach to security.

Lee's presidential office said later Monday that South Korea hopes "friendly relationship" between Trump and Kim would lead

to "meaningful dialogue" between the U.S. and North Korea and start discussions on promoting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. It said that South Korea will make necessary diplomatic efforts for that.

South Korea and the U.S. are closely discussing practical and military contributions that can be made to restore freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, according to South Korea's presidential office, which said the countries have been closely coordinating over their joint military drills and readiness.

Lee is a liberal who espouses improved ties with North Korea. Since taking office last year, his government has taken proactive steps to improve ties with North Korea, including turning off front line loudspeakers that blared K-pop music and world news and banning activists from flying balloons carrying propaganda leaflets toward North Korea.

Also:
SEOUL, South Korea: Torrential

rains have pounded southern South Korea, leaving one person dead and four others injured, officials said Monday.

One person died in a landslide that struck an apartment building in the southern city of Geosje on Monday, the Interior and Safety Ministry said in a report. It said two people were injured in Geosje and two others in nearby cities.

The heavy rains that have pummeled southern South Korea since Saturday have forced about 390 people to evacuate to safe places and caused power outages at about 3,580 houses, the ministry report said.

In the **Philippines**, heavy monsoon rains flooded key streets and snarled traffic early Monday in the densely populated region of metropolitan **Manila** and a dozen outlying provinces, forcing the government to suspend government work and cancel classes at all levels starting at noon. Schools were asked to shift to online learning.

Moroccan security forces arrest nearly 300 migrants trying to reach Spain's Ceuta

CASABLANCA, Morocco, Aug 17, (AP): Hundreds of migrants trying to reach the Spanish exclave of Ceuta by land and sea were arrested by Moroccan security forces, Moroccan state television reported Sunday, as authorities tightened security along the border following calls for a new mass crossing.

Moroccan state broadcaster Medi 1 TV said 294 migrants from sub-Saharan Africa were arrested Saturday while attempting to enter Ceuta. Authorities also arrested 61 Moroccans accused of facilitating the migration attempts, the broadcaster reported.

The attempted crossings followed a surge in social media posts calling on migrants to make their way to Ceuta, a Spanish city on Morocco's northern coast. In response, Moroccan and Spanish authorities beefed up security presence and limited movement toward the area.

The latest attempt comes two weeks after tens of thousands of would-be migrants, driven by poverty and misinformation, rushed toward Ceuta in one of the deadliest migration crises to hit the region. At least 90 people died on both sides



Moroccan security forces provide water to detained migrants who attempted to cross from the border town of Fnideq to the Spanish exclave of Ceuta on Aug 15. (AP)

of the border, according to official numbers, while human rights groups reported higher figures.

The interior ministry did not respond to AP's questions about the latest arrests or the number of security personnel deployed around the border to pre-

vent a new migration push.

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.

Temple stampede and hotel fire in eastern India kill 14 and injure several

PATNA, India, Aug 17, (AP): A deadly stampede broke out at a Hindu temple in eastern India's Bihar state Monday, hours after a fire swept through a hotel housing pilgrims in West Bengal state.

Seven people were killed and more than a dozen injured in the stampede, while the blaze left at least seven people dead and several others critically injured, police said.

The incident in Bihar occurred near Ashok Dham Temple in Lakhisarai district, as thousands of devotees gathered to offer prayers on the third Monday of Shraavan, one of the holiest months in the Hindu calendar. The period, which usually falls between July and August, is dedicated to the worship of Hindu god Lord Shiva and is marked by fasting, prayers and colorful monsoon festivals across India.

More than a dozen people were taken to a government hospital for treatment, said Shailendra Kumar, a civil



Chaos and panic as a stampede unfolds at a temple in Bihar, India, with injured devotees being rushed for medical attention on Aug 17. (AP)

official. Kumar said the cause of the stampede was still being investigated.

According to preliminary reports, an electric wire snapped outside the temple premises around 6:30 a.m., sparking panic as devotees rushed to escape what they feared was a risk of

electrocution.

A section of the barricades collapsed under the weight of the surging crowd, leading to a crush in which people fell over one another, said Kumar, according to the Press Trust of India news agency.



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, (second left), holds a Brazilian flag alongside his wife, first lady Rosangela da Silva, left, his running mate, Vice President Geraldo Alckmin, right, and Alckmin's wife, Lu Alckmin, during a presidential election campaign rally in Sao Bernardo do Campo, Sao Paulo state, Brazil on Aug 16. (AP)

Lula, Bolsonaro return to strongholds to kick off presidential campaigns

SAO BERNARDO DO CAMPO, Brazil, Aug 17, (AP): Brazil's two main presidential candidates kicked off their campaigns on Sunday, rallying supporters in their political strongholds ahead of what is expected to be a tight October election.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva spoke with nostalgia to more than 10,000 supporters at the Vila Euclides Stadium outside Sao Paulo - a city where he rose to political fame 47 years ago as a metalworkers union leader during the country's 1964-1985 military dictatorship.

The 80-year-old, wearing a hat after a skin cancer diagnosis, insisted Brazil needs more of his policies.

Sen. Flavio Bolsonaro, one of the sons of former President Jair Bolsonaro, gathered with thousands of voters on the Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro. His father, under house arrest following his conviction for an attempted coup, did not attend the rally.

Lula echoed his own earlier comments denouncing foreign interference in Brazil's politics. His allies have accused the U.S. government of seeking to boost Flavio Bolsonaro's bid with measures such as raising tariffs on Brazilian exports and revoking the visa of Brazil's ambassador to Washington.

Speaking about Brazil's vast reserves of rare minerals, Lula said "no one (abroad) will tap our minerals. We are going to tap them for the benefit of the Brazilian people." Bolsonaro argued that he is "the only one who can sit with the United States, with China, with Israel, with the Middle East, with India and with Argentina to make the best and biggest trade deals for our nation."

His party's convention was attended by Argentina's

President Javier Milei. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and several members of the Trump administration have expressed support for him.

Sunday was the first campaign day the 13 candidates in the running but many voters are expected to pay more attention once campaign ads start airing on TV and radio at the end of the month.

"It looks like we are starting slow this time," said 68-year-old Flavio Alves, a Lula supporter who lives on the same street where the rally was underway. "We all expect a narrow election, but now Lula is in government, things are different."

Four years ago, Lula beat incumbent Jair Bolsonaro with 50.9% of the vote.

Another presidential candidate, Ronaldo Caiado, a former state governor and an agribusiness leader, toured the surroundings of Brazil's capital Brasilia and reinforced his anti-Lula credentials.

Another Lula opponent, Romeu Zema, met voters and attended a Catholic ceremony in the countryside of Minas Gerais, considered a bellwether state for the elections - a state he had governed until recently.

Lula, who is seeking his fourth nonconsecutive term, and Bolsonaro each reached out to women voters, who account for nearly 53% of Brazil's 158 million eligible voters, according to the country's electoral court.

"Men need to learn from childhood that they are no better than women. We need to be equal," said Lula, as first lady Rosângela da Silva stood by his side, nodding. She was one of the event's main speakers in Sao Bernardo do Campo, where Lula lived a large part of his life.



Boursa Kuwait

Main market index leads the decline

Boursa Kuwait closes lower across all indices

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Monday’s session lower, as selling pressure weighed on all key benchmarks. The General Index dropped 79.34 points, or 0.90 percent, to 8,762.37, supported by turnover of 330.7 million shares worth KD 89.7 million (about USD 292.6 million) across 23,266 cash trades.

The Main Market Index led the decline, falling 93.35 points, or 1.05 percent, to 8,775.96 on 206.6 million shares traded for KD 40.8 mil-

lion (USD 133.1 million) in 13,582 transactions.

The Premier Market Index slipped 80.47 points, or 0.87 percent, to 9,214.28, with 124 million shares exchanged in 9,684 deals totaling KD 48.9 million (USD 159.5 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index eased 72.57 points, or 0.69 percent, to end at 10,439.44, as 123.4 million shares changed hands in 8,592 cash transactions valued at KD 26.9 million (USD 87.7 million).

Kuwait Airways boosts digital drive with KD 5.8 mln ASC pact

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): Kuwait’s national carrier, Kuwait Airways, and local IT solutions provider firm Automated Systems Company (ASC) signed on Sunday a three-year deal over resource planning worth KD 5.8 million, the airline’s chief said on Sunday.

Hailing the agreement as a step towards pushing forward Kuwait Airways’ digital drive, Abdulmoshen Al-Fagaan said such a deal would allow the national carrier to build a “modern and fully-equipped,” operational system, citing the agreement as a “watershed” in the airline’s digital transformation.

On the merits of the agreement, he said it would allow the national carrier to build an “integrated system” that would encompass various sec-

tors in a bid to ratchet up operational efficiency, while “data accuracy and speed” will be another by-product of the agreement.

He went on to underline the significance of the deal thanks largely to the “nature” of the Kuwaiti flag carrier’s daily operations, which largely depend on meticulous “decision-making and planning,” and the optimal use of resources at the airline’s disposal, added the official.

Investing in digital infrastructure has now become the focal point of Kuwait Airways’ day-to-day operations, he said, emphasizing that the flag carrier would continue to accelerate its digital drive in a bid to cope with an “evolving” aviation industry, subsequently keeping growth on an upward trajectory, he said.

Stepping up Jurassic gas drilling

KOC drills 2,428 oil wells in 5 years, report shows

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) has achieved a huge leap in its exploration and production operations, thereby, recording an exceptional accomplishment.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the official report issued by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), confirming the success of the company in drilling 2,428 wells for crude oil production, excluding non-associated gas, within the five-year period ending on March 31, 2026.

The last fiscal year recorded the highest rate of drilling, as 751 wells were completed. This achievement coincided with the maintenance and repair operations in 2,034 wells for crude oil production (excluding non-associated gas) during the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2026 alone.

The same official report stated that during the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2026, the company drilled 57 deep wells for exploring and developing Jurassic gas reservoirs. This is a remarkable increase compared to 40 wells drilled in the previous fiscal year.

This achievement is attributed to KOC’s adoption of advanced technological solutions and its tireless efforts to develop infrastructure, in addition to strengthening the inte-

gration mechanisms between reservoir management, wells and surface facilities.

Despite this intensive operational activity and exceptional performance, the average production of non-associated gas by the end of the fiscal year remained below the approved annual target.

The report explained that the difference between the actual and target production is 100 percent due to constraints outside the direct operational control of KOC.

It also revealed that during the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, KOC implemented the replacement project for the low-pressure gas network in Shuaiba Industrial Area.

This project ensures the continuity and stability of gas fuel supplies to essential facilities, specifically the power generation plants of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

The report added that drilling operations witnessed the introduction of advanced technologies for the first time in the field of Jurassic gas well drilling, including the application of integrated automated drilling systems that enable real-time connection between the wellbore and surface. This technology develops drilling standards, raises operational efficiency, reduces drilling time and improves performance.

Egypt urges stronger BADEA role in Africa’s development

CAIRO, Aug 17, (KUNA): Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty on Sunday stressed the significance of promoting the contributions of the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) to development and infrastructure projects in Africa.

The Egyptian foreign minister made the remarks while meeting BADEA Chairman Fahad Al-Dossari, highlighting how to support Egyptian companies working in Africa and push forward economic development efforts in the continent, said the Egyptian Foreign Ministry in a press release.

Abdelatty added that his country

is proud of its partnership with the bank, hailing it as a key pillar of Arab-African cooperation, underlining his country’s commitment to advancing sustainable development efforts and consolidating economic and developmental cooperation across the continent.

The Egyptian foreign minister stressed the importance of building upon the meeting he held with the Bank’s Chairman in Washington on the sidelines of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund Spring Meetings and capitalizing on the outcomes of that discussion to promote bilateral cooperation to support the continent’s development.

Students gain more control over SELECT rewards in app

Weyay enhances SELECT experience with new features and greater transparency for students

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Weyay Bank, Kuwait’s first digital bank, has announced the latest enhancement to its SELECT card, designed exclusively for allowance students. The update introduces a revamped rewards experience and a redesigned in-app interface, reflecting Weyay’s ongoing commitment to evolving its digital banking services and delivering solutions tailored to the banking needs of young customers in Kuwait.

Since its launch, SELECT has evolved beyond a digital allowance card into a comprehensive rewards ecosystem that offers students exclusive benefits, cashback opportunities, and lifestyle-focused partnerships. Developed around the needs and spending habits of university students, the program continues to grow through ongoing enhancements and collaborations with leading brands across dining, cafés, fitness, telecommunications, and entertainment.

University students automatically receive access to SELECT in their Weyay app once their student allowance is deposited into their Weyay account, allowing them to enjoy its full range of benefits through a seamless and fully digital experience.

The latest update introduces a more intuitive and transparent user experience, enabling SELECT customers to view their complete cashback history, track their accumulated cashback balance, redeem earned cashback directly through the app, and monitor their spending progress toward monthly cashback eligibility. These enhancements provide students with greater visibility and control



over their rewards, making it easier than ever to manage and maximize the value of their SELECT benefits.

Commenting on the update, Naser Al-Duwaisan, Assistant Vice President, Products Department at Weyay Bank, said: “Since the launch of SELECT, our vision has been to create a banking and rewards experience that grows alongside stu-

dents and adapts to their evolving needs. Over the years, we have continuously enhanced SELECT through new benefits, partnerships, and experiences, transforming it from a simple card into a comprehensive platform that adds real value to students’ everyday lives.”

He added: “With this latest update, we are taking the SELECT experience to the next level by giving customers greater transparency, control, and convenience. Students can now track and manage their cashback more easily and redeem their rewards instantly within the app. This enhancement reflects our commitment to developing innovative digital banking solutions that meet the expectations of the next generation and place their needs at the center of everything we do.”

SELECT customers continue to enjoy a wide range of student-focused benefits, including 30% cashback on orders from Talabat and Snoonu, 10% cashback at Trolleyand on fuel purchases at Q8 and KNPC stations. Members also have access to discounts of up to 50% at selected fitness destinations, alongside a growing portfolio of exclusive offers and partnerships designed specifically for university students.

Weyay Bank continues to invest in innovative products and digital solutions that enrich the everyday banking experience for students, further strengthening its position as a trusted digital partner that supports them throughout their university journey and beyond.

Brent crude climbs to \$87 on Middle East supply fears

US inflation cools to 3.4%, easing Fed hike expectations

By National Bank of Kuwait

Global markets were influenced this week by easing inflation in the United States, resilient economic growth in the United Kingdom, and continued caution from central banks amid geopolitical uncertainty and elevated energy prices. While inflation pressures appear to be moderating across major economies, policymakers remain mindful of risks stemming from the Middle East conflict and its impact on energy costs. In the United States, inflation slowed for a second consecutive month in July, with headline CPI easing to 3.4% year-on-year from 3.5% in June, while core inflation moderated to 2.5%. Producer price data also pointed to softer inflationary pressures, as the Producer Price Index (PPI) remained unchanged during the month, helped by a 3.1% decline in energy prices. These developments have strengthened expectations that the Federal Reserve will keep interest rates unchanged, as current policy settings appear restrictive enough to guide inflation lower over time. The U.S. labour market remains relatively resilient despite signs of slower hiring. Initial jobless claims rose modestly to 209,000, while the unemployment rate held at 4.1%. Although layoffs remain low, employers have become increasingly cautious about hiring due to elevated borrowing costs and economic uncertainty. This combination of easing inflation and softening labour market conditions has reduced expectations of a near-term Fed rate hike. As a result, the U.S. Dollar Index (DXY) weakened toward 99.8, reflecting lower expectations for further monetary tightening. In the United Kingdom, the economy expanded by 0.4% in the second quarter, matching expectations but slowing from 0.6% growth in the previous quarter. Growth was supported by the technology, advertising, and pharmaceutical sectors, as well as stronger consumer activity linked to favourable weather and the FIFA World Cup. However, economists remain cautious, noting that much of the recent strength may be temporary. Ongoing energy market volatility, fragile business confidence, and concerns over inflation could weigh on future growth. The GBP/USD pair traded below 1.35 as investors balanced encouraging economic data against external risks. In the Asia-Pacific region, the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) kept its cash rate unchanged at 4.35% following three rate hikes earlier this year. While the central bank acknowledged slowing economic growth and rising unemployment, it maintained a hawkish stance, warning that inflation remains too high and could require further policy tightening if upside risks emerge. Governor Michele Bullock reiterated that additional rate increases remain possible if inflation does not ease as anticipated. Commodity markets continued to reflect geopolitical developments. Gold prices fell below \$4,350 per ounce as softer U.S. inflation data reduced the likelihood of an imminent Fed rate hike. Meanwhile, Brent crude oil climbed to around \$87 per barrel, supported by ongoing concerns over supply disruptions in the Middle East and uncertainty surrounding the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. Overall, the latest economic data suggest that major central banks are likely to maintain a cautious approach in the near term. Easing inflation in the U.S., steady growth in the UK, and persistent inflation concerns in Australia point to a “higher-for-longer” interest rate environment, while geopolitical developments and energy prices remain key risks for global markets

United States

US Inflation Eases to 3.4% in July, Continuing Downward Trend

US inflation eased for a second consecutive month in July 2026, with the annual CPI rate slowing to 3.4% from 3.5% in June, matching market expectations. The decline suggests that inflationary pressure continues to cool from the 2023 high of 4.2%, helped by easing energy-related effects. Gasoline prices still rose sharply on an annual basis at 24.6%, but this was lower than June’s 26.7% increase, while fuel oil inflation also moderated. Shelter inflation eased slightly to 3.2%, while food inflation remained unchanged at 3.0%. On a monthly basis, CPI rose 0.1%, supported mainly by shelter and food, while gasoline prices fell 2.9%. Core inflation rose 0.2% month-on-month, while the annual core rate eased to 2.5%, reinforcing the view that underlying inflation is gradually moving in the right direction.

