



Sudan seeks diversification in fraternal ties with Kuwait Page 2



Economic courts to boost Kuwait's investment edge

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: Minister of Justice Nasser Yousef Al-Sumait affirmed that the law on establishing economic courts to adjudicate economic, commercial and investment cases is a qualitative leap in the economic judicial system of the country, especially since it covers all three levels of litigation, with the support of a specialized technical office.

Al-Sumait believes that this step will expedite dispute resolution, develop procedures for enforcing court rulings, and expand electronic litigation, thereby, raising the efficiency of contract enforcement and boosting public trust in the legal and investment environment of the country.

He revealed that the law establishes special economic circuits in the courts of First Instance, Appeals and Cassation, adding that these circuits will handle the economic, commercial and investment disputes specified in the law.

He said the law aims to shorten the duration of dispute resolution through the case preparation office that completes the necessary documentation before the case is presented to the court.

He indicated that this includes regulating procedural and appeal deadlines, and establishing a settlement and reconcili-



Nasser Al-Sumait, Minister of Justice

ation track before the dispute is adjudicated. He then clarified that a settlement agreement is an enforceable instrument.

He pointed out that digital transformation is a pillar of the

Justice gets KD 10,000, KD 30,000 thresholds

KD 100,000 line set for major public contracts

Disputes to face 15-day settlement push

law, through an electronic platform for litigation, enforcement of judgments, an electronic case file, and a database of rulings and judicial principles.

He added that the law stipulates the establishment of a specialized department for the execution of court rulings, its electronic linking with relevant entities, and the adoption of electronic auctions.

He stressed that the law improves the competitive level of the country, strengthens its ability to attract investments, and reinforces the rule of law in economic disputes.

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HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Barbarossa, with 120 ships, defeated 300 European warships

Suleiman the Magnificent appointed him commander of the naval fleet in 1533

He exploited his knowledge of wind movement and led a battle that was a resounding success by all accounts

Everyone expected defeat before the battle even began

The small Muslim ships swooped down on the European naval fleet

King Faisal II and his kingdom fell in the most costly betrayal in history

An enlightened mind and a patriotic heart, he wanted to modernize Iraq

He trusted his army officers and treated them like close friends, but they betrayed him

They dragged the king and his family to the palace courtyard and shot them

We wronged the donkey when we called it stupid, it is actually very intelligent

It has a phenomenal memory and a biological navigation system that remembers every detail of the route

3

Cabinet 'targets' fake family links

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet approved Tuesday a draft decree-law amending certain provisions of the Kuwaiti Nationality Law and referred it to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

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

The proposed amendments provide for revoking the citizenship of a person who deliberately adds to their citizenship file, or that of another person, an individual who is not their child or descendant, if established by an investigation conducted by the Higher Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Citizenship or by a final court ruling.

Citizenship may also be revoked from any of the person's children or descendants if their knowledge of the violation is established.

The draft also provides for issuing Kuwaiti citizenship certificates electronically after verification, with the electronic certificate carrying the same legal validity and effects as the paper certificate.

It further stipulates that naturalized Kuwaiti citizens shall not have the right to vote, run for election or be appointed to any parliamentary body.

The Cabinet also approved a draft decree-law on the organization of the judiciary aimed at developing the judicial system, enhancing efficiency and consolidating guarantees of judicial independence and integrity.

The proposed judicial legislation includes updated rules governing the selection, appointment and promotion of members of the judiciary, as well as expanded rules for judicial inspection, accountability and disciplinary procedures and enhanced rights for litigants.

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Kuwaiti Army Chief visits Kuwait Embassy in Washington

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19, (KUNA): Kuwait's Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraiaan visited on Wednesday the Kuwaiti Embassy in the US, where he was received by Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah as part of his official visit to the country.

During his visit, alongside the Kuwaiti delegation consisting of senior army officers and officials, General Al-

Shuraiaan reviewed the embassy's efforts to support bilateral relations between the two countries, especially in the military and defense fields. The delegation visited the memorial site being built for Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield, a site made to remember the sacrifices made to liberate Kuwait in 1991, as well as reflecting the deep historical relations between both countries. (KUNA)



General Staff of Army photo
Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraiaan, accompanied by Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, tours the memorial site under construction for Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield.