Falling Energy Costs Drive Producer Inflation Lower

Producer inflation showed signs of stabilizing in July 2026, providing support for the Federal Reserve to keep interest rates unchanged as inflation pressures begin to ease. The Producer Price Index (PPI) was flat compared with June and rose 4.7% year-over-year, suggesting that producer price infla-

Previous Week Levels					This Week’s Expected Range		3-Month
Currencies	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1548	1.1510	1.1585	1.1569	1.1450	1.1700	1.1610
GBP	1.3479	1.3471	1.3561	1.3530	1.3440	1.3650	1.3535
JPY	157.74	157.60	159.56	159.30	158.50	160.00	158.20
CHF	0.8070	0.8060	0.8146	0.8131	0.8070	0.8200	0.8050

tion may be moving onto a downward path. A key contributor was a 3.1% decline in energy prices, which could gradually reduce cost pressures across the economy and eventually benefit consumers. While services prices continued to rise modestly as earlier cost increases flowed through supply chains, goods prices fell for a second consecutive month, narrowing the gap between the two sectors. At the same time, consumer spending patterns showed early signs of shifting back toward goods, which could help improve the balance between supply and demand and ease inflationary pressures. Despite these encouraging developments, inflation remains elevated, with core producer prices, excluding food and energy, still 4.2% higher than a year ago, reflecting the lingering effects of this year’s oil price shock. The Federal Reserve must also contend with emerging weakness in the labor market, including job losses reported in July, as it determines the appropriate course for monetary policy. Although lower producer costs are a positive sign, policymakers will likely need broader evidence of cooling inflation before considering any policy changes. For now, the latest producer inflation data supports expectations that the Fed will keep interest rates steady through the rest of 2026 and into 2027 while monitoring both inflation and economic growth trends.

U.S. Labor Market Shows Resilience Amid Sluggish Recruitment

U.S. jobless claims increased modestly last week, but layoffs remain at historically low levels, indicating that the labour market continues to be relatively resilient. Initial unemployment benefit applications rose to 209,000 from a revised 200,000 the previous week, slightly exceeding expectations, while the four-week moving average held steady at 199,000. Although these figures suggest strong job security for those already employed, with the unemployment rate remaining low at 4.1%, conditions are less favourable for job seekers. Many employers, still mindful of the labour shortages experienced after the pandemic, have been reluctant to reduce headcount but are also cautious about expanding their workforce, creating what economists describe as a “no-hire, no-fire” environment. As a result, hiring activity remains subdued, with employers cutting 23,000 jobs last month and adding an average of 61,000 jobs per month so far in 2026. While this marks an improvement from the exceptionally weak hiring pace seen in 2025, elevated interest rates and uncertainty surrounding President Trump’s trade policies continue to weigh on business confidence and recruitment plans.

Cooling Inflation Reduces Pressure for Immediate Fed Rate Hike

Kevin Warsh became Federal Reserve Chair in May at a time when officials were debating whether interest rates should be increased to fight inflation, while President Trump was pushing for lower rates to boost the economy. Recent economic data, however, suggests the Fed may keep rates unchanged for now. The job market has slowed, wage growth has weakened, and hiring remains modest, but unemployment is still low at 4.1%. Inflation remains above the Fed’s 2% target, although it has started to ease after rising sharply earlier in 2026 due to higher energy prices linked to the U.S. war with Iran. Many Fed officials believe current interest rates are already high enough to gradually bring inflation down, especially since much of the recent inflation was caused by temporary factors such as tariffs, oil prices, and strong investment in artificial intelligence. Recent reports showing slower inflation and weaker job growth have reduced expectations of an immediate rate hike. However, some policymakers remain concerned that keeping inflation above target for too long could cause consumers and businesses to expect permanently higher prices, making inflation harder to control in the future. As a result, the Fed faces a difficult choice. Raising rates could help bring inflation back to 2% more quickly but may slow the economy and increase unemployment. Leaving rates unchanged could support growth but risks inflation staying elevated for longer. While a few Fed officials are still calling for rate increases, many economists believe the Fed will likely keep rates steady if inflation continues to cool and the economy gradually weakens. The key issue now is balancing economic growth with maintaining confidence that inflation will eventu-

ally return to the Fed’s target.

The Greenback was last seen trading at 99.667.

United Kingdom

GDP m/m

The UK economy grew by 0.4% in the second quarter of the year, matching market expectations but slowing from the 0.6% expansion recorded in the first quarter. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), economic growth remained relatively strong, making the UK one of the better performing economies among the G7 countries so far this year. Despite concerns that the Iran war and political uncertainty surrounding Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s resignation could weigh on activity, the economy is now 1.2% larger than a year ago. Growth during the quarter was supported by sectors such as computer programming, advertising, and pharmaceuticals, while declines in power generation and sewerage services partially offset these gains. Favourable weather conditions, summer heatwaves, and increased spending linked to the men’s football World Cup also contributed to stronger economic activity in June. While the economy has shown resilience, economists caution that this performance may not be sustainable. Some of the recent growth was driven by temporary factors, and ongoing volatility in energy markets remains a significant risk, particularly if disruptions related to the Middle East conflict continue. Businesses reported that higher costs for raw materials following the Iran war have begun to stabilize, helping improve operating conditions. However, experts warn that rising inflation, increasing unemployment, and fragile business confidence could slow growth in the months ahead. Treasury projections suggest the UK economy could expand by just 0.9% this year, with growth potentially falling as low as 0.3% by 2027 if energy market disruptions persist. Overall, while the UK has weathered recent economic shocks better than expected, uncertainty remains and the outlook continues to be challenging.

The GBP/USD currency pair last seen trading at 1.3530.

Asia Pacific

Reserve Bank of Australia maintained the official cash rate at 4.35%.

The Reserve Bank of Australia maintained the official cash rate at 4.35% on Tuesday, as widely expected, following three hikes earlier in the year. The RBA, which pointed to rising unemployment and a weak property market, said its policy decision was unanimous. “The disruption to global oil supply is adding directly to inflation and there are indications that higher fuel prices are being passed through to prices of other goods and services, so inflation is likely to remain high for some time,” it said. “This inflation impulse is in addition to the effect of capacity pressures in the economy. “The board remains focused on ensuring that high inflation does not become embedded. To achieve this, growth in aggregate demand needs to remain subdued to reduce capacity pressures and bring inflation back to target. Following three increases in the cash rate target since the beginning of the year, financial conditions are now tighter than they were, and the economy appears to be slowing as expected. But inflation is still too high. It is not expected to return to around the midpoint of the target range until late 2027 and there are upside risks to this projection. “With monetary policy judged to be somewhat restrictive, the board decided to leave the cash rate target unchanged while it assesses how the economy is evolving. The board will continue to do what it considers necessary to bring inflation sustainably back to target, including increasing the cash rate target further if upside risks materialise.” Speaking to reporters after the announcement, Governor Michele Bullock took a hawkish tone, suggesting that it was “quite possible” rates will be lifted if needed. “Its important people believe that we will act if we need to,” she said. “I think personally that it’s quite possible we might need to go but we’ll wait and see what the data tells us.”

The AUD/USD currency pair last seen trading at 0.7081.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30725

The collaboration confirms the Bank’s commitment to supporting national and social initiatives

Kuwait Finance House a strategic partner of AlShaheed Adventures

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced its strategic partnership with TAS Entertainment to officially sponsor the inaugural season of “AlShaheed Adventures” in Phase 3 of AlShaheed Park. The partnership aligns with KFH’s efforts to strengthen cooperation with official entities, support Kuwaiti youth projects, and help develop Kuwait’s tourism and entertainment sectors.

This partnership reflects the bank’s corporate social responsibility and a shared vision to invest in national potential while supporting high-quality projects that boost tourism, fulfill community aspirations, and offer diverse choices for youth, families, and all societal segments.

Empowering Youth and National Partnerships

Head of Group Public Relations and Media at KFH, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh said: “We are proud of our strategic partnership with AlShaheed Adventures. This initiative serves as a model for leading community and national projects in tourism while supporting entrepreneurship and empowering Kuwaiti youth, a key pillar of our social responsibility strategy.”

Al-Ruwaieh emphasized KFH’s ongoing commitment to supporting sustainable development, the economy, and SMEs, aligned with Kuwait’s development goals and Vision 2035.

He affirmed that KFH consistently supports national and community initiatives, empowering young Kuwaiti talent and advancing impactful tourism and entertainment projects. He added that such partnerships exemplify effective public and private sector integration.

He noted that KFH’s sponsorship of AlShaheed Adventures highlights its commitment to premier events that create memorable experiences for the public while strengthening Kuwait’s status as a top tourism and entertainment hub.

New Experiences set Kuwait as Tourism Destination

Meanwhile, Senior Manager PR and Event Management at KFH, Fahad AlSaad said: “Through this partnership, KFH is offering exclusive ticket discounts for AlShaheed Adventures while officially sponsoring the ski slope and snow village. This allows us to connect with the public and provide our customers with unique, seasonal experiences.”

Supporting Youth: An Ongoing Commitment

AlSaad emphasized that supporting AlShaheed



Signing the partnership.



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh speaking after the signing of the partnership agreement.



Fahad AlSaad speaking at the meeting.

Al-Ruwaieh: Our leadership in supporting youth and national projects is key pillar of our social responsibility strategy
The partnership sets a benchmark for integration between the public and private sectors
AlSaad: We are committed to supporting impactful social initiatives as part of our leading CSR role
Alomar: We are delighted to partner with KFH, a step that highlights their commitment to investing in national talent
AlSaqabi: Partnership marks key milestone in supporting entertainment and boosting Kuwait’s tourism profile
Exclusive Offers on AlShaheed Adventures Tickets for KFH Customers

Adventures reflects KFH’s ongoing commitment to empowering Kuwaiti youth and innovative projects, rooted in its leading community role.

The Bank also supported the entertainment sector through a three-year strategic partnership with the Touristic Enterprises Company for Kuwait’s Winter Wonderland, hosting events, activities, competitions, and giveaway prizes throughout the season.

Additionally, KFH advances its social and environmental commitment through the “Keep it Green” campaign, an overarching initiative that drives programs to build environmental awareness, promote sustainability, and expand green space.

Investing in National Expertise to Develop Entertainment

TAS Entertainment CEO, Tariq Alomar said: “We are proud to partner with KFH, demonstrating the power of investing in local talent to enrich quality of life and boost tourism. Beyond offering outstanding entertainment, TAS aims to help build an advanced, world class sector driven by Kuwaiti leadership.”

For her part, TAS Entertainment Chief Operating Officer, Fatima AlSaqabi explained that the partnership marks a major milestone for the project, stating: “We are proud of KFH’s confidence in our team and capabilities. Great achievements happen when vision aligned institutions combine their strengths, with each party bringing complementary value. This partnership demonstrates what happens when experience, trust, and resources align around a shared national ambition.”

She added that AlShaheed Adventures reflects a growing movement to elevate local entertainment and build professional business models capable of delivering high-quality experiences regionally.

AlShaheed Adventures: A New Destination for Fun and Entertainment

AlShaheed Adventures is Kuwait’s newest entertainment destination, located within the Phase 3 expansion of AlShaheed Park—a national project affiliated with the Amiri Diwan. It brings a variety of attractions under one roof, featuring a snow village, trampoline park, ice rink, and go-kart track tailored for youth, families, and adventure seekers. This new expansion adds a dynamic dimension to the AlShaheed Park visitor experience, offering a modern space that combines entertainment, physical activity, and adventure.

Kyiv hits Russia’s e-commerce hub

Russian SMEs face loan strain as Wildberries inventory destroyed

MOSCOW, Aug 17, (AP): The attacks began on a July weekend and have continued for a month, stretching from Moscow and St. Petersburg, to cities in the south, and eastward to the Ural Mountains. The targets weren’t oil refineries, maritime hubs or arms plants hit by other Ukrainian strikes, but warehouses that bring the convenience of online shopping across the breadth of Russia.

Ukraine’s drones have pummeled the giant depots belonging to Wildberries, Russia’s biggest online retailer, burning billions of dollars’ worth of merchandise and bringing the war home to the broad public.

The attacks on about 20 Wildberries facilities have underlined Kyiv’s ability to strike far and wide inside Russia and posed a new challenge to President Vladimir Putin nearly 4½ years into his full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

They have badly shaken the empire built by Tatyana Kim, the country’s richest female entrepreneur, whose fortune has been estimated at \$8.1 billion.

Hundreds of thousands of individual sellers have lost their merchandise, sending shock waves across Russia’s economy. Wildberries has drawn massive loans from VTB and other banks as it expanded and likely will have trouble repaying them, putting more pressure on the financial system.

Kim, 50, was born in Grozny, the capital of the province of Chechnya, to an ethnic Korean family of an engineer and a teacher. She launched Wildberries in 2004 from her Moscow apartment soon after giving birth to her first child while working as an English teacher.

“The idea was born from my own needs, and turned out to be needed by hundreds of thousands,” said Kim, now a mother of seven. “If a product or service makes your own life easier, you’re on the right track.”

Wildberries initially sold clothing before expanding to appliances, household items, cosmetics, books and more. The platform with its distinct purple logo has become an undisputed leader in e-commerce, accounting for about half of all online orders in Russia. Businesses big and small use it to store, ship and deliver merchandise across the country’s 11 time zones.

An estimated 500,000 to 800,000 sellers use Wildberries, often described as Russia’s Amazon. After Western brands fled following the war in Ukraine, online retailers filled the void with merchandise from China, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and elsewhere.

The company also acquired a bank, expanded to tourism and even considered buying an airline.

In 2024, Kim divorced her hus-

band, Vladislav Bakalchuk, triggering a fight for control of the company. Bakalchuk sought the support of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov and his feared paramilitary forces but eventually lost the battle, which peaked in a shootout at a business center near the Kremlin that left two people dead and several wounded.

Unlike smaller competitors Ozon and Yandex Market, the company has prided itself on relying on about two dozen mammoth warehouses as the core of its vast logistical network, stockpiling the goods before shipping to about 100,000 storefront distribution points.

As Ukraine embarked on a strategy of long-range drone attacks deep inside Russia, it has expanded from striking military bases, oil refineries and other infrastructure to Wildberries warehouses, which provided particularly soft targets.

Since the first attack July 18 in Elektrostal, just east of Moscow, and in the southwestern Tambov region, Wildberries depots burned one after another in massive fires that flooded social media.

The depots, some as big as 300,000 square meters (about 3.2 million square feet) were unprotected. It took three days to extinguish the fire in Elektrostal, a key Moscow region hub.

On Sunday, Ukraine set ablaze another such hub in Podolsk, also near the capital.

Seven of Wildberries’ 10 largest logistics centers have been knocked out of operation, Ukraine’s Defense Ministry said. Wildberries did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

“These are not military and high-value political targets, therefore they’re not especially secured, they’re not really built to be able to shrug off drone strikes,” said podcaster Mark Galeotti, a Russia expert who heads the Mayak Intelligence consultancy.

The strikes have stretched from the European part of Russia to Yekaterinburg, over 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) from Ukraine’s border.

There’s scarce public data, but some estimates indicate up to 20% of the company’s total warehouse space has been destroyed, with assessments of losses running as high as \$6 billion.

Kim said Wildberries’ sites have been “reinforced and strengthened” defensively, but the attacks continued. Some warehouses suffered only minor damage, and Ukraine tried to hit them again.

Wildberries said it’s rearranging supply chains to create “partner hubs” for storing merchandise - a challenging process, given its dependence on big depots.

As part of its efforts to share its institutional expertise with the public sector

KIB organizes training program to enhance service quality and develop Public Authority for Manpower employees’ capabilities

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) organized a specialized training program for employees of the Public Authority for Manpower to strengthen customer service skills and enhance the quality of service provided to visitors. The program reflects KIB’s commitment to sharing its expertise in management and service excellence with the public sector, supporting the development of national talent and improving institutional performance across Kuwait.

The program was attended by members of the Public Authority. It focused on equipping participants with practical workplace skills to help enhance customer experience and drive organizational performance.

Commenting on the initiative, Mohammad Dashti, Senior Manager – Service Quality Unit at KIB, said: “This initiative reflects our belief that investing in human capital development is one of the key drivers of service quality. We also believe that knowledge exchange between the banking and government sectors contributes to the adoption of best practices and enhances the efficiency of the service ecosystem. With this in mind, we designed a program that combines theoretical and practical learning while equipping participants with the hands-on skills needed to keep pace with the rapidly evolving demands of digital transformation.”

Dashti added: “KIB is committed to leveraging its extensive expertise in service excellence to support a wide range of entities and institutions, in line with its social responsibility and its role as a development partner. We believe that enhancing employees’ skills and equipping them with the latest tools directly contributes to advancing workplace standards and strengthening long-term operational efficiency.”

The program covered several key



Group photo during the workshop.

areas, including service excellence practices, effective communication skills, strategies for engaging with different categories of visitors, and techniques for managing daily situations, addressing challenges, and resolving problems efficiently. It also emphasized fostering a customer-centric culture that promotes customer satisfaction as a key driver of institutional development. In addition, the program explored the latest trends in digital services and their role in enhancing customer experience.

A specialized KIB team led the training, drawing on its extensive expertise in quality and professional development to support the program’s objectives. Through interactive training methods and practical workshops, participants were able to maximize the value of the program and acquire practical tools that could be applied immediately in their workplace, helping en-

hance service efficiency and improve responsiveness to visitors’ needs.

This program is part of a series of training initiatives implemented by KIB in collaboration with a range of public- and private-sector entities. These initiatives reflect the Bank’s commitment to developing national capabilities, promoting knowledge transfer, and supporting efforts to enhance service delivery, while fostering a culture of excellence and innovation across diverse work environments.

About KIB

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari’ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank

focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: “Bank for Life”.

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

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

Auto and chip demand drive Japan’s export-led Q2 gain

Japan’s Q2 GDP grows 1.1% annually, misses forecasts

TOKYO, Aug 17, (AP): Japan’s economy grew an annual rate of 1.1% in the April-June quarter even as private consumption stayed flat and the growth of exports declined, according to government data released Monday.

Japan’s real GDP, or gross domestic product, the sum value of nation’s goods and services, grew at a seasonally adjusted rate of 0.3% from the first quarter to second quarter of this 2026, according to Cabinet Office data.

The annualized rate shows what the growth rate would have been if it had continued for a whole year. It was 2.1% in the January-March period.

Private spending dipped 1.2% in April-June compared to January-March, while exports grew 0.5%.

Exports for the latest period were driven by the global demand for Japanese autos and semiconductors. Japan is home for Toyota Motor Corp., Honda Mo-

tor Co. and other top automakers.

Global demand for computer chips being powered by interest in AI, helping to support Japan’s exports.

Government consumption rose 1.6%.

Quarterly GDP growth was lower than what analysts had expected. The Japanese economy has been hurt by the war in Iran, which has sent energy costs surging. That’s especially difficult for resource-poor Japan, which imports almost all its oil.

The Strait of Hormuz, a vital transport route for oil exports from the Persian Gulf to Asia, has been effectively blocked due to the war, pushing prices higher. Japan has released some oil reserves and is working on alternate routes.

What's On

SPOTLIGHT



Got a birthday or event?
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Promoting marine safety and environmental responsibility through community engagement

stc collaborates with Kuwait Coast Guard on community initiative at Kubbar Island

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, organized a community initiative in collaboration with the Kuwait Coast Guard at Kubbar Island. The activity brought the stc team together with island visitors in an engaging setting that combined an enjoyable day at sea with greater awareness of safety and environmental preservation. The initiative forms part of stc's comprehensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) framework, with environmental protection representing one of its key pillars and an important focus of the Company's efforts to create a positive and lasting impact.

With boating trips and visits to Kuwait's islands forming a popular part of the summer season, stc used the initiative to encourage visitors to prioritize their safety while enjoying their time at sea. Working alongside the Kuwait Coast Guard, the Company highlighted the importance of being properly prepared before heading out on a boat and following the necessary safety guidelines throughout the trip. The collaboration provided a suitable setting to share these messages directly with people spending their day at Kubbar Island, while also reinforcing the importance of protecting the island and its surrounding environment.

Throughout the day, the stc team engaged with visitors alongside representatives from the Kuwait Coast Guard, raising awareness of the importance of following safety guidelines and being properly prepared before heading out to sea. The team also distributed safety bags containing first-aid supplies to help visitors stay better prepared while at sea. Refreshments, gifts and prizes were also distributed, adding to the experience and creating an enjoyable atmosphere while raising awareness of important



stc's corporate communications team with coast guard officers on Kubbar Island.

safety practices. Environmental preservation was also an integral part of the activity, with a team of stc employees participating in a clean-up campaign at Kubbar Island. Employees contributed their time and efforts towards keeping the island and its surroundings clean, while waste collection

bags were distributed to visitors to encourage them to dispose of their waste responsibly. The activity highlighted how simple actions can make a difference when everyone plays a role in protecting Kuwait's natural environment. The initiative also reflects stc's broader social responsibility and sustainability efforts, which focus on support-

ing programs that create a tangible positive impact within the community and raise awareness of issues that affect people's everyday lives, including public safety and environmental protection.

In a statement, stc indicated that its role within the community extends beyond providing services and solutions to actively contributing to initiatives that raise awareness and support quality of life. Through its collaboration with the Kuwait Coast Guard at Kubbar Island, the Company aimed to communicate important messages around safety at sea and environmental responsibility directly to members of the community, particularly during the summer season when boating trips and visits to Kuwait's islands increase. stc also highlighted the participation of its employees in an activity that brought together community engagement and environmental preservation.

The Company added that its participation in the Kubbar Island clean-up highlights the role every individual can play in protecting the environment. Simple practices, such as disposing of waste responsibly and keeping public spaces clean, can collectively create a meaningful impact when they become part of everyday community behavior. stc will continue collaborating with different entities and institutions on initiatives that reflect its commitment to the community and environment while contributing to a positive and sustainable impact.

stc will continue strengthening its role as an active partner in the community through its social responsibility programs and initiatives, working alongside government entities and relevant institutions to support efforts that raise awareness and encourage responsible behavior. These efforts form part of the Company's broader commitment to sustainability and creating a positive impact within the Kuwaiti community.



Archbishop Eugene Martin Nugent



Carmo Santos



Carmo Santos and Carrie Santos with Archbishop Eugene Martin Nugent



Group photo during the event.

Goan community in Kuwait bids farewell to Archbishop Nugent

By John C. Fernandes
Online Media Manager - Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The Goan Cultural Centre and members of the Goan community in Kuwait gathered on 16th Aug, to bid farewell to His Excellency Archbishop Eugene Martin Nugent, Apostolic Nuncio to Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, as he prepares to take up his new assignment as Apostolic Nuncio to the Czech Republic.

The evening, hosted by Gaspar Crasto, opened with a short prayer led by Rev. Fr. Nelson Lobo. Community leaders including Floyd Paisse, Lana DeMelo, Rabin Gonsalves, Dr. Jagannath Chowdankar and Revon D'Souza paid tribute to the Archbishop for his pastoral care and active engagement with the Christian community during his tenure from January 2021 to August 2026. Attendees praised his warmth, accessibility and the strong personal bonds he forged across the community and wider Kuwaiti society.

Carmo Santos, President of the Goan Cultural Centre and a prominent entrepreneur and philanthropist, organized the event and presented the Archbishop with a memento and offered a warm address. Santos thanked His Excellency for his service, friendship and kindness, noting that while the Archbishop carried important diplomatic responsibilities representing the Holy See, it was his personal qualities — encouragement, dialogue and friendship — that the community will most fondly re-

member. Santos also highlighted the role of faith and community in Goan heritage and commended the evening's cultural programme, which included performances by children, as a celebration of that shared identity.

Archbishop Nugent responded with brief, heartfelt remarks, expressing his gratitude for the community's support. "You warmed your support to me during my years here in Kuwait. The memories I will cherish as I leave this beautiful country are of meeting you, celebrating with you and praying with you on so many occasions," he said. He thanked Carmo Santos and members of the Goan Cultural Association for the "beautiful gift" presented to him. He lightened the mood with a seminary quip about the three rules of public speaking: "stand up, speak up, and then shut up."

The Archbishop also expressed regret at not yet having visited Goa during his posting and conveyed hope of making that visit in the near future. Carmo Santos offered prayers for his new mission, invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit and Our Lady of Arabia, and wishing him continued opportunities to build bridges and strengthen relationships.

The farewell concluded with a short thanksgiving prayer, a song by Loraine and Carrie Santos, and a communal dinner. Community members said they will not say goodbye but "until we meet again," reaffirming that Kuwait will always hold friends ready to welcome His Excellency back.

Bank celebrates public-private partnership with Fire Force event

Warba Bank hosts recreational day for children of Kuwait Fire Force personnel

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: As part of its corporate social responsibility strategy and commitment to supporting national institutions, Warba Bank organized a recreational day for the children of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) personnel at "Dabdab World" in Adailiya. The initiative recognizes the important role of Kuwait Fire Force personnel in protecting lives and property across Kuwait.

The event forms part of Warba Bank's broader community engagement efforts and its cooperation with government institutions through community and family-oriented initiatives.

Event Activities:

The recreational day featured a variety of family-oriented programs, including:

- **Children's Activities:** Games, interactive group activities, and entertainment in a safe and family-friendly environment.
- **Family Engagement:** Activities designed to encourage interaction among children and their families.
- **Opening Remarks:** Introductory addresses by Warba Bank representatives highlighting the value of community cooperation between the public and private sectors.

Executive Commentary:

Ayman Salem Al-Mutairi, Senior director of Public Relations and Corporate Communications at Warba Bank, stated:

"This initiative reflects Warba Bank's commitment to delivering meaningful programs that support key national institutions. Corporate responsibility also means building lasting partnerships with national institutions and recognizing those who serve the community."



Warba Bank honors Fire Force personnel with children's event.

Al-Mutairi added that community engagement goes beyond financial support and includes building long-term relationships with public institutions and contributing to community well-being.

Kuwait Fire Force Statement:

Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Ghareeb, Director of the Public Relations and Media Department at the Kuwait Fire Force, commented:

"We appreciate Warba Bank's initiative in organizing this recreational event for the children of fire force personnel. Such initiatives

demonstrate effective cooperation between state institutions and the banking sector, while recognizing the efforts of personnel who serve the country."

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.

46 trainees showcase diabetes research at DDI's Posters Day

Dasman Diabetes Institute concludes 2026 summer training with Scientific Posters Day



A group photo of the participants in the Dasman Diabetes Institute's summer training program.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17, (KUNA): The Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI), a subsidiary of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), has concluded its 2026 summer training program with the annual Scientific and Research Posters Day, featuring 46 trainees from students and recent graduates across scientific and medical disciplines.

Held on Monday, the event showcased scientific posters summarizing research projects completed by participants during their two-month training, under the supervision of DDI specialists and in the presence of Director General Dr. Jasim Alabbad, alongside researchers, doctors and institute staff.

Dr. Alabbad praised the participants' contributions, de-

scribing the program as an integrated environment offering realistic, hands-on opportunities that sharpen scientific skills and strengthen research capabilities for both students and early-career graduates.

He noted that the summer training covered diverse research projects and initiatives focused on diabetes and its complications, with the core aim of equipping trainees

with foundational skills in scientific research, scientific writing and collaborative work within integrated research teams.

Dr. Alabbad reaffirmed DDI's commitment, backed by KFAS, to nurturing the next generation of researchers through a stimulating academic and practical environment, and wished all participants continued success in their scientific and professional journeys.

From quiet doubts to a voice of purpose

By Reem Javed Baloch

Special to the Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: At just 17 years old, Mahir Aiman, a Class 12 student at the Gulf Indian School in Kuwait, has already found his voice in the world of writing, journalism, and diplomacy. He is currently involved with the news portal “Indians in Kuwait,” where, as a youth reporter, he has covered stories on society, the environment, and current affairs.

In an interview with the Arab Times, Aiman reflected on his experience growing up as a Kuwait-born Bangladeshi and how his upbringing and socialization as a child sparked his interest in politics and global affairs.

Growing up surrounded by people from different cultures and backgrounds, he was able to witness something that would leave a lasting impression on him - the value of respectful dialogue, understanding, and tolerance among Kuwait's diverse expatriate communities.

For Aiman, this multicultural upbringing offered more than just exposure to different traditions and perspectives. It taught him the importance of listening to others and looking beyond differences. “Slowly the realization hit me that conflict cannot solve anything. We need to have proper discussions and gain the point of view of different cultures. That really helped me analyze different cultural issues.”

It was this unique experience of growing up in Kuwait's rich cultural tapestry that nurtured his curiosity about the world around him, and encouraged him to learn about other nations, and understand their challenges and issues.

In his initial request to the Arab Times, Mahir stated that one of the objectives of his interview was to portray how education can pave the way for activism and advocacy. He himself has walked this path through his participation in various debate competitions and Model United Nations events, receiving several accolades, including a Best Position Paper award at an MUN.

When asked how these experiences had shaped his outlook and mindset, he emphasized the importance of proper education and his community of teachers, who motivated students at Gulf Indian School to participate in inter-school events for the valuable experiences they offered.

Recalling an instance from his first Model UN, Mahir spoke about a particularly respectful and peaceful debate between two representatives, taking place amid the usual overlapping conversations, interruptions, and arguments between candidates. “At the end of the conference the two delegates actually listening to each other ended up snatching the awards. After speaking to one of the chairs at the MUN, they confirmed that their mutual respect was one of the main reasons why they had won.”

According to Mahir, that anecdote changed his perspective on conversations and instilled in him the importance of respecting an opponent and objectively understanding their perspective, which he sees as an essential part of diplomacy in resolving conflicts surrounding sensitive issues.

When asked about his recent endeavour - an upcoming feature with KTV2's “The Untold” podcast, which he sees as a point of consolidation in his journey so far, from his initial interests to school events, writing columns, and eventually authoring books - he described his journey as quite challenging.

“Growing up, and even now, I never really fit into the standards set by society regarding looks. The younger version of myself was more insecure and lacked confidence. I knew what I wanted to do, knew my passion, but I felt shy talking about it or really reaching out. You know, the whole thing of “what will people think?” That made my journey a bit more turbulent.”

As his first step towards overcoming that fear, Mahir drew inspiration from the popular Hindi line, “Kuch toh log kahenge, logon ka kaam hai kehna,” which roughly translates to, “People are going to talk about you no matter what you do; it's their job to talk.” He credits this thought with inspiring him to take action, explaining that moving forward, his goal would become fodder for those people to talk about, but at least it would mean that he had done something worthy of their gossip.