Weather turns brutal with 48°C heat, blinding dust

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19, (KUNA): Kuwait is expected to see extremely hot weather and active dust-raising winds on Wednesday and Thursday, reducing visibility, with conditions improving on Friday, Kuwait Meteorological Department said.

Acting Director Dhirar Al-Ali told KUNA that the coun-

try would be affected by the Indian seasonal low, bringing an extremely hot and dry air mass and northwesterly winds exceeding 50 km/h.

The winds could reduce visibility to below 1,000 meters in some areas, particularly open areas, and cause high sea waves, he said, adding that winds would gradually ease early

Friday.

Al-Ali said temperatures would range between 46 and 48 degrees Celsius during the day and 35 to 37 degrees at night.

He urged asthma and allergy patients, people with chronic illnesses, children and the elderly to exercise caution outdoors and wear protective masks.

NewsWatch

MANAMA: The Kingdom of Bahrain on Wednesday vehemently condemned and denounced recent Israeli air strikes on Abu Al-Duhur military airport in northwestern Syria's Idlib province.

In a press release, the Foreign Ministry termed these air raids as a blatant violation of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integration, international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and a threat to regional security and stability. (KUNA)

MOSCOW: Russia and Oman called for a swift diplomatic solution to the Gulf crisis, underlining the importance of freedom of international navigation, keeping the Strait of Hormuz open for commercial vessels, and restoring normal maritime traffic.

According to Russia's Foreign Ministry, both countries discussed developments in the Gulf and underscored the need to intensify diplomatic efforts to ease tensions and create conditions for a political settlement. (KUNA)



5 Ahmed Al-Jarallah receives 'The Amir is in the Heart' book project team



8 National Bank of Kuwait launches 4 new Middle Management Program cohorts to enhance the readiness of future leaders

Food haul hits Customs snag

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: For the third time in less than two weeks, the Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) inspectors assigned at Shuwaikh Port seized 2,236 subsidized food items loaded in six 40-foot containers for export to Sri Lanka.

The seized containers belong to several shipping and export companies and were intercepted while completing export procedures at Shuwaikh Port, prior to their departure.

The necessary customs and legal procedures were taken regarding the containers and the seized goods, and the case was referred to the relevant authorities.

The seized items include 211 cans of powder milk, 349 bags of flour, 435 bottles of oil, nine cans of vegetable ghee, 38 bags of lentils, 787 bags of pasta, 49 bags of rice, 35 bags of sugar, and 323 cans of tomato paste.

Kuwait leads GCC energy media shift

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19, (KUNA): Director of Public Relations and Petroleum Media at the Ministry of Oil Sheikha Tamadher Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah affirmed on Wednesday Kuwait's pivotal role in supporting and developing the energy media system across the GCC countries.



Sheikha Tamadher

She also affirmed Kuwait's role in contributing to updating the GCC media strategy in line with the rapid changes taking place in the global energy sector.

In a press statement issued by the Ministry of Oil, Sheikha Tamadher Al-Sabah said the ministry has actively participated in efforts to develop and update the GCC strategy, contributing to shifting media discourse from its traditional petroleum scope toward a more comprehensive concept of energy media that keeps pace with developments in energy markets, supply security, sustainability, the energy transition, and technological and environmental developments related to the sector.

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KNG inspects expanded camp ahead of major unit relocation

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: Undersecretary of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas visited the expansion site at Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Camp to look into the preparations and equipment for the relocation of some KNG units to the camp, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the visit, Al-Barjas inspected various facilities and equipment, and was briefed on the preparation phases and the relocation plan. He stressed the need to complete all requirements according to the highest standards of readiness and efficiency.

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National Guard photo
KNG Undersecretary Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas visits the expansion site at Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Camp.



Fajr03:55 Asr 15:27
Sunrise .. 05:19 Maghrib .. 18:24
Zohr 11:51 Isha 19:48



Crown Prince Diwan photo

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the letter delivered by Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mohi El-Din Salem Ahmad.

Sudan seeks diversification in fraternal ties with Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Wednesday a handwritten letter from Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of the Republic of Sudan General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan concerning the fraternal bilateral relations between the two countries.