He considers his MUNs the second step in this process, opening him up to activism and environmental issues. The experience led him to constantly rethink the arguments made by delegates and the topics discussed, ultimately strengthening his confidence in what he knew and what he was doing. Mahir additionally credits his teachers for supporting him throughout this journey.

Mahir Aiman: I had a Geography and Political Science teacher, Dr. Farinda Khan. She really helped me throughout my journey. I remember whenever I felt nervous, she used to tell me, “Mahir, just let it be. No matter if you win or not, we are here to learn from the experience. Enjoy the experience. You shouldn't go back with regrets that you did not enjoy the experience.”

Then came my English teacher, Mrs. Savita Prasad. She really amplified and brought out the love for literature I had in me, and about a year later, I wrote my first book.

Arab Times: Is there something from both your journey and overcoming your fears that perhaps the readers could learn from?

Aiman: I would like to say to the readers that your educators, your family, your friends, and the people you surround yourself with can have the power to make you or break you. So, be respectful to the people who are around you, including your educators, your peers, your juniors, your seniors, and more than that, choose the people you surround yourself with, because they are going to have a direct impact on the work that you do or the ambitions that you may pursue.

I would also say that you need to have patience. Not everything happens overnight. You may begin a project now, and you may complete it now or a year later.

It was one of my wildest dreams to be called on national television for a podcast, and it really happened very randomly. I remember my second book, “When a Generation Spoke,” which is about Gen Z's activism around the world. About two weeks after it came out, I got a message from KTV saying, “We are planning to invite you to the podcast. Would you be up for it?” And before I knew it, I was at the studio.

I still cannot comprehend that because I am just a student trying to bring attention to issues. It wasn't overnight; it took a few years. But following my passions made the time go by quite leisurely.”

When discussing his first book, “The Memoirs of 13 Days of War,” and his choice to conclude each chapter with a poem, Mahir points to the traumatic sentiments of those thirteen days and their impact on the people of Kuwait. “Anyone who was in Kuwait at the time remembers those days very peculiarly.”

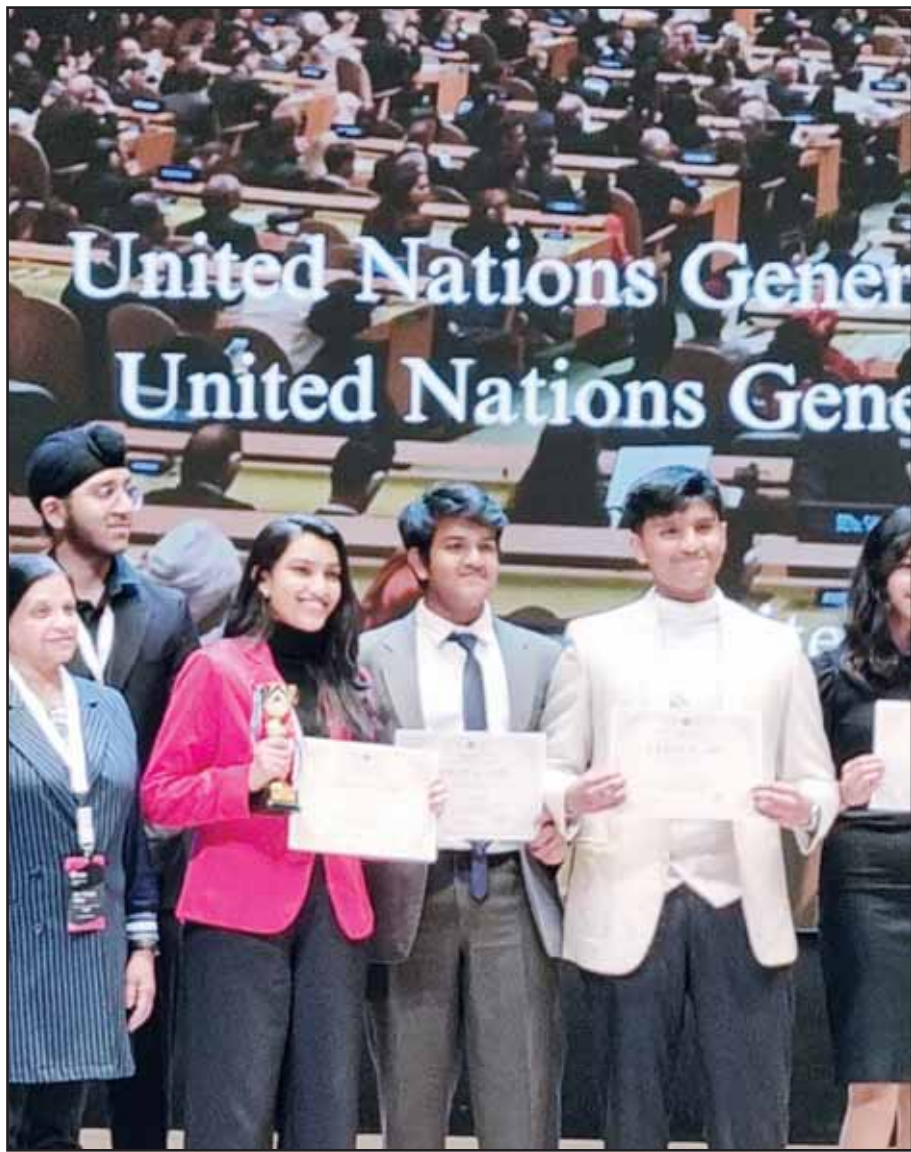
He explains that his choice to use poetry was a reflection of each particular day through the eyes of ordinary people, focusing on the human stories rather than the political turmoil. “Every night, I would sit, and I would finish a chapter dedicated to that particular day. I feel the lines that I have selected are authentic in depicting the emotions



Mahir Aiman



Mahir Aiman being sworn in as the Vice Head Boy of Gulf Indian School.



Mahir Aiman winning the Best Position Paper Award (FMUN24).



Mahir Aiman presenting a resolution at a MUN conference.

At 17, Aiman turns multicultural childhood into a global outlook

that I felt.”

AT: Now, you described a bit of your writing process. Let's dive deeper into that. Particularly, is there something that you think young individuals reading this can themselves apply to their work ethic?

Aiman: I feel that with every project that you undertake, you should have the strength to not listen to praise and simply keep going. Learn to live without validation, because there's a whole world out there that will not commend you for an accomplishment, and you should learn to be okay with that.

I was told by someone really close to me, “Keep doing your work. The fame, if you do get some, or the recognition, if you do get some, is just a byproduct. The main goal here is to follow your passion so that when you grow up, no matter if you have flourished in that certain field, at least it is justified to you and you can make yourself understand that I gave it a try.”

More than that, I feel you should have the capability to make certain sacrifices.

I say that because sometimes I've not gone out with my friends or not taken a break to go on social media that day because I was busy with my project. I am one of the top four leaders at my school's student council, there is a lot of work that depends on me, I have courses ongoing, and I have my academics.

So, to the readers, I'd say, pick your passion and ask yourself if you can sacrifice something for it. Tomorrow, if you need to skip an outing with your friends, would you be willing to do that? Would you be disciplined enough to instead get your task done?

You should really train your mind to see that project as the primary task, so you won't even have the thought of putting it aside.

AT: Let's talk about your future aspirations. You've mentioned that your aim is to become a human rights lawyer and work alongside the UN. Would you say there is a focal point in your plan that you intend to achieve a particular outcome from?

Aiman: Yes, there is quite a lot I'd like to achieve by becoming a human rights lawyer. There are terrible things happening around the world, and although there are great advocates and lawyers fighting against them, I don't see enough traction from people simply as humans. Before being an activist or a journalist, you are a human being, before your occupation or whatever you do in your life.

So, I feel that as humans, there are not enough voices rising against injustices such as the Palestinian cause. There is no clear channel for us to raise our voices to support them. They are being denied food, de-

fense, and basic human necessities, yet there still aren't enough voices speaking out against that. There is a fire in me about wanting to work towards bringing them to justice. Your voice is your closest friend and your most powerful tool that can be used against injustice.

Secondly, across the entire Indian subcontinent, women face domestic violence on a daily basis, and it has been normalized when it is really unacceptable. I would like to work in the human rights sector to hopefully be a part of making better policies that safeguard these women and protect these victims.

AT: In “The Battle with Words” debate competition, you participated in a debate on the topic, “Is cultural diversity an asset to a nation?” It's certainly a very relevant topic. What sort of awareness is required on this topic today that readers should consider?

Aiman: I feel that cultural diversity is an asset to a nation only if the government knows how to handle it. We witness a lot of governments looking generously towards one community and forgetting the other, which can later lead to clashes and fuel the argument that diversity is a liability. But I feel that a nation where people have mutual respect is one of the greatest assets to humanity. It teaches you that no matter where you or the other person is from, mutual respect must always exist.

I feel that readers will relate to this if they have grown up in a country like Kuwait or anywhere in the GCC, because we see people from different cultures bonding everywhere around us, even at school, where there is so much cultural diversity, whether that is Indians, Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Palestinians, or Arabs. I feel that it is a blessing for any child to grow up surrounded by all these cultures. I truly believe that this is one of the greatest assets we can have as human beings.

AT: You have had your opinions voiced by several different outlets before. What is it in particular that you wish to achieve by having this interview with the Arab Times?

Aiman: I feel that Arab Times is doing a great job of promoting the youth and giving them a voice, and I'm really grateful for that. I simply sent the email thinking, “Okay, let's give it a try, maybe someone will see it,” and I actually got a response.

I also don't want my age to matter when it comes to the work that I do. Being a part of this nation's youth is enough reason for me to speak about things, but I still need credibility. If I end up going somewhere for an investigative article or perhaps to research another book, the first thing I might be asked is, “Who even are you? You're barely an adult,” or “Who gave you the authority to do this?” So, being featured in Arab Times will help me gain that recogni-



Mahir Aiman at the debate competition “Battle With Words”.

tion and amplify the work that I do.

More than that, I've noticed that recently, Gen Z has been going back to newspapers. I see more and more young people picking up newspapers nowadays. So, if through Arab Times I can positively impact even one young person's life, I would feel that sense of satisfaction and success for myself.

AT: So finally, to these young people who are hopefully reading, what would you like to say or urge them to do?

Aiman: I would like to say that Mother Nature provides us with a lot. It has taken care of us, so learn to take care of it too. Learn to take small, meaningful actions, even if someone else is not doing them, because your actions, combined with those of other people, can create a much bigger positive impact.

For example, when we go to small shops, the bakalas, and buy something, we can refuse the plastic bags they offer to carry our things. It may seem insignificant, but now imagine a thousand young people doing the same. The plastic pollution in this country and the issues surrounding plastic could go down drastically. So, I feel that learning to be selfless and taking actions that may help nature and the environment around you is important.

Also, growing up, I faced bullying a lot, and as I've gotten older, I've noticed that people are becoming meaner in a way that can make a child hesitant to talk about the things they like or the things they have achieved.

So, to anyone reading, I'd like to tell them to choose kindness. Maybe a child's achievement has nothing to do with your interests. Fine, say congratulations and move on, or have a small conversation and move on. There is no need to be mean. It is a very serious issue, and I say this because I have a younger sibling who sometimes tells me about children saying things such as, “What's the point of studying, won't you just end up married in the end?”

I feel that hearing something like this from another child is a big statement, and this stigma needs to be broken. I have also seen many children, even as a joke, undermine the abilities of women and fail to give them the respect they deserve. I feel like there are many concerning habits and mindsets among young people today.

So, to the readers, I would say once again: choose kindness. Sometimes, even the smallest act of kindness can make a difference in someone else's life.

Sony blockbuster adds \$70 million domestically, while ‘The Odyssey’ holds second

‘Spider-Man’ rules box office as two dinosaur movies fight for third

NEW YORK, Aug 17, (AP): Two very different dinosaur movies devoured a modest chunk of the North American box office this weekend, although neither came close to unseating “Spider-Man” from its perch atop the charts, nor managed to steal second place from “The Odyssey.”

“Paw Patrol: The Dino Movie” and “The End of Oak Street,” one targeted to very young children and the other an original PG-13 rated action movie, battled for third place in their first weekend in theaters. According to studio estimates on Sunday, the Anne Hathaway and Ewan McGregor movie had the slight edge, with a projected \$21 million to the animated pups’ \$20.5 million.

Neither stood a chance for first, however, while “Spider-Man: Brand New Day” continues to cast its sticky web around audiences three weekends into its historic run. The Sony Pictures release added another \$70 million from theaters in the U.S. and Canada, bringing its domestic total to a staggering \$785.8 million, making it the fourth-biggest domestic release ever. With \$118.7 million from overseas markets, it surpassed \$2 billion globally, only the eighth movie ever to achieve that landmark (not accounting for inflation) and the second-fastest to do so. “Avengers: Endgame” did it in 11 days in 2019. “Brand New Day” took about 18.

“The Odyssey,” now in its fifth weekend, also managed to stay in second with a \$23.2 million weekend that pushed its domestic total to \$504.7 million. With \$98 million from international showings, propelled by \$36.6 million from its first few days playing in China, Christopher Nolan’s epic has now made over \$1.2 billion globally.

“The End of Oak Street” came in ahead of expectations with around \$21 million from 3,446 locations. It also made \$26 million from international screenings, adding up to a \$47 million global opening against a reported \$80 million production budget.

The film, written and directed by David Robert Mitchell, stars McGregor and Hathaway as suburban parents in 1982 whose neighborhood is mysteriously transported to



Terry Crews arrives at the premiere of “Paw Patrol: The Dino Movie” on Sunday, Aug. 2, 2026, in Los Angeles. (AP)

prehistoric times. It was well-received by critics and currently carries an 86% on Rotten Tomatoes, but audiences gave it a less enthusiastic B CinemaScore. According to PostTrak exit polls, just over half the opening weekend audience said they would “definitely recommend” to friends.

Family audiences showed up for “Paw Patrol: The Dino Movie,” which Paramount Pictures released in

3,545 theaters in the U.S. and Canada this weekend. Carrying a PG rating, it’s the third theatrically released Paw Patrol movie since 2021. The opening weekend audience gave it an A CinemaScore. Globally, it has a running total of \$69 million.

The Katseye documentary “Katseye: Wild Hearts” rounded out the top five with \$4 million from only 724 screens. Several other newcomers also managed to get

places in the top 10: “Six: The Musical Live” opened in sixth place with \$3 million, followed by “The Brink of War” with \$2.7 million. The Tamil-language romance “Vishwanath & Sons” made \$1.6 million to take 10th place.

The Matthew McConaughey crime thriller “The Rivals of Amziah King” opened outside of the top 10 with just over \$1 million from 632 theaters. The young Anthony Bourdain biopic “Tony,” meanwhile, made \$706,676 from 37 theaters in its second weekend. The A24 release is expanding in the coming weeks.

The box office is strong with the summer season, now over, accounting for over \$4.2 billion in ticket sales - about 5.7% ahead of the pre-pandemic summer of 2019. Paul Dergarabedian, the head of marketplace trends for Rentrak, noted that the number to date is only about \$130 million shy of the record 2013 summer, which was led by “Iron Man 3” and “Despicable Me 2.”

While this summer might not surpass 2013, which ended with just under \$4.8 billion, Dergarabedian said, “This is going to be a top five summer of all time.”

The year overall is just under \$6.9 billion. With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak:

1. “Spider-Man: Brand New Day,” \$70 million.
2. “The Odyssey,” \$23.2 million.
3. “The End of Oak Street,” \$21 million.
4. “Paw Patrol: The Dino Movie,” \$20.5 million.
5. “Katseye: Wild Hearts,” \$4 million.
6. “Six: The Musical Live,” \$3 million.
7. “The Brink of War,” \$2.7 million.
8. “Toy Story 5,” \$2.3 million.
9. “One Night Only,” \$2 million.
10. “Vishwanath & Sons,” \$1.6 million.

Actor reflects on imaginative worlds

Garfield finds magic in everyday life in ‘The Magic Faraway Tree’

LOS ANGELES, Aug 17, (AP): Andrew Garfield wants audiences to look up from their phones and remember that there is still plenty of magic in the world around them.

That idea drew the two-time Oscar nominee to “The Magic Faraway Tree,” a family adventure about Tim, a stay-at-home father whose family is forced to reconsider life after his wife, Polly, quits her job. They move to the countryside, where their children discover the magical Faraway Tree and its ever-changing worlds, sending the family into a series of fantastical adventures. The film, based on Enid Blyton’s children’s books, arrives in U.S. theaters on Friday.

For Garfield, the story’s themes of nature, imagination and community feel especially timely as technology increasingly shapes everyday life. “I think people are craving connection and community and a kind of reconnection to the earth and to each other,” he said.

Garfield said he became passionate about the project after reading Simon Farnaby’s screenplay. “I really just adore his sense of whimsy and heartfulness and magic and joy,” he said. “I felt very, very passionate about it.”

Tim’s journey reflects the film’s larger ideas about finding wonder outside the routine and distractions of modern life. For Garfield, that sense of wonder extends beyond fantasy. “I think it’s all around us,” he said. “There are so many things to be in awe of on

this planet.” The film, he said, is ultimately about recognizing that “there’s magic in the ordinary” as well as in the extraordinary.

Garfield, whose credits include playing Spider-Man, says he is drawn to roles with an element of play, community and the natural world. He focuses on “anything that keeps me awake to the remembering of the connection that we have to each other, the connection we have to nature, how we are all interconnected,” he said.

Garfield grew up reading Enid Blyton’s “The Famous Five” with his brother but did not read “The Faraway Tree” series as a child. His mother introduced him to another beloved literary adventurer: Bilbo Baggins, the hero of J.R.R. Tolkien’s “The Hobbit.”

“Any underdog story, really, those are the ones that get me,” Garfield said.

Another childhood escape was the video store. Garfield remembers being fascinated by the rows of VHS tapes and the possibilities behind their covers. The habit has survived in a new form in adulthood: spending an evening browsing streaming services without picking anything, enjoying the feeling of looking “into the windows of all these imaginary worlds.”

That may help explain why Garfield welcomes the resurgence of VHS and other analog technology among younger audiences.

“I dig that,” he said. “The regression to analog is looking good to me.”



Nicolas Brown, from left, director Ben Gregor, Claire Foy, and Andrew Garfield attend “The Magic Faraway Tree” special screening at Regal Union Square on Wednesday, July 29, 2026, in New York. (AP)

Obituary

Actor’s father announces her death; cause not yet disclosed

Hayden, ‘Heroes’ & ‘Nashville’ star dies at 36

LOS ANGELES, Aug 17, (AP): Hayden Panettiere, star of popular television series including “Heroes” and “Nashville,” has died. She was 36.

Panettiere’s father, Skip, announced the actor’s death in a statement provided to ABC News on Sunday.

“It is with profound sadness that we share the tragic passing of our beloved Hayden. She was an incredible light and a force of nature who brought immeasurable love and joy to all who knew her - and to the millions who watched her onscreen,” his statement said.

No cause of death was announced, and a publicist for Hayden Panettiere did not immediately respond to an email from The Associated Press.

Panettiere, who would have turned 37 on Friday, began her career as a child actor in commercials and soap operas.

Her role as a cheerleader with superpowers in “Heroes” propelled her to fame in 2006, with the series revolving around the mantra “Save the cheerleader, save the world.”

“I think ‘Heroes’ is really hot because it’s just a really great combination of everything that people love - they love reality, they love sci-fi and things like X-Men where they get to dream of something bigger,” Panettiere told The Associated Press in 2008. “And at the core of it are these human stories that people can relate to, very rugged. And it’s just grabbed everyone in every age group.”

She went on to win three Teen Choice Awards for that role and was a Grammy Award nominee for a children’s spoken word album recorded a few years after the release of the animated movie “A Bug’s Life.”

Panettiere later played a brash country upstart op-



Hayden Panettiere arrives at the premiere of “Blonde,” on Sept. 13, 2022, at TCL Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

posite Connie Britton on “Nashville,” which aired on ABC for four seasons before being canceled and revived on CMT. She did her own singing in the show, which scored some hits on country charts, spawned U.S. tours and earned Panettiere two supporting actress Golden Globe nominations. Panettiere had 11 songs recorded for “Nashville” appear on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs charts during the show’s run, including two featuring Britton.

Panettiere’s younger brother, Jansen, who was also an actor, died of a heart condition in 2023, at age 28.

She had been open about her struggles with alcohol addiction and depression, including after the birth of her daughter with Ukrainian boxer Wladimir Klitschko in 2014.

States sue Meta over social media harms to children

WASHINGTON, Aug 17, (AP): Of the thousands of lawsuits Meta faces over child safety on its platforms, none may be more consequential than one going to trial this week in California.

States are seeking extensive financial damages that could, in theory, total as much as \$1.4 trillion, plus changes to how the company operates Facebook and Instagram.

The lawsuit accuses the social media giant of contributing to the youth mental health crisis by knowingly and deliberately designing features that get children addicted to its platforms. It also claims that Meta routinely collects data on children under 13 without their parents’ consent, in violation of federal law.

“Meta has harnessed powerful and unprecedented technologies to entice, engage, and ultimately ensnare youth and teens. Its motive is profit, and in seeking to maximize its financial gains,” the lawsuit says.

Dozens of states filed the lawsuit three years ago. The trial set to begin Tuesday in federal court in Oakland, California, features four of the states as plaintiffs - California, Colorado, Kentucky and New Jersey. The other 25 states are expected to have trials later.

Meta said it disputes the allegations, and the trial evidence will show its commitment to supporting young people. “We’ve listened to parents, worked with experts and law enforcement, and conducted in-

depth research to understand the issues that matter most,” the company said in a statement.

For Meta, which already lost two pivotal cases over harms to children and teens this year, the stakes are high. The company reported a rare profit decline last month, in part due to \$2.4 billion in legal expenses.

The \$1.4 trillion figure, which Meta disclosed in a legal filing, is almost as high as the Menlo Park, California, company’s entire market capitalization - that is, the value of all its outstanding shares on the stock market. Paying it would inevitably put Meta Platforms in bankruptcy and perhaps put the company under state ownership.

“The state attorneys general are going for the gusto,” said Eric Goldman, a professor and co-director of the High Tech Law Institute at Santa Clara University School of Law. “They are trying to set the definitive precedent in this case and they have asked for extraordinary damages and they are going to seek extraordinary structural remedies if they succeed.”

Meta calls the possible penalty “untethered to any claimed violation” by the states.

“A sanction of that size has no analog in the history of consumer protection enforcement,” Meta said in a July 6 filing with the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

Bryan Voltaggio makes his lobster rolls with a flavor-boosting soak

NEW YORK, Aug 17, (AP): I’ve never been to Maine for a lobster roll, but the ones I’ve had in other places have been so good that I knew I needed to make one myself.

This version is from my cookbook “Home” and is made with perfectly cooked lobster meat that is plump, juicy, and tender but also firm, and slightly chewy. The trick to this recipe is soaking the lobster meat in the cooled cooking liquid to give it an extra burst of flavor and to rinse away any residue from the surface, leaving nothing behind but sweet, briny lobster meat.

- Makes 6 to 8
- Trinity Sauce:**
- 1 cup mayonnaise (I prefer Duke’s)
 - 1 tablespoon sriracha
 - 1 teaspoon soy sauce
 - 1/2 teaspoon fish sauce
 - 1/8 teaspoon sesame oil
 - 1 tablespoon finely sliced fresh chives
 - 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilan-

- tro leaves
- Our Bay Seasoning Blend:**
- 1 dried shiitake mushroom
 - 1 tablespoon black peppercorns
 - 4 bay leaves
 - 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
 - 1/8 teaspoon yellow mustard seeds
 - 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
 - 1/2 teaspoon piment d’Espelette
 - 2 teaspoons onion powder
 - 2 1/4 teaspoons paprika
 - 2 1/2 teaspoons celery seeds
 - 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
 - 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- Lobster Salad:**
- 8 1/2 quarts water
 - 3/4 cup white vinegar
 - 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons fine sea salt
 - 1/4 cup Our Bay Seasoning Blend
 - 6 1 1/2-pound lobsters
 - 3 celery ribs, peeled and thinly sliced
 - 1/2 head fennel, cut into small dice
 - 3/4 cup Trinity Sauce
 - 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

- 6 to 8 Hot Dog Buns (homemade) or store-bought, for serving
- Unsalted butter, room temperature, for griddling the buns
- Potato chips, for serving

Make the Trinity Sauce: Put all of the ingredients in a medium bowl and stir well to blend. Transfer to a covered container and refrigerate until needed. Trinity Sauce will



This image released by Voracious shows a recipe for lobster rolls from the cookbook “Home” by Bryan Voltaggio. (AP)

keep for up to 10 days in the refrigerator.

Make the Our Bay Seasoning Blend: Place all of the ingredients except the salt in a spice grinder and grind to a fine powder. Transfer to a bowl and whisk in the salt. If you have weighed the ingredients correctly, the mixture should be in between orange and brown in color, and will be so delicious you’ll want to put it on everything. Our Bay can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to one year.

Cook the Lobster: Put the water, vinegar, salt, and Our Bay Seasoning in a large stockpot and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat and submerge the lobsters in the pot. Bring the mixture back to a simmer and cook for 12 minutes. Take out the lobsters and transfer to a large platter to cool. Reserve the cooking liquid.

Once they are cool enough to handle, use kitchen shears and a

lobster cracker to remove all of the meat. Put the lobster meat in a large container and pour over just enough of the cooking liquid to cover the meat. Let the lobster meat macerate in the cooking liquid for 30 minutes.

Make the Lobster Salad: Drain the lobster meat, pat dry, cut into bite-size pieces (roughly 1-inch dice), and put in a large bowl. Add the celery, fennel, Trinity Sauce and lemon juice. Mix gently with a spatula to blend. Reserve the lobster salad in the refrigerator.

Prepare the Lobster Rolls: Split open the hot dog buns and spread butter on the insides. Set a large non-stick pan over medium-high heat. Once the pan is hot, place the buns, butter side down, in the pan and cook for 3 to 5 minutes, until the insides of the buns are crisp and golden brown. You may need to do this in batches. Transfer to a large platter and fill generously with lobster salad. Serve with potato chips alongside.

Health experts say there’s no scientific basis for changing course

Trump’s vaccine plan would require millions of individual shots last used decades ago

WASHINGTON, Aug 17, (AP): Public health experts have been quick to condemn an executive order from President Donald Trump aimed at upending childhood vaccinations in the US, but the biggest obstacles may be the unprecedented financial and logistical challenges it would impose on parents, health providers and drugmakers.

Monday’s announcement by the Republican president calls for separating combination shots - including the measles, mumps and rubella, or MMR, vaccine - into separate injections. Appointments for that and other vaccinations should be spaced out whenever possible, the order states.

To accomplish that, drugmakers would need to revive a slate of individual vaccines that have not been widely used in the US for decades. They would also have to build new manufacturing plants capable of producing millions more vaccine doses than the nation currently uses.

For parents, unbundling the MMR vaccine and spacing out the shots would mean returning to the doctor’s office many more times than is currently needed. Those appointments could also strain pediatricians who typically administer the shots, while driving up costs tied to syringes and other medical supplies.

Studies in the US and other countries have shown that combination vaccines increase the likelihood that children will be fully protected from infectious diseases before starting school.

Health experts say there is no scientific basis for changing course.

“We do things that are less convenient and more expensive if there’s a good reason to do it,” said Dr. Anna Durbin, of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. “There is no good justification for this. I think it’s very bad public health policy.”

Under Trump’s executive order, federal officials are instructed to develop within 90 days plans for breaking up the MMR shot and spacing out other vaccines.

But pharmaceutical scientists and former regulators say those changes would likely take years and require drugmakers to spend tens of millions of dollars on new studies and manufacturing facilities.

Currently, there are no individual vaccines in the U.S. for measles, mumps or rubella. All the vaccines approved for those viruses by the Food and Drug Administration are combination shots. That three-in-one approach has been the standard in the U.S. since the 1970s.

Dr. Jesse Goodman, a former FDA vaccine chief, said companies may have to conduct large studies showing their new individual shots produce immune system-boosting reactions in children similar to the current versions. The specifics would depend upon the quality of data from the original standalone vaccines and how it’s viewed by FDA regulators.

“The question is how much has changed since then and how com-



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

fortable will the FDA and the companies be relying on those comparisons?” said Goodman, who is now a professor at Georgetown University.

Manufacturers may also have to demonstrate the safety of new manufacturing facilities and procedures, given that individual measles shots haven’t been widely produced in the U.S. for decades.

Designing, constructing and getting federal sign-off for new vaccine plants typically takes about five years, according to industry experts.

Additionally, Goodman said the FDA would have to review and li-

cense each unbundled vaccine separately, a process with no precedent.

“I don’t think there’s any comparable example of removing hugely effective public health measures that protect babies for no documented scientific reason,” he said.

Individual shots for measles and related diseases tend to be used by lower-income countries that can’t afford the MMR shot. Merck, GSK and the handful of other companies that supply U.S. childhood vaccines make only the combination shot.

In separate statements, Merck and GSK said they stand by the safety

and effectiveness of their products. Neither discussed plans to unbundle their shots.

“To date, there has been no published scientific evidence that shows any benefit in separating the combination MMR vaccine into three individual shots,” Merck said in an emailed statement.

The MMR shot is currently delivered in two doses - the first at the age of 1 and the second dose after age 4. Splitting up the shot into its three separate components would mean six office visits. Spacing out other shots for pertussis and other infectious diseases could multiply the number of visits many more times.

As the number of visits goes up, parents are more likely to miss appointments or stop making them, according to Durbin.

“It’s going to be less convenient, more expensive and you’re going to have fewer people getting vaccinated,” she said.

For well over a decade, Trump has expressed his view - against medical groups’ guidance - that American children receive too many vaccines and that they should be given in smaller doses over a longer period of time. Last year he called on called on Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to look at reducing the number. Kennedy and other officials have pointed to smaller countries, such as Denmark, that recommended slightly fewer vaccinations than the U.S.

But breaking up combination shots will result in kids receiving

many more individual shots than other comparable nations, Durbin notes.

White House spokesman Kush Desai said the Trump administration’s efforts on the MMR vaccine “will give parents more options on timing and frequency for their children, which ultimately will increase vaccination rates for all three diseases.”

Despite the precedent-breaking nature of Trump’s order, some experts are skeptical it will result in meaningful changes.

Neither the White House nor the FDA can compel drugmakers to develop and seek approval for new vaccines. And from a business perspective, companies have little incentive to develop individual versions of vaccines they already sell in combination shots.

“They’d be competing against themselves, and there’s no reason to do that,” said Dr. Paul Offit, a Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia vaccine researcher and former government adviser.

While Trump’s order calls for more federal research and recommendations, only state governments have the legal authority to require vaccinations for schoolchildren. The order simply advises states to consider updating their laws to reflect the Trump administration’s approach.

“I think states will ignore this,” Offit said. “I think that bottom line is that we don’t need to look to Donald Trump for our medical advice.”



The Wahweap Marina floats on Lake Powell at the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area on July 15, near Page, Ariz. (AP)

Lake Powell hits record low, threatening key water and electricity supply for millions

WASHINGTON, Aug 17, (AP): The water level at Lake Powell, the United States’ second-largest reservoir, has fallen to a record low, heightening concerns about the ongoing crisis in the Colorado River system.

The alarming milestone at Lake Powell, reached Saturday, comes about a week after the river’s other major reservoir, Lake Mead, also hit a historic low. Plummeting water levels pose a major threat to the Colorado River Basin, which is a key resource for wildlife, hydropower and more than 40 million people in seven U.S. states.

The historic lows come as the federal government and states that rely on the river - California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and Colorado - struggle to reach agreement on a long-term management plan for the dwindling resource. Persistent overuse combined with a record-dry winter and rising temperatures have been depleting both Lake Powell and Lake

Mead.

Lake Powell’s elevation dropped to 3,519.91 feet (1072.9 meters) above sea level on Saturday, dropping just slightly below a previous record set in April 2023, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The lake is more than 20 feet (6.10 meters) lower than it was at the start of the year, USBR data shows.

The reservoir is now about 30 feet (9.1 meters) away from the point at which turbines would stop producing hydroelectric power. Federal officials warned in April that a “major intervention” would be necessary to avoid reaching that threshold by the end of this year.