It also concerns ways to strengthen and develop those relations in various fields.

The message was delivered to His

Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah by Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mohi El-Din Salem Ahmad.

The meeting was attended by Head of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Sudanese Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Dr. Jibril Ibrahim Mohammad and senior officials.



KUNA photos

Top and above: Delegations from the Defense Ministries of the GCC countries during their visit to the Kuwait News Agency.

GCC's defense groups visit KUNA to upscale journalism

Move to advance joint media work, discourse

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19, (KUNA): Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) hosted on Wednesday delegations from the defense ministries of the GCC countries to showcase the agency's media experience, news services, national and community mission.

The visit aimed at showcasing the Kuwaiti and GCC discourse while upholding the principles of professionalism, accuracy and responsibility.

KUNA Acting Director General Mohammad Al-Manaie received the GCC defense ministry delegations on the occasion and welcomed them to Kuwait.

He said the visit provides an important opportunity to learn about the agency's work and news services and its efforts to keep pace with the latest technological developments worldwide, in a manner that contributes to advancing Kuwaiti and GCC media work and discourse as a whole.



KUNA Acting Director General Mohammad Al-Manaie honors a member of the delegation.

The delegations toured various sectors and departments of the agency, where Acting Editor-in-Chief Bader Al-Sharhan provided an overview of the editorial sector and its departments, including its Arabic, English and French bulletins, as well as related electronic

editing services, KUNA's official social media accounts and KUNA Smart Oasis, all of which seek to keep pace with the latest global media and technological developments.

During their visit to the main newsroom, Al-Sharhan welcomed the GCC delegations and highlighted the importance of the media in general, particularly news agencies, in highlighting GCC issues that underscore unity, a shared destiny and the deep-rooted relations among the brotherly countries under the enduring slogan "Our Gulf is One."

He also gave a brief presentation on the nature of work at KUNA, where GCC matters across various fields constitute one of its key areas of coverage, in addition to the cooperation between KUNA and its GCC counterparts, contributing to advancing journalistic work and GCC media discourse.

KUNA colleagues Maryam Al-Soula and Abdullah Al-Mohareb also gave a presentation on KUNA's key achievements and coverage in general, particularly its coverage of GCC defense ministries and related events.



KUNA photo

Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in talks with his visiting Sudanese counterpart Mohi El-Din Salem.

FM meets Sudan counterpart

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met on Wednesday with his visiting Sudanese counterpart Mohi El-Din Salem and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting, both sides tackled bilateral relations between both brotherly countries and their peoples and means to promote and develop them across fields to serve common interests,

said the Foreign Ministry in a press release.

They also discussed several issues of mutual interest and reviewed the latest regional developments and efforts aimed at strengthening regional security and stability. The Kuwaiti minister of foreign affairs then held a luncheon in honor of the Sudanese guests. (KUNA)

Charitable aid spread worldwide: Dr. Al-Huwailah

Philanthropy embedded in Kuwait values

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs and Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthar Al-Huwailah affirmed on Wednesday Kuwait's pride in its longstanding efforts in the fields of humanitarian and charitable work.

She noted that it is rooted in deeply held values inherited by the people of Kuwait that have made giving and aiding those in need a steadfast approach.

Speaking to KUNA on the occasion of World Humanitarian Day, Dr. Al-Huwailah said the ministry has been keen in recent years to develop and regulate the charitable work system and strengthen partnerships with government agencies, charitable societies, civil society organizations and volunteer teams.

She pointed out that this partnership aims to enhance the efficiency of humanitarian initiatives and ensure that aid reaches its beneficiaries according to the highest standards of efficiency, transparency and governance.



Dr. Al-Huwailah

The minister explained that the ministry is working to keep pace with developments and benefit from digital transformation and modern technologies in regulating humanitarian work and strengthening monitoring and oversight tools to improve the management of aid and donations, preserving this noble work and enhancing its sustainability and impact.

She expressed appreciation and gratitude to humanitarian workers and volunteers in the field who make sincere efforts to serve people and safeguard their dignity, stressing the importance of supporting, empowering and protecting them so they can continue carrying out their noble mission.