USBR in July proposed a 10-year plan that includes major potential water cuts for Arizona, California and Nevada.

The crisis has been in the making for years. Both reservoirs are at the lowest they have been in nearly seven decades, and levels may continue

to drop, USBR data shows.

The last time their combined storage was this small was in May 1957 when Glen Canyon Dam that holds back Powell was being built, according to a recent paper published by a group of academics and retired water officials. Powell began to fill in 1963.

Also:

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia: A coalition of farmers, consumer associations and environmental groups is urging Malaysia’s National Biosafety Board to reject a proposed field trial of genetically modified rice, warning the project could pose risks to food safety, the environment and farmers.

The board is evaluating an application by Zen Cropscience for the confined field trial in northern Perak state that involves a genetically modified version of the MR219 rice variety that is tolerant to the herbicide glyphosate and resists diseases caused by bacteria and fungi.

Flesh-eating bacteria devouring limbs in warming waters worldwide

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

□ □ □

By Bill Sullivan
Indiana University

Flesh-eating bacteria sounds like the premise of a bad horror movie, but it’s a growing - and potentially fatal - threat to people in the US and beyond.

Vibrio vulnificus, a type of flesh-eating bacteria that thrives in warm seawater, is once again threatening the safety of beachgoers and raw shellfish enthusiasts. To date, Louisiana has reported nine cases, with five fatalities, and Florida has reported 14 cases, with two fatalities. As of late June, Maryland has reported 72 cases.

I’m a professor at the Indiana University School of Medicine, where my laboratory studies microbiology and infectious disease. Here’s why health officials are so concerned about this deadly infection - and ways to avoid contracting it.

There are several types of bacteria that can infect open wounds and cause a rare condition called necrotizing fasciitis. These bacteria do not merely damage the surface of the skin - they release toxins that destroy the underlying tissue, including muscles, nerves and blood vessels. Once the bacteria reach the bloodstream, they gain ready access to additional tissues and organ systems. If left untreated, necrotizing fasciitis can be fatal, sometimes within 48 hours.

The bacterial species group A Streptococcus, or group A strep, is the most common culprit behind necrotizing fasciitis. But the U.S. Centers for Disease Control points to Vibrio vulnificus as an additional suspect. There are only 150 to 200 cases of Vibrio vulnificus infections in the United States each year, but the mortality rate is high, with 1 in 5 people succumbing to the infection. Cases have also increased in Europe.

Vibrio vulnificus primarily lives in warm seawater but can also be found in brackish water - areas where the ocean mixes with freshwater. Most infections in the U.S. occur in the warmer months, between May and October. People who swim, fish or wade in these bodies of water can contract the bacteria through an open wound or sore.

Vibrio vulnificus can also get into seafood harvested from these waters, especially shellfish like oysters. Eating such foods raw or undercooked can lead to food poisoning, and handling them while having an open wound can provide an entry point for the bacteria to cause necrotizing fasciitis. In the US, Vibrio vulnificus is a leading cause of seafood-associated fatalities.

Vibrio vulnificus is found in warm coastal waters around the world, like those of the southern Gulf Coast states in the U.S. But rising ocean temperatures due to global warming are creating new habitats for this type of bacteria, which can now be found along the East Coast as far north as New York and Connecticut. A

recent study noted that Vibrio vulnificus wound infections increased eightfold between 1988 and 2018 in the eastern US.

Vibrio vulnificus is also spreading into coastal areas of Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea as a consequence of climate change driving warming water temperatures.

Climate change is also fueling stronger hurricanes and storm surges, which have been associated with spikes in flesh-eating bacteria infection cases due to increasing contact with seawater or brackish water.

The number of people around the world who are most vulnerable to severe infection, including those with diabetes and those taking medications that suppress immunity, is on the rise.

Early symptoms of an infected wound include fever, redness, intense pain or swelling at the site of injury. If you have these symptoms, seek medical attention without delay. Necrotizing fasciitis can progress quickly, producing ulcers, blisters, skin discoloration and pus.

Treating flesh-eating bacteria is a race against time. Clinicians administer antibiotics directly into the bloodstream to kill the bacteria. In many cases, damaged tissue needs to be surgically removed to stop the rapid spread of the infection. This sometimes means amputating affected limbs.

Researchers are concerned that an increasing number of cases are becoming impossible to treat because Vibrio vulnificus has evolved resistance to certain antibiotics.

The CDC offers several recommendations to help prevent infection.

People who have a fresh cut, including a new piercing or tattoo, are advised to stay out of water that could be home to Vibrio vulnificus. Otherwise, the wound should be completely covered with a waterproof bandage. The tiniest scrape or cut is enough for Vibrio vulnificus to get under your skin. One case was even traced to freshly shaven legs.

People with an open wound should also avoid handling raw seafood or fish. Wounds that occur while fishing, preparing seafood or swimming should be washed immediately and thoroughly with soap and water.

Anyone can contract necrotizing fasciitis, but the elderly and people with weakened immune systems are most susceptible to severe disease. This includes people taking immunosuppressive medications or those who have pre-existing conditions such as liver disease, cancer, HIV or diabetes.

It is important to bear in mind that necrotizing fasciitis presently remains very rare. But given its severity, it is beneficial to stay informed.

Cases of infection by Vibrio vulnificus are about as rare as shark attacks. While shark bites get more attention, the microscopic shark that is Vibrio vulnificans can also rob you of life or limb.

This is an updated version of an article originally published on Sept. 25, 2023. (AP)

Virus reaches sixth province

Ebola outbreak kills 2,325: DRC govt

ALGIERS, Aug 17, (Agencies): The Democratic Republic of Congo’s (DRC) government said Monday that the country’s latest Ebola outbreak has killed 2,325 people, surpassing the number of victims recorded during the 2018-20 outbreak and becoming the deadliest Ebola outbreak in the country’s history.

The National Public Health Institute (NPHI) said confirmed cases had risen to 4,945, including 101 new cases recorded over the previous 24 hours.

Government data showed that the fatality rate among confirmed cases rose sharply from about 20 percent in early June to 46 percent, meaning nearly half of confirmed cases are now fatal.

The outbreak is the DRC’s 17th and its largest by number of cases, reaching a record level in late July.

Three months after it was officially declared, it is now surpassed in scale only by the 2014-16 West African Ebola outbreak, which recorded 28,616 cases and 11,310 deaths across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, according to the World Health Organization.

During that West African outbreak, it took nearly five months to reach 1,000 deaths, while the current DRC outbreak reached 2,000 deaths in less than three months.

The current outbreak is caused by the Bundibugyo Ebola virus strain, for which no approved vaccines or treatments are available.

Since being declared on May 15, the outbreak has been fueled by weak healthcare infrastructure, community resistance, instability, and difficulties identifying cases and responding to them.

Ebola had also spread in Uganda, where authorities contained the outbreak to two deaths and 20 confirmed cases before declaring it over in July.

Ebola spreads through direct contact with bodily fluids of infected people, whether living or deceased, and can cause fever, vomiting and diarrhea, with severe cases potentially causing internal and external bleeding. Meanwhile, Congo’s Ebola outbreak has spread to a sixth province after a death was recorded in the previously unaffected Bas-Uele province, the head of Africa’s CDC said Thursday.



People dressed in protective gear lower into a grave the coffin containing the remains of Jacques Lobo Dhen, who died of Ebola, during a burial service in Bunia, Ituri province, eastern Congo on Aug 12. (AP)

The man died in Buta, the capital of Bas-Uele, after traveling there from Isiro in Haut-Uele province, said Jean Kaseya, director general of Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

The outbreak in eastern Congo, considered the fastest-growing one yet, is on track to surpass the deadliest one in history, which erupted over a decade ago and killed over 11,000 people, the World Health Organization said Wednesday. There are no approved vaccines or treatments for the rare Bundibugyo virus responsible for the current outbreak.

The outbreak is unfolding in some of the most challenging conditions imaginable, with strikes by some unpaid health workers, threats by rebel groups, anger from long-traumatized communities and misinformation asserting that Ebola isn’t real.

Bas-Uele is a vast province in northeastern Congo that borders the Central African Republic, where there is recurring armed violence that has forced thousands to flee and take refuge in the province. Access can be difficult due to bad and poorly connected roads as well as limited communication networks, and there are frequent population movements related to gold mining and displacement from conflict.

As of Thursday, six out of 26 of Congo’s provinces have been impacted. About 90% of all cases and 80% of deaths are concentrated

in Ituri province, the WHO said Wednesday.

Mercy Corps, an aid group, warned Thursday that Ebola cases have been reported along a major travel route about 35 kilometers (22 miles) from Congo’s border with South Sudan, expressing concern over the outbreak’s “widening footprint.” No cases have been confirmed in South Sudan so far.

Meanwhile, health workers at the Nizi Treatment Center in Ituri province, one of the most affected in the area, went on strike Thursday, leading to the temporary closure of the center after they said they have not been paid for three months.

Kaseya on Thursday called on the Congolese government to pay the outstanding salaries.

“We need to pay health workers,” he told reporters. “This is the responsibility of the government, not partners. And they told us that money is available.”

The real scope of the outbreak remains unknown. It was declared on May 15, but the WHO now says sequencing showed it began months earlier, in February.

Health authorities have said between 60% and 70% of new cases are recorded outside contacts being monitored, and that the disease is spreading at an “alarming” rate. Contact tracing helps break chains of transmission by finding exposed people early and reacting quickly if they show symptoms.

Damiani’s brace lifts Union past NYCFC

Whitecaps deal Sounders club-record seventh straight MLS defeat

SEATTLE, Aug 17, (AP): Ryan Elloumi and Thomas Müller scored second-half goals and goalkeeper Yohei Takaoka wasn’t tested as the Vancouver Whitecaps handed the Seattle Sounders a club-record seventh straight defeat in MLS play with a 2-0 victory.

The Whitecaps (11-3-4) move to the top of the Western Conference with the win, two points ahead of the Houston Dynamo.

Elloumi took a pass from Emmanuuel Sabbi in the 77th minute and scored his first goal of the season for the lead. Sabbi’s assist was his second.

Müller used Ryan Gauld’s nifty assist on a free kick inside the box five minutes later to score his sixth goal for the final margin. Gauld subbed into the match in the 58th minute before collecting his first assist in his fourth appearance of the season.

Takaoka did not have to make a save in earning his seventh clean sheet. It was his 34th career shutout in 117 starts.

Seattle keeper Andrew Thomas had the only save of the match on a shot by Müller in the 52nd minute.

Whitecaps midfielder Jeevan Badwal left with a concussion in the 18th minute and was replaced by Rayan Elloumi.

Seattle forward Jesús Ferreira left with a leg injury in the 36th minute and was replaced by Sebastian Gomez.

The Sounders (7-8-3) haven’t won since beating the San Jose Earthquakes 3-2 on the road May 13.

Vancouver has posted a 2-0-3 record in its last five trips to Seattle.

Bruno Damiani scored his first two goals of the season, 16-year-old Cavan Sullivan had two assists and the Philadelphia Union rallied from two goals down to beat New York City FC 3-2 at Yankee Stadium.

Bénic Traoré scored on a penalty kick in the 4th minute to give NYCFC (7-7-5) the lead with his first goal in his fourth appearance since being acquired from Swiss side FC Basel 1893. The PK was awarded after Union midfielder Neil Pierre fouled Andrés Perea.

Luighi Hanri Sousa Santos added a PK goal two minutes into stoppage time in his league debut and NYCFC led 2-0 at the break. NYCFC acquired the forward on loan from Brazilian side SE Palmeiras through the end of the season. A foul on Union midfielder Indiana Vassilev led to the kick.



Vancouver Whitecaps defender Tristan Blackmon, left, clears the ball against Seattle Sounders midfielder Kalani Kossa-Rienzi during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Seattle. (AP)

Philadelphia (5-10-4) cut it to 2-1 three minutes into the second half on a goal by Danley Jean Jacques. Sullivan and defender Kai Wagner had assists on Jacques’ third goal - matching his total from last season. Wagner has four assists this season and 67 in 208 career appearances.

Sullivan added another assist in the 69th minute on Damiani’s first goal to tie it 2-all. All six of Sullivan’s assists have come this season in 17 appearances with 10 starts. He made one start and 14 appearances in the previous two seasons, playing 224 minutes.

Damiani scored the go-ahead goal in the 75th minute with an assist from

Cavan’s 22-year-old brother - Quinn Sullivan, his first of the season.

Andre Blake saved two shots for Philadelphia, which has won four in a row under 37-year-old interim coach Ryan Richter after Bradley Carnell was let go in late May.

Dje D’Avilla had a goal and an assist in the first 14 minutes and the Chicago Fire spoiled the debut of Portland Timbers coach Martí Cifuentes with a 2-1 victory.

D’Avilla picked up his second assist on a goal by Robin Lod in the 9th minute and then scored for the first time this season five minutes later to give Chicago a 2-0 lead.

Defender Andrew Gutman also had an assist - his fourth - on Lod’s fourth netter. Maren Haile-Selassie notched his seventh assist on D’Avilla’s goal - one off his career high.

Defender Finn Surman used his head in the 85th minute to score his first career goal in 51 appearances and cut it 2-1. Defender Brandon Bye earned his third assist this season and Ariel Lassiter, a second-half substitute, was credited with his fourth.

Chris Brady totaled one save for Chicago (10-6-2).

James Pantemis stopped two shots for Portland (7-9-3), which made it’s first trip to the Windy City in eight years. Neither keeper had a save in the first half.

The Fire moved into third place in the Eastern Conference with the victory. Cifuentes is the Timbers’ fifth head coach.

Petar Musa scored his league-leading 14th goal and FC Dallas beat Austin FC 2-.

Musa scored in the 73rd minute - with some help from Joaquín Valiente - to set the final margin. Valiente has six assists through his first 17 appearances.

Defender Lalas Abubakar took a corner kick from Santiago Moreno and scored with a header two minutes into stoppage time to give Dallas a 1-0 lead at halftime.

Moreno collected his second assist of the campaign on Abubakar’s first netter this season and his 13th in 201 career matches.

Eighteen-year-old Ervin Torres scored his first career goal in spectacular fashion - unassisted in the 57th minute to pull Austin even.

Espanyol routs Levante

10-man Lens stun PSG for maiden French Super Cup

LENS, France, Aug 17, (AP): Florian Thauvin scored as 10-man Lens stunned Paris Saint-Germain 1-0 to win the French Super Cup for the first time on Sunday.

Thauvin found the net in the 32nd minute and Lens held on for the victory despite playing a man down from the 39th after Kyllian Antonio was sent off for a hard foul.

Lens, the French Cup winner, was runner-up to PSG in the French league last season, ending six points behind its rival.

PSG, trying to win its fifth consecutive French Super Cup, saw Nuno Mendes ejected in the 87th.

PSG had defeated Aston Villa 2-1 in the UEFA Super Cup on Wednesday.

Lens won the French Super Cup under new coach Dino Toppmöller, who was hired in June following Pierre Sage’s departure to Crystal Palace.

New France coach Zinedine Zidane was at Stade Bollaert-Delelis in Lens for the final.

Meanwhile, Espanyol got off to a good start by beating Levante 3-0 in the Spanish league with a pair of goals from Roberto Fernández in the first weekend of action across Europe’s top domestic leagues on Sunday.

La Liga was the first of the main five leagues in Europe to start, less than a month after its national team won the World Cup.

Fernández scored first-half goals and English forward Tyrhys Dolan sealed Espanyol’s opening victory at home with a late score.

Also Sunday, Racing Santander made its return to the top flight after a 14-year absence with a 2-2 draw against Villarreal, the third-place finisher last season behind champion Barcelona and second-place Real Madrid.

Barcelona and José Mourinho’s Real Madrid won’t start their campaigns until next weekend because they had players return late from the World Cup.



Florian Thauvin

Racing led 2-0 at home before Villarreal evened the match with goals a minute apart late in the first half.

Espanyol finished 11th in the league last season after a strong start that kept it near the top of the table early on. It later endured an 18-game winless streak that left it in danger of relegation.

Levante barely escaped demotion last season, finishing in 16th place.

Another game had been scheduled for Sunday, Celta Vigo against Osasuna, but it had to be postponed because of a fungus outbreak on Celta’s Balaidos field. It was rescheduled to Aug. 27 despite complaints by Osasuna.

Two games took place on Saturday. Alaves defeated 10-man Getafe 3-0 and Sevilla rallied to beat Rayo Vallecano 2-1.

Ipswich signs Enciso, Ouattara

Madrid sells Ortega to Strasbourg

STRASBOURG, France, Aug 17, (AP): Real Madrid sold center forward Jacobo Ortega on Monday to French club Strasbourg, which recouped more than five times the transfer fee by selling two players to Ipswich.

Strasbourg, owned by Chelsea’s holding company BlueCo, is under financial scrutiny from UEFA and its 13 million euros (\$15 million) fine in June for overspending was the biggest imposed by the European soccer body on any club last season.

The 20-year-old Ortega cost a reported 10 million euros (\$11.6 million) from Madrid to help replace Paraguay forward Julio Enciso, who left Strasbourg for newly-promoted Ipswich, where he spent time on loan two seasons ago when the club was last in the Premier League.

Enciso started all five Paraguay games at the World Cup and scored against Germany in the round of 32. He also featured in an opening 4-1 loss to the United States and a testy and aggressive 1-0 loss to France in the round of 16.

Ipswich said it also signed Strasbourg’s 20-year-old midfielder Abdoul Ouattara, with the two deals reportedly costing a combined 50 million euros (\$58 million).

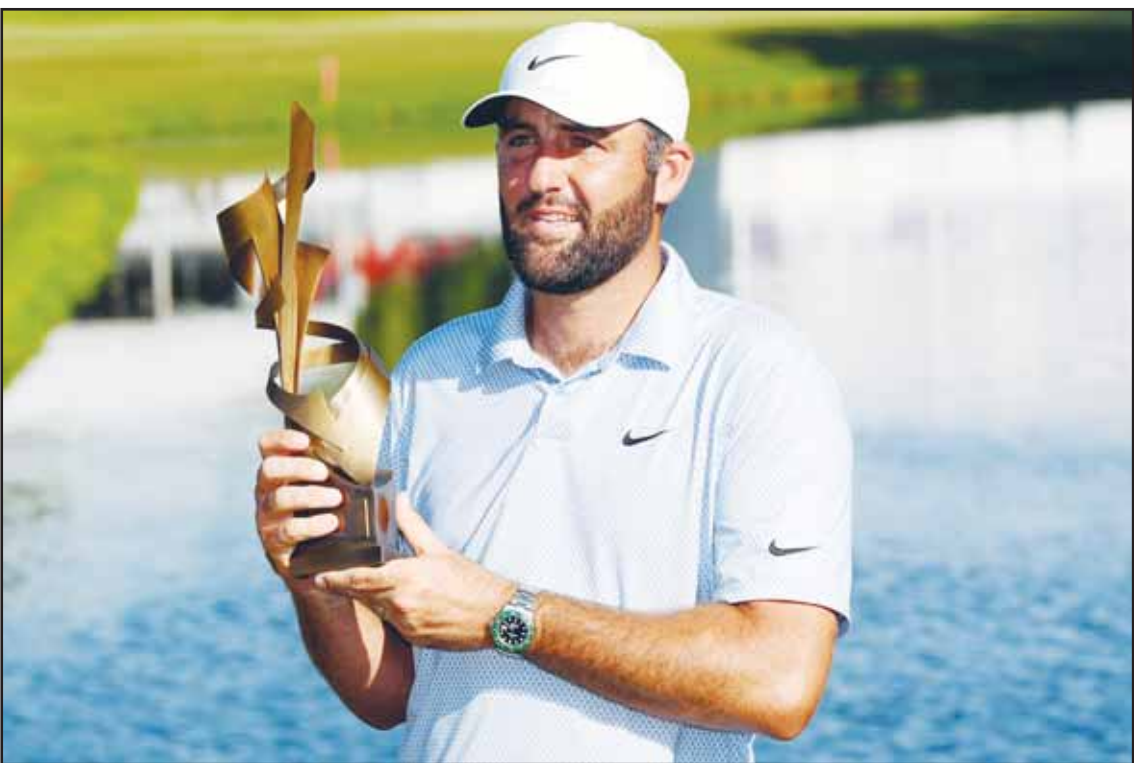
Enciso and Ouattara signed five-year contracts, Ipswich said, and reunite with coach Gary O’Neil, who was at Strasbourg for the second half of last season.

Strasbourg’s offseason transfer trading now shows a profit of about 80 million euros (\$92 million), after being advised by UEFA to “significantly decrease” player costs in 2026.

Scheffler wins FedEx Opener as Whaley takes US Amateur

Thitikul claims third LPGA victory of the season

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Aug 17, (AP): Scottie Scheffler was back to his dominant form Sunday, turning a two-shot lead into a runaway in the FedEx St. Jude Championship. He closed with a 4-under 66 for an eight-shot victory, his first in nearly seven months and the largest margin in the 68-year history at the TPC Southwind.



Scottie Scheffler holds the winning trophy after the final round of the St. Jude Championship golf tournament in Memphis, Tenn. (AP)

This was only close for a fleeting moment. Scheffler saw a birdie turn into a bogey when his bunker shot on the par-5 third hit a sprinkler head on the fringe and rolled across the green into the water, shrinking his lead to one. He made two quick birdies and was on his way.

He finished at 17-under 263, eight shots clear of his Dallas neighbor Si Woo Kim, who closed with a 68 to finish eight shots behind. Sam Burns, one of Scheffler’s best friends in golf, played with him in the final group and took double bogey on the par-5 third hole. He shot 73 and tied for third with Alex Noren (69).

Scheffler won \$3.6 million from the prize fund, and he clinched an additional \$23 million in bonus money for being No. 1 in the FedEx Cup through next week’s BMW Championship.

Jack Whaley of England used double gloves, needed an umbrella, was stung by a wasp at rainy Merion Golf Club and still pushed through the inconveniences to cap a tremendous tournament and hold off Jay Leng Jr. to win the U.S. Amateur on Sunday.

With skies finally clear on the rain-slogged course, Whaley sank his final putt to clinch the 36-hole final, 4 and 3. The 22-year-old Whaley broke down in tears as he held the Havemeyer Trophy and dedicated the win to his father, who never stopped encouraging his son to play, even as he kept missing cuts as a teenager.

Whaley made a rapid rise from NAIA star to Florida State to amateur champion and now has an exemption into the 2027 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, and the 2027 British Open at St. Andrews and the Masters should he remain an amateur.

He wore his Florida State Seminoles cap and team colors for the championship round.

Leng, a Stanford junior, held a 2-up advantage through the first 18 holes, and Whaley began to pull away in the afternoon by winning four straight holes. Leng also gets a spot in the Masters and U.S. Open, and he was among six players added to the Walker Cup next month in Ireland.

Jeenno Thitikul ran off five straight birdies early and closed with an 8-under 64 for a one-shot victory Sunday in The Standard Portland Classic, her third LPGA Tour title of the season.

Thitikul led an all-Thailand finish, with Arpichaya Yubol (67) and Channettee Wannasaen (63) tying for second at Columbia Edgewater Country Club.

Sophia Schubert, tied with Yubol for the 54-hole lead, had to settle for a 71 and finished fourth.

The 23-year-old Thitikul won for the 10th time in her LPGA career, making her the eighth player to reach 10 wins or more before turning

24. She also joined Nelly Korda as three-time winners this year on the LPGA.

Jeff Winther captured his national tournament in thrilling style by shooting 5-under 67 to win the Danish Golf Championship on Sunday, outlasting a bunch of rivals that included compatriot Rasmus Hojgaard.

The two Danes delivered an amazing few minutes for the home fans late in the final round at Great Northern. Hojgaard chipped in for eagle at No. 17 to briefly join Winther in a share of the lead, only for Winther to respond by driving the green on the par-4 16th and draining an eagle putt to go two shots clear again.

The 38-year-old Winther parred the 17th and was given a standing ovation as he walked to the green on No. 18, where he also made par to seal his second title on the European tour - five years after winning the Mallorca Open.

BOISE, Idaho (AP) - Ross Steelman opened with four birdies in five holes and pulled away with an 7-under 64 for a three-shot victory Sunday in the Albertsons Boise Open,

his second Korn Ferry Tour win of the year that sends him to the PGA Tour next year.

Steelman, who finished at 27-under 257, also won The Blue Championship in Colorado. The victory moves him to the top of the points list.

Robby Shelton (62) and Davis Shore (63) tied for second.

Steelman had a two-shot lead at the start and holed a 25-foot birdie putt to start the final round. He birdied the next two holes, both par 5s, and capped off his big start with a 6-foot birdie on No. 5. He led comfortably the rest of the way.

SNOQUALMIE, Wash. (AP) - Stewart Cink continued his dominance of the PGA Tour Champions on Sunday when he closed with a 7-under 65 and defeated Miguel Angel Jimenez with a birdie on the first playoff hole to win the Boeing Classic.

Cink extended his lead in the Charles Schwab Cup with his fifth victory, and his first since winning the Regions Tradition - his second straight senior major - in May.

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Timpson scores career-high 20 as Fever edges Dream in OT

ATLANTA, Aug 17, (AP): Makayla Timpson scored a career-high 20 points, including Indiana’s first three field goals in overtime, and the Fever beat the Atlanta Dream 95-91 on Sunday to protect their hold on fourth place in the WNBA standings.

Indiana (23-12) held off Atlanta (21-13) despite Allisha Gray matching her career high with 32 points. The top four teams have homecourt advantage in the first round of the playoffs.

Kelsey Mitchell’s layup with 13.6 seconds remaining in overtime gave the Indiana guard 20 points, her 19th consecutive game scoring at least 20.

Caitlin Clark scored 26 points, including two free throws after Atlanta trimmed Indiana’s lead to 93-91, with nine assists.

Mitchell’s 3-pointer for Indiana with 1:05 remaining tied the game 81-81. Atlanta had three misses on its final possession to end regulation.

Indiana’s Sophie Cunningham, celebrating her 30th birthday, gave Indiana a 78-77 lead with a basket and free throw.

Sky 82, Storm 80

In Seattle, Kamilla Cardoso had 22 points and 12 rebounds, Natasha Cloud scored 20 points and Chicago ended a six-game losing streak on the road with a victory over Seattle.



Indiana Fever’s Caitlin Clark (22) dribbles the ball against Atlanta Dream forward Angel Reese (5) in the second half of an WNBA basketball game in Atlanta. (AP)

Seattle (7-30) trailed 53-37 with 5:49 left in the third quarter, but Dominique Malonga answered with a basket and two free throws and Jade Melbourne and rookie Awa Fam sank back-to-back 3-pointers to cap a 15-4 run as the Storm closed to 60-55 heading to the fourth.

Seattle pulled within a point, but Courtney Vandersloot sank the second of two free throws for Chicago (13-22) with 10 seconds left and Melbourne missed a tying layup

at the buzzer. Vandersloot finished with 15 points, five rebounds, five assists and four steals.

Seattle made the first basket, but Cardoso scored six in an 11-0 run and Chicago never trailed again.

Fire 88, Mercury 85

In Phoenix, Carla Leite scored 23 points and Portland rallied to beat Phoenix, when the Mercury had halftime and postgame ceremonies celebrating franchise icon Diana Taurasi.

Leite had the final two baskets in a 6-0 run and the expansion Fire (15-20) moved in front 81-80 with 1:12 remaining. Portland’s Emily Engstler and the Mercury’s Kahleah Copper traded baskets before Katie Lou Samuelson hit the second of two foul shots with 20 seconds left to put the Fire up 84-82.

Bridget Carleton blocked a shot by Copper and grabbed the rebound with 12 seconds to go, then sank two free throws for a four-point lead after Copper fouled her. Alyssa Thomas buried a 3-pointer, but Carleton sank two free throws to preserve the win.

Leite shot 9 for 15 and added five assists. Megan DiLeo had 15 points.

DeWanna Bonner scored 23 to lead Phoenix (13-23). Copper totaled 19 points and seven rebounds. Thomas finished with 17 points and 11 rebounds, falling one assist shy of a triple-double.

Federation planning a second coordination meeting

Kuwait Handball Federation targets stronger club structures for new season

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: The Kuwait Handball Federation held a coordination meeting with sports directors from local clubs participating in handball competitions, as preparations continue for the 2026-2027 season.

The meeting, held at the federation's headquarters at the Martyr Fahad Al-Ahmad Complex in Al-Daiya in the presence of federation board member Mishal Al-Qabandi, reviewed the positives and challenges from last season.

Officials also discussed proposals aimed at improving Kuwaiti handball, with particular emphasis on both the technical and administrative aspects of the game.

The federation is planning a second coordination meeting before the new season begins, this time with youth-team coaches from the participating clubs.

Al-Sulaibikhat first-team handball director Hussein Siwan described the meeting as productive, saying it addressed several issues that could contribute to the devel-

opment of Kuwaiti handball.

He said particular attention was given to youth development and competitions, as well as reviewing tournament formats and ensuring that technical staffs are selected carefully to help improve players' performances and raise the standard of domestic competitions.

Siwan also highlighted the importance of completing the administrative and technical structures within handball departments. He said clubs should aim to have a full support team comprising a technical director, head coach, assistant coach, goalkeeper coach, physiotherapist, doctor and data analyst.

According to Siwan, establishing comprehensive technical and administrative teams would have a positive impact on players and clubs while helping develop Kuwaiti handball according to sound technical and scientific principles.

He expressed hope that greater attention would be devoted to strengthening these structures during the coming season.



Kuwait Handball Federation coordination meeting with sports directors in progress.

Cameroon routs Malawi to claim historic WAFCON title



Cameroon's soccer team celebrates after winning the Women AFCON 2026 final soccer match against Malawi, in Rabat, Morocco. (AP)

Ngah Manga the heroine with brace

RABAT, Morocco, Aug 17, (AP): Three goals for three lost finals.

Cameroon finally won the Women's Africa Cup of Nations with a 3-0 victory over tournament debutant Malawi.

Marie Ngah Manga headed two goals and Naomi Eto scored the other while Cameroon kept Malawi's Chawinga sisters in check to claim its first win in the final at the fourth attempt.

The Indomitable Lionesses, who failed to qualify for the previous edition of the tournament, had lost on their last three appearances in the final - all to 10-time winner Nigeria.

"I feel like it's a dream because you know Cameroon have been working hard to have this moment and today for us to be champion of Africa is a very, very wonderful thing," Ngah Manga said.

FIFA's under-fire president, Gianni Infantino,

attended the game along with CAF President Patrice Motsepe.

Infantino later helped Motsepe hand out medals to the top three teams. Algeria defeated Morocco in the third-place decider on Saturday.

Infantino also posed with Motsepe and Samuel Eto'o, the president of the Cameroon Football Federation, for a photo with Cameroon forward Monique Ngock after she received the player of the tournament trophy.

Malawi made the better start but suffered a double blow when Ngah Manga headed the opener from close range in the 21st minute, shortly before Eto - who had her back to goal - turned brilliantly to send the ball inside the right post.

Eto was also involved in the first goal, forcing a save from Malawi goalkeeper Mercy Sikelo before Ngah Manga scored.

Malawi failed to muster a response and Ngah

Manga effectively sealed the result on a break when Eto got to the ball before Sikelo and produced a perfect cross for her teammate to head her second goal of the game and fifth overall in the tournament.

Cameroon substitutes ran onto the field to celebrate with their teammates.

The Chawinga sisters had pushed Malawi after the break. Tabitha Chawinga felt she should have had a penalty, but a VAR check deemed otherwise. Then she drew a good save from Michaela Bihina, and her sister Temwa went close from the rebound.

Cameroon veteran Gabrielle Aboudi Onguéné went on in stoppage time and duly scored, only to have the goal ruled out for offside. The 37-year-old Onguéné was part of the Cameroon team that lost the final at home to Nigeria in 2016. Despite her disallowed goal, this time she could celebrate.

Arsenal hosts promoted Coventry

Premier League is back and uncertainty pervades the start of post-Guardiola era

LONDON, Aug 17, (AP): The post-Pep Guardiola era is getting underway in English soccer amid uncertainty and upheaval - not just at Manchester City but across the whole of the Premier League.