Al-Huwailah stressed that Kuwait will remain present in the fields of humanitarian work and giving, adhering to its deeply rooted heritage and values of solidarity and mutual support. She noted that humanitarian work for Kuwait is not an occasion celebrated for one day, but rather a national approach and an ongoing mission.

World Humanitarian Day is observed annually on Aug. 19 around the world in recognition of humanitarian workers and volunteers and to highlight the importance of efforts to assist those in need and protect human dignity.

the leadership, has provided substantial assistance through government institutions and civil society organizations to countries affected by conflicts, disasters and humanitarian crises, while hosting international conferences and initiatives aimed at reconstruction and aid efforts.

On May, 2024, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah affirmed Kuwait's commitment to continuing its longstanding approach of supporting global humanitarian efforts during his meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in turn, praised Kuwait's pioneering initiatives in this field.

In recognition of Kuwait's humanitarian role, the United Nations officially honored the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a Humanitarian Leader and recognized Kuwait as a Humanitarian Center at a ceremony held at UN Headquarters in 2014.

Other Voices

A beautiful, humane Lebanese wedding

By Ahmad alsarraf

I spent part of this summer between Lebanon and the Turkish resort, Marmaris.

The best part of those days was actively participating in the wedding celebrations of Haitham Al-Muslim and Margarita Al-Maroun in Lebanon and Turkiye.

It was a truly special event, embodying humanity, tolerance and love, all reflected in the beautiful relationship between the bride and groom.

The wedding ceremony was unprecedented and unparalleled in its ease and acceptance by society, even the family and the religious authorities. With a certain degree of conservatism, it was difficult to imagine it was happening with such ease anywhere but in Lebanon, the only country with which many Kuwaitis wish to maintain a lasting bond of brotherhood.

The celebrations began with the Islamic ceremony, which was dignified and peaceful, led by a preacher who delivered a serious yet engaging sermon that was well-received by everyone. Everything proceeded without the extravagance or lengthy rituals.

The couple's marriage ceremony was simple and unpretentious. The following day, we went to the Syriac Maronite Church for the church wedding ceremony, which was somewhat more elaborate and lengthy compared to the Islamic ceremony. However, it was more vibrant, joyful and lively, filled with beautiful voices, prayers, music and hymns.

The ladies and young women wore their finest clothes, and the men were impeccably dressed. All of this took place in an atmosphere of love and tolerance, free from any negativity.

A few days later, we traveled with the bride and groom, their families, relatives and friends to the Turkish resort, Marmaris, where we spent unforgettable days. The singer, Jad Choueiri, officiated the civil ceremony, formally declaring the couple, Haitham and Margarita, "husband and wife forever."



alsarraf

Letitia, with her Mona Lisa smile, served as maid of honor, being the bride's cousin and lifelong friend. Ahmed, the groom's brother, acted as best man.

But what is the linguistic origin of the term 'best man'? And what does it mean?

The words 'best man' and 'best woman' are of Syriac origin, specifically from the word 'shushbina', meaning guardian, protector or representative entrusted with a specific responsibility.

In the West, it is known as 'the best man' for the groom, and the 'best woman' for the bride. The term originated from Scotland. In Arabic, they are known as 'al-wasif' and 'al-wasifa'.

Their selection and role are among the most prominent traditions of church weddings. These groups of close friends and family members often form an essential part of the wedding celebrations.

In ancient times, the groom's companions were warriors who protected him from dissenting relatives. The bride's bridesmaids were responsible for warding off evil spirits. Although some consider these roles to be myths, their origins are actually more practical than fantastical, as the idea of having trusted people participate in wedding ceremonies dates back thousands of years.

In many ancient societies, marriage was not merely a relationship between two individuals, but also a legal, religious and social agreement including families and communities. Weddings were important social bonds, and others often witnessed, assisted and participated in them.

The term 'bridegroom' first appeared in English in the 16th century. The term 'groom' emerged a century later. Their responsibilities varied according to the time period, culture and social status.

The important thing is that we all spent unforgettable days at a unique wedding, rich with beautiful memories, and overflowing with love, intimacy and happiness. Beirut and Marmaris provided a welcoming space for this event and for the gathering of love and tolerance among everyone. My thanks to the people of Marmaris, and my love for Saint Charbel.



email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

Kuwait: Safety, security of humanitarian workers vital

Role of workers in life-threatening situations lauded

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday commended the important role played by humanitarian organizations and the significant contributions of humanitarian workers.

It also praised their efforts to deliver aid to those in need, save lives and alleviate the suffering of people affected by conflicts and disasters around the world, at a time when humanitarian needs are increasing and challenges facing humanitarian action are growing.

In a statement, marking World Humanitarian

Day, the ministry expressed its profound appreciation for the sacrifices of humanitarian workers, stressing the need to strengthen their protection and ensure their security and safety, enable them to carry out their humanitarian duties safely, and ensure the safe, swift and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those in need.

It also underscored the importance of respecting international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

In this context, the Ministry renewed Kuwait's welcome for the consensus adoption by the Human Rights Council at its 62nd session of the resolution entitled "Impact of the prevention and obstruction of humanitarian assistance and the jeopardizing of the safety of humanitarian workers on the enjoyment of human rights in armed

conflicts," which was initiated by Kuwait.

The Ministry described the resolution as an important step toward strengthening international efforts to protect humanitarian workers, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need and promote respect for relevant international obligations.

On this occasion, the Ministry affirmed that Kuwait will continue its steadfast approach of extending a helping hand to those in need and enhancing cooperation with the United Nations and humanitarian organizations, based on its firm commitment to humanitarian action and belief in the importance of international solidarity and co-operation in addressing crises, reflecting its role as an active partner in supporting humanitarian efforts at the regional and international levels.

‘Shisha’ cafes issued 10 citations; eatery closed

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) conducted inspection campaigns in the Farwaniya and Capital governorates, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

These campaigns resulted in the issuance of 10 violation citations to shisha cafés in Ardiya Industrial Area and the closure of a restaurant in Bneid Al-Gar after the discovery of serious health violations.

In a press statement, PAFN disclosed that the Farwaniya Governorate Inspection Department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Interior and Public Authority for

Manpower (PAM), conducted a joint inspection tour in shisha cafés in Ardiya Industrial Area to ensure compliance with regulations and requirements.

This resulted in the issuance of 10 violation citations, including five violations related to employing workers without health certificates and five violations related to food handling by workers without health certificates.

In the Capital Governorate, the Inspection Department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, detected several serious health violations at a restaurant in Bneid Al-Gar. Legal action was taken and the establishment was closed. The

violations include handling food unfit for human consumption and contaminated with salmonella, handling food in unsanitary conditions, and failing to meet technical and health requirements, thus, exposing it to contamination, in addition to non-compliance with general sanitation rules and regulations. Dirt and live cockroaches were observed inside the establishment.

Other violations found were operating the food establishment under an expired health license, employees handling food without health certificates, and the employer hiring workers without health certificates.

Adopt new tech, Arab nationality departments urged

TUNIS, Aug 19, (KUNA): Kuwait's National Identity Centers Director Colonel Nasser Al-Khudair underscored Wednesday the importance of Arab nationality and civil affairs authorities keeping pace with technological developments to protect privacy and personal data.

Speaking to KUNA during the Ninth Arab Conference of Directors of Nationality and Civil Affairs Departments in Tunis, Al-Khudair underlined the need to protect the confidentiality of personal data, especially amid growing digital hacking threats.

He called for modernizing nationality and civil affairs systems and secur-

ing official documents to keep pace with advances in technology and artificial intelligence (AI).

Al-Khudair also presented Kuwait's experience in digitally developing its nationality and civil ID systems, emphasizing stronger Arab cooperation to confront emerging challenges, particularly illegal immigration and document forgery.

Information-sharing among Arab nationality authorities could help combat cyberattacks and crimes threatening regional security, he said, reaffirming Kuwait's Interior Ministry's commitment to strengthening cooperation.



Jahra Governorate photo
Jahra Governor Hamad Jassim Al-Habashi receives PAS nominee Eng. Sarah Faisal Al-Kharji.

‘Include disabled persons in sports programs & services’

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: Jahra Governor Hamad Jassim Al-Habashi on Tuesday met with Eng. Sarah Faisal Al-Kharji, the Public Authority for Sports (PAS) nominee for membership in the Jahra Governorate Council as its representative.

During the meeting, they discussed several topics related to the youth and sports sector in the governorate, and ways to expand cooperation between the Governorate and PAS.

The Governor underscored the

need to include people with disabilities in sports programs and services, cover their needs, and promote their participation in sports activities and facilities in the governorate.

Meanwhile, Al-Kharji expressed her gratitude to the Governor for his interest and support for the youth and sports sector. She then affirmed her commitment to strengthen coordination with the governorate to better serve its residents.

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Economic courts

It is worth noting that the Cabinet approved the draft decree-law on establishing economic judicial circuits during its meeting on Tuesday. This move aims to align with modern global and regional legislation, and utilize advanced technology in ensuring justice for everyone.

According to the law, one or more economic circuits, each consisting of three judges, will be established within the Court of First Instance. These circuits will have exclusive jurisdiction over economic disputes and related substantive enforcement disputes. Their rulings are final if the value of the claim does not exceed KD10,000.

In the same manner, an economic circuit consisting of three judges will be established in the Court of Appeals. The ruling of this circuit is final if the value of the claim does not exceed KD30,000.

An economic circuit in the Court of Cassation will have jurisdiction over appeals if the value of the claim is more than KD30,000 or if the value of the claim is undetermined.

This circuit will also handle cases of jurisdictional errors and conflicting rulings that have acquired the force of res judicata.

The deadline for submission of appeals to the Cassation Court is set at 30 days, 15 days for appeals against urgent rulings, and 10 days for appeals against orders issued on petitions.

The jurisdiction of these circuits includes disputes involving banks, financial companies, financial markets, companies, partners, shareholders, direct investment, non-Kuwaiti capital, oil contracting, public-private partnerships, competition protection, trademarks, patents, and companies developing cities and residential areas.

This is in addition to handling financial and contractual disputes related to public tenders and other administrative contracts whose value exceeds KD100,000 in accordance with the regulations and exceptions stipulated by the law.

Moreover, the Dispute Resolution and Conciliation Office is established to review cases before referring them to the court, except the urgent matters, orders and administrative cancellation requests. This office must attempt a settlement within 15 days and can be extended in accordance with the agreement of the parties, for a total period not exceeding three months.

The approved settlement agreement serves as an enforceable document that terminates the dispute. If settlement proves impossible, the case is referred to the Case Preparation Office to complete the necessary documents and notifications before being presented to the court.

The law stipulates the creation of an electronic platform for litigation and enforcement, along with an electronic file for each case. It includes a specialized department for the execution of judgments and a direct link with banks, the Land Registry, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and other entities concerned with issuing seizure, transfer and ownership transfer orders.

The law grants the enforcement judge the power to seize and freeze accounts, impose travel bans, issue precautionary orders, suspend financial transactions if the debtor delays payments or conceals assets, while settlements, payment schedules and electronic auctions are permitted as well.

The first objection automatically suspends the enforcement, while the second and subsequent objections only suspend enforcement through a court decision.

The law shall take effect on Oct 1, 2027 and the Justice Minister is mandated to issue its implementing regulations before this date.

On the other hand, Al-Sumait said the Cabinet's approval of the Judicial Organization Law is a milestone in the development of the judicial authority and the largest reform process it has ever witnessed in its history.

Al-Sumait pointed out that the law is in compliance with the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on reforming and developing the judicial system to raise its efficiency and safeguard its independence.

He affirmed that His Highness the Amir paid special attention to this law and followed up its stages of preparation until the completion of the constitutional procedures.

He explained that the law reorganizes a number of fundamental aspects of judicial work, such as the selection, promotion and assessment of members of the judiciary according to clear rules that guarantee competence and integrity, and preserve the prestige of the judiciary.

He said the law establishes well-defined rules for filling up senior administrative positions in the judiciary and sets the term of office at four years, renewable once, to allow the rotation of qualified individuals. He added that the implementation of the law requires reforming the Supreme Judicial Council as per the new regulations.

He revealed that the law provides solutions to the discrepancies and conflicts in judicial principles through the Unification of Principles Committee at the Court of Cassation, such that the principle decided by the committee is binding on all courts and must be followed in subsequent cases. He added that this step consolidates the unity of judicial interpretation and reduces the disparity or conflict in rulings.

He confirmed that the law strengthens the guarantees of due process, activates the role of the Public Prosecution in monitoring detention centers, and regulates electronic trials.

He indicated that the law supports the plan of the country to nationalize the judiciary by reducing the required promotion period to expedite the appointment of qualified Kuwaiti nationals to higher judicial positions.

He asserted that the rule of law and the integrity of the judiciary are pillars of a legal state, stressing that the Kuwaiti judiciary has always been a source of public trust and pride.

Kuwait leads

She explained that updating the strategy comes amid broad transformations in the global energy system, requiring the development and expansion of GCC media tools to enhance their ability to explain these changes, highlight GCC countries' positions, policies and efforts in addressing them, and strengthen their presence in regional and international discussions on the future of energy.

She noted that among the key changes incorporated into the strategy was Kuwait's proposal to change the name of the "Petroleum Media Strategy" to the "Energy Media Strategy," a proposal approved in the minutes of the 19th preparatory meeting of GCC Undersecretaries of Petroleum Ministries, held in Kuwait on Sept. 30, 2025.

She pointed out that the change in name is not merely a formal amendment, but reflects a qualitative shift in the strategy's content, scope and media priorities to include, alongside oil and natural gas, renewable energy, hydrogen, emissions-reduction technologies, the circular carbon economy, energy efficiency and supply security, in line with developments in the energy mix and the policies adopted by GCC countries.

She stressed that the updated strategy's vision is based on building a unified and credible GCC energy media discourse that reflects the GCC countries' standing in the global energy system, strengthens the balance between energy security and sustainability, and highlights their role in ensuring reliable supplies, supporting global economic growth, and responsibly addressing climate and energy-transition issues.

She said the strategy's new directions include utilizing media intelligence and proactive analysis tools to monitor international media trends, analyze content produced by influential media outlets and think tanks, and anticipate potential campaigns before they escalate, thereby providing relevant GCC authorities with more accurate analytical outputs and enhancing the efficiency of their response to international developments.

She added that the strategy also seeks to expand media cooperation with international organizations concerned with energy, the energy transition and climate, enhance coordinated GCC participation in major international events, monitor and analyze international legislation and policies related to energy and climate, and prepare specialized media content explaining their potential implications for GCC countries.



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Left: Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah receives 'The Amir is in the Heart' delegation. Right: Al-Jarallah with Dalal Al-Saif, Fahad Al-Rish, Yahya Al-Rish, Faten Rawdan Al-Armali, and colleague Bassam Al-Qassas.



Photos by Samer Shqair

Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism hails initiative documenting national spirit

Al-Jarallah receives ‘The Amir is in the Heart’ book project team

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah met with founder of ‘The Amir is in the Heart’ book project Dalal Al-Saif, Diwaniya Relations Coordinator of the project Fahad Al-Rish, Yahya Al-Rish and Faten Rawdan Al-Armali at his office on Wednesday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the meeting, Al-Jarallah was briefed on the concept, objectives and implementation phases of the project.

The meeting included a presentation on the aim of the project to document the feelings of Kuwaitis towards their political leadership and nation. This documentation is based on meetings and events held in Kuwaiti diwanias

(traditional meeting places), and the messages conveyed through these gatherings, reflecting the values of loyalty, patriotism and devotion.

Al-Jarallah affirmed the importance of national initiatives that preserve the collective memory of society and document the citizens’ stances and feelings towards their political leadership. He praised the initiative and its patriotic message.

He stated that the documentation of these sentiments is a vital legacy for the future generations and a testament to the deep ties binding the people of Kuwait and their leaders.

On the other hand, Al-Saif expressed her gratitude to Al-Jarallah for sup-

porting the project. She praised the coverage of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers of the events and meetings held in diwanias, as well as their contributions to raising awareness on the project and highlighting its message.

At the end of the meeting, Fahad Al-Rish presented a plaque and a letter of gratitude and appreciation to Al-Jarallah in recognition of his endorsement of the project.

He also presented a letter of gratitude and appreciation to colleague Bassam Al-Qassas in recognition of his efforts in covering the diwaniya events related to the initiative.

Continued from Page 1

Cabinet ‘targets’

It also seeks to strengthen the Public Prosecution’s role, including oversight of detention facilities, while introducing a mechanism to unify judicial principles of the Court of Cassation and regulate electronic trials and judicial procedures.

The Cabinet referred the draft judiciary law to His Highness the Amir for approval.

The Cabinet further approved a draft decree replacing the schedule attached to Decree No. 126 of 2018 concerning minimum periods required for judges and Public Prosecution members to remain in their respective grades.

It also approved a draft decree-law establishing economic chambers to enhance the efficiency of economic litigation and keep pace with modern regional and international legislation and technological developments.

The proposed law seeks to balance the

right to defense with expediting the resolution of cases by establishing specialized economic chambers and judges, simplifying litigation procedures and expanding remote litigation, while ensuring the principle of confrontation between litigants and safeguarding defense rights.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet affirmed that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah approved sponsoring the opening of several new health projects in the country and assigned the Prime Minister to attend on his behalf.

Following the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Maousherji stated the proceedings.

The Cabinet reviewed a written message received by His Highness the Amir from UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham concerning the longstanding relations between Kuwait and the United Kingdom, ways to develop them, and regional and international developments.

The Cabinet strongly condemned

the Iranian attacks targeting two tankers and a vessel belonging to the UAE’s ADNOC while transiting the Strait of Hormuz, stressing that targeting commercial vessels and international waterways constitutes a blatant violation of international law and UN Security Council Resolution 2817.

It called for an end to actions that escalate regional tensions, respect for freedom of navigation and safe passage through international waterways, and the full and unconditional reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. The Cabinet also reaffirmed Kuwait’s full solidarity with the UAE.

The Cabinet condemned the Israeli occupation’s rejection of the roadmap for completing implementation of US President Donald Trump’s comprehensive plan to end the conflict in Gaza, as well as its rejection of establishing a Palestinian state.

It stressed the need for the international community to fulfill its responsibilities and compel the Israeli occu-

pation authorities to fully comply with the commitments and arrangements outlined in the comprehensive plan and its roadmap.

The Cabinet reiterated the urgent need for full and immediate implementation of the plan to address the humanitarian crisis, ensure security and stability for all in Gaza, facilitate reconstruction and recovery, and advance a just and lasting peace based on the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination and establishment of an independent state on the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet on Kuwait’s political and diplomatic efforts to follow regional and international developments, as well as his recent telephone contacts with foreign ministers of brotherly and friendly countries.

The contacts focused on regional developments, diplomatic efforts to

de-escalate tensions, enhance security and stability, and ensure the safety and freedom of maritime navigation.

The Cabinet also reviewed several items on its agenda, reports and ministerial committee recommendations, approving several of them and referring others to the relevant committees for further study and recommendations.

Cabinet also looked into how far progress has come on Al-Shaheed park’s third phase project that stretches across 243,605 square meters, ahead of its opening to the public on October 1 of this year.

Briefing the cabinet on the technical matters pertinent to the project, Kuwaiti Amiri Diwan undersecretary Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Sabah said that a glittery carnival comprising a slew of recreational and family-oriented activities is scheduled to precede the official opening on October 1.

He went on to explain that the third phase of Al-Shaheed Park covers a total construction space of 203,162

square meters, 190,661 of which are green areas, citing a “vision” to create a fully equipped and complete park.

The third phase of Al-Shaheed Park is expected to feature multiple new facilities, including a Roman theatre, outdoor cinema, gymnasium and ice-skating rink, in addition to restaurants and cafes.

Nestled between high-rise buildings in the heart of Kuwait City, Al-Shaheed is the largest public park in the country, while the third phase of the project should, upon completion, be a national tourist landmark, the cabinet said.

KNG inspects

He commended the efforts exerted in the expansion project, which was implemented using the latest construction and engineering systems, ensuring a suitable and integrated environment for the units operating in the camp to better perform their tasks.

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Sullivan, Peltola begin Alaska US Senate campaign after advancing from primary

US Rep Donalds wins GOP nod for Florida governor against Jolly for Dems

ORLANDO, Fla., Aug