Get this: Heading into the new top-flight season beginning Friday, nine clubs have new permanent managers - an unprecedented number at the start of an English top-flight campaign. At age 33, Fabian Hürzeler is the fifth longest-serving coach in the Premier League ... and he has been at Brighton for just two years.

The biggest vacuum needing to be filled is at City, following the departure of Guardiola after 10 record-breaking years in charge. Good luck following that, Enzo Maresca - especially after the team's lamentable performance in the Community Shield loss to Arsenal on Sunday.

Among the other top clubs with new coaches are Liverpool (Andoni Iraola), Chelsea (Xabi Alonso) and Newcastle (Matthias Jaissle) - all of which competed in the Champions League last season.

Heck, it makes Roberto De Zerbi - appointed by Tottenham on March 31 to escape relegation - and Michael Carrick - installed as interim manager at Manchester United for the second half of last

season before impressing and getting the permanent job - seem like veritable veterans.

It also makes Arsenal, the reigning champion, appear a haven of stability as Mikel Arteta goes into his seventh full season at the helm as by far the league's longest-serving manager.

Yet, there's a big question mark hanging over the Gunners, too:



Arsenal's Myles Lewis-Skelly, left, and Manchester City's Elliot Anderson challenge for the ball during the FA Community Shield final soccer match between Arsenal and Manchester City in Cardiff, Wales. (AP)

Will there be a hangover after winning the league for the first time in 22 years?

We're about to find out, though Arsenal's display in the Community Shield provided early encouragement for its fans.

The non-stop roller coaster that is the Premier League begins in earnest Friday night when Arsenal hosts promoted Coventry, which has a compelling backstory of its own after being out of the big time for 25 years.

Here are some other storylines providing a backdrop to the new season:

The Cristiano Ronaldo circus left town in 2022. Harry Kane moved away in 2023. Kevin De Bruyne departed in 2025. Mohamed Salah quit for Turkey this offseason. Rodri looks set to leave these shores for Barcelona, too.

It begs the question: Is the biggest league in the world lacking the biggest players in the world?

OK, City still has prolific striker Erling Haaland, whose brand has never been higher after wowing American fans during the World Cup.

But soccer superstars like Kylian Mbappé, Ousmane Dembélé, Vinícius Júnior, Lamine Yamal and even England's own two top players in Kane and Jude Bell-

ingham play in other countries. All-time greats of this century - think Lionel Messi, Ronaldinho, Zinedine Zidane - never played in England, either.

The big blockbuster deal of the offseason could have been Vinícius joining Arsenal, but he chose to stay at Real Madrid.

The Premier League has recently prided itself in having the world's top coaches, yet Guardiola and Jürgen Klopp are no longer around.

The competition might have to settle, then, for having the greatest strength in depth, with the middle-level clubs having arguably never been better owing to the league's huge broadcasting deals.

Amid so much turbulence among its rivals, Arsenal has a great opportunity to retain the title and is the favorite with British oddsmakers.

Brazil midfielder Bruno Guimarães has joined from Newcastle to bolster an already-strong midfield, left winger Christos Tzolis signed from Club Brugge to replace the departed Leandro Trossard, and there is strength in depth in every position.

Counting against Arsenal, however, is an injury to defensive mainstay William Saliba that will rule out the France centreback for the first few months.

Kuwait's Al-Zaabi named Best Libero at Arab U-17 Volleyball Championship

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Staff

MANAMA, Aug 17: Kuwait U-17 volleyball standout Mohammed Al-Zaabi was named Best Libero at the conclusion of the second Arab U-17 Volleyball Championship in Bahrain.

Egypt secured the title after defeating hosts Bahrain 3-1 in the final round, while Saudi Arabia swept Jordan 3-0.

Egypt dominated the individual awards with four winners, followed by Bahrain with three, while Al-Zaabi claimed Kuwait's only individual honor after producing a consistently impressive performance throughout the tournament.

The Blues finished third while Saudi Arabia placed fourth, followed by Algeria in fifth and Jordan in sixth.

Kuwait endured a difficult start, suffering 0-3 defeats to Egypt and Bahrain before narrowly losing 3-2 to Saudi Arabia. The team responded strongly, however, beating Jordan and Algeria 3-0 in consecutive matches to secure third place and the bronze medal.

Al-Zaabi's award highlighted his defensive contribution and his key role in helping Kuwait secure a podium finish.

Speaking after the tournament, Al-Zaabi credited his teammates for the achievement and praised the support provided by the technical and administrative staff.

He said the Best Libero award belonged to the entire team rather than being a personal accomplishment, adding that the bronze medal demonstrated the squad's development and progress.

Al-Zaabi described third place as "the first step on the ladder of progress" and expressed his determination to continue improving with his teammates and achieve stronger results in future competitions while proudly representing Kuwait.



Al-Zaabi flanked by Dr. Jaber Al-Marri and Talal Al-Nimsh.

Best of the Rest

Jhon Lucumí moves to Juventus: Colombia defender Jhon Lucumí signed for Juventus on Monday for 19.5 million euros (\$22.6 million) after impressing at the World Cup.

Juventus said the 28-year-old center back had signed a four-year contract and the fee paid to Serie A rival Bologna could rise above 22 million euros (\$25.5 million) with performance bonuses.

Lucumí played almost every minute of Colombia's five games at the World Cup, where the team conceded just one goal, in an opening 3-1 win over Uzbekistan. (AP)

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Scotland hires Pocognoli: Scotland hired Sébastien Pocognoli as its new coach to replace Steve Clarke, who stepped down from the role after the team was eliminated from the World Cup without advancing from its group.

Pocognoli, a former Belgium international, was fired by Monaco on June 1 after a seventh-place finish in the French league and missing out on Champions League qualification. (AP)

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NEWS



Cameroon's Naomi Leslie Ndjoah Eto, right, celebrates after scoring her team's second goal against Malawi during the Women AFCON 2026 final soccer match, in Rabat, Morocco. Cameroon beat Malawi 3-0 to win Women's Africa Cup of Nations for the first time. (AP) – See Page 15

Sports

Kuwait women's table tennis team secures bronze



The women's table tennis team celebrates bronze medal on the podium.

KUNA photo

AMMAN, Aug 17, (KUNA): Kuwait's women's table tennis team claimed the bronze medal in the senior category at the ongoing West Asian Championships in Jordan.

The Kuwaiti team, comprising Mnouh Al-Shammari, Maryam Al-Halwaji and Khadija Al-Halwaji, finished third in the senior women's competition to secure the bronze medal.

The event was contested in a league format in accordance with the tournament regulations.

Kuwait is participating in the championship in several age categories for both men and women. The tournament, which concludes next Thursday, features teams from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Qatar, Jordan, Palestine, Oman, Iraq, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

'I want to leave a spectacular legacy'

This is probably my last year in soccer, says Ronaldo

RIYADH, Aug 17, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo says this Saudi Pro League season is likely to be the last of his professional career.

The 41-year-old superstar's contract with Riyadh club Al-Nassr, signed in December 2022, expires next June, and he has told Vogue magazine that another is unlikely.

"This is probably my last year of football, and I want to leave a spectacular legacy," Ronaldo said.

The Portugal forward, who has scored 976 career goals, married long-time partner, Georgina Rodriguez, earlier this month.

"I have my future all mapped out," he said. "I have so many things to keep me busy that to tell you just one thing is hard. Because football could leave a big hole, you have to fill your time in various ways, not just one."

"And also have more fun, travel more, watch and play padel, which I really like, and continue to enjoy what I've earned - what we've earned. Because after all, it's been 25 years with a lot of sacrifice."

The 2026-27 SPL season is Ronaldo's 25th as



In this file photo, Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo waves following the World Cup Group K soccer match between Colombia and Portugal in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

a professional. During his career, he has won five Ballon d'Or awards and five UEFA Champions League titles.

Ronaldo's 28 league goals last season helped Al-Nassr become champion of Saudi Arabia in

May to secure his first trophy since arriving in Riyadh, and a first league title for the club since 2019.

After returning from his wedding, he missed Al-Nassr's first game of its title defense on Saturday, watching from the sidelines as it opened with a 3-0 win over Al-Fateh.

"Cristiano is here today, and he is always present with us," Al-Nassr coach Ange Postecoglou said after the game.

Ronaldo could play against Al-Diriyah in the King's Cup on Tuesday.

"The most important thing now is recovery, especially as we have only two days after this match," former Tottenham Hotspur and Nottingham Forest coach Postecoglou said.

Ronaldo's comments came days after long-time rival Lionel Messi revealed that, following his father's death, he may soon retire.

"I don't know how to carry on," Messi, 39, said. "I used to just play football, and now I'm really not sure if I'll carry on doing it for much longer."

Kuwaiti triathlete Al-Jumah sets national Ironman record

KALMAR, Sweden, Aug 17: Kuwaiti triathlete Mubarak Al-Jumah delivered a landmark performance at the Ironman event in Kalmar, Sweden, completing the full-distance race in 9 hours, 31 minutes and 4 seconds to set the fastest time ever recorded by a Kuwaiti athlete in the event.

Al-Jumah's performance underlined the growing standards of triathlon in Kuwait, particularly in one of the sport's most demanding endurance events. The full Ironman consists of long-distance swimming, cycling and running, requiring exceptional physical fitness, endurance and preparation.

His achievement also earned him official qualification for the Ironman World Championship, giving him the opportunity to compete against the world's leading triathletes.

Breaking the 10-hour barrier represents a major personal milestone and reflects the extensive preparation behind his performance, including



Mubarak Al-Jumah

endurance training, strength work, pacing, nutrition and recovery.

Al-Jumah will now turn his attention to preparing for the world championship, aiming to build on his record-breaking performance and proudly represent Kuwait on the international stage.

Hunt 'captures' record 4th gold

'Mondo' triumphs again



Britain's Georgia Hunter Bell poses after winning the gold medal in the women's 1,500 meters final at the European Athletics Championships in Birmingham, England. (AP)

BIRMINGHAM, England, Aug 17, (AP): Amy Hunt won a record fourth gold medal in a single edition of the European championships when Britain clinched victory in the mixed 4x100 relay.

Hunt had already won two individual titles - the 100 and 200 - and added a third gold Saturday in the women's 4x100 relay at Alexander Stadium.

The team of Jeremiah Azu, Dina Asher-Smith, Zhanel Hughes and Hunt won in a time of 39.97 seconds. Germany was second in 40.11 and Spain third in 40.42.

On the anchor leg, Hunt pulled away from Gina Lückenkemper to cross the line for gold.

"Oh my gosh, I'm over the moon," Hunt told the BBC. "To finish it off with some of my best friends in the sport ... to do it all together is incredible."

Asher-Smith won her career eighth European championships gold and became the competition's most decorated athlete with her 11th medal, moving one ahead of the late Polish sprinter Irena Szewinska.

This was the debut of the mixed 4x100 relay in the European championships. "It's good to get to try something new," Asher-Smith told the BBC, although she added, "I was absolutely terrified."

Swedish pole vaulter Armand "Mondo" Duplantis earned his fourth consecutive European championship title by clearing 6.15 meters.

Duplantis is the world record holder - he vaulted 6.31 meters in March. That was his 15th world record. He first broke it in 2020 and has eclipsed his mark by 1 centimeter each time since.

The two-time reigning Olympic champion watched on as Greek rival Emmanouil Karalis (6.00) lost momentum after getting over 6.10 but knocking the bar off on his way down. Karalis took his second straight silver at the championships. France's Baptiste Thierry (5.85) earned bronze.

Bragging rights were on the line in the last event of the week-long championships when Britain and Italy were tied at nine golds each atop the medal table.

The Italians pulled out the victory in the men's 4x400 relay final, and the home team settled for silver. That means Italy topped the table with 10 golds and an overall 22 medals, three more than Britain's total.

Italy also topped the medal table two years ago in Rome.

In the penultimate event of the championships, the Dutch women's 4x400 relay team won gold when star Femke Broeders-Bol held off Britain's Emily Newnham down the stretch. It was the third straight women's 4x400 relay championships title and Broeders-Bol's sixth career gold at the championships.

In the women's 1,500 final, Britain's Georgia Hunter Bell improved on her silver medal from two years ago by crossing the line first in 4:07.78.

Larissa Iapichino had added to Italy's gold tally by winning the women's long jump, leaping 7.00 meters for the title.

Amanal Petros made sure there was no photo finish this time.

The German won the men's marathon on Sunday morning by a whopping 7 seconds, less than a year after missing out on gold in a photo finish at the world championships in Tokyo.

Petros crossed the finish line in Birmingham in 2 hours, 9 minutes, 11 seconds - breaking the championships record in the process. Italy's Pietro Riva took silver with his 2:09:18, three seconds better than Israel's Gashau Ayale.

Last September, the Eritrean-born Petros settled for silver behind Tanzania's Alphonse Simbu in the closest marathon in world championships history. Both men were officially clocked at 2:09:48, but it was determined that Simbu crossed the line a fraction sooner.

In the women's marathon Sunday, Finland's Alisa Vainio dominated the field to finish in 2:22:26, nearly five minutes ahead of silver medalist Lili Anna Vindics-Toth of Hungary. Britain's Abbie Donnelly took bronze. Vainio broke Christelle Daunay's championship record from 2014 by almost three minutes.

New coach expressed his satisfaction with players' performances so far

Mohammad praises Kuwait preparations in Cairo

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Staff

CAIRO, Aug 17: Kuwait Basketball Federation National Teams Director and national team delegation Chief Mishal Mohammad has praised the preparations of the Kuwait national basketball team during its ongoing training camp in Cairo, Egypt, ahead of the first window of the Asian Cup qualifiers, which begins in the UAE on August 23.

Mohammad is leading the delegation alongside Assistant Secretary-General Owaid Al-Anzi and board member Mohsen Al-Anzi. Greek coach Vassilios Bratsiakos is in charge of the team after recently being appointed by the federation to oversee the national side during the qualifiers.

Speaking about the camp, Mohammad said the team is holding two training sessions each day, in the morning and evening, under the



Players preparing for training session in Egypt.

guidance of Bratsiakos. The new coach, he added, has expressed his satisfaction with the players' per-

formances so far.

Mohammad also highlighted the team's encouraging displays dur-

ing the camp, saying the coaching staff is focused on raising the players' technical and physical readiness ahead of the Asian qualifiers.

Kuwait opened its series of friendly matches with a 75-72 victory over Egypt's Olympic team two days ago. The Blue will play several more warm-up games over the coming days before heading to the UAE for the qualifiers.

Kuwait has been drawn alongside the UAE, Oman, Bahrain and Nepal. The coaching staff is looking to ensure the team reaches peak readiness for the campaign, with the squad featuring a blend of promising young players and experienced veterans.

The Asian Basketball Federation previously announced the qualifying groups for the East and West regions. In the West Region, Group Two features Kazakhstan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Kyrgyzstan.

Dinusha's maiden ton rescues Sri Lanka but India on top

GALLE, Sri Lanka, Aug 17, (AP): Sonal Dinusha's maiden test hundred rescued Sri Lanka as the home team was bowled out for 284 on Day 3 of the first cricket test against India.

Dinusha scored 100 off 168 balls, including four fours and two sixes, and put on 146 for the sixth wicket with Niroshan Dickwella (80). The duo saved the day after Sri Lanka had plunged to 90-5 in the first innings, but India remained in a strong position after having totaled 462 earlier.

India's bowlers started the day strongly, with Mohammed Siraj having Nishan Madushka caught at slip for a two-ball duck.

Left-arm spinner Manav Suthar struck with the first delivery he bowled, having Dinesh Chandimal (4) caught behind.

Kamindu Mendis (14) and Lahiru Udara (27) resisted with a stand of 26 for the third wicket until Suthar ended the partnership by having Udara caught at point.

Three overs later, Shubman Gill took a stunning, one-handed diving catch at cover off Kuldeep Yadav to send Mendis back.

Skipper Dhananjaya de Silva scored 21 off 41 balls and added 31 for the fifth wicket with Dinusha but was dismissed by Ravindra Jadeja just before lunch.

Dinusha dropped anchor while Dickwella made sure the scoreboard kept ticking over as the second session ended wicket-less for India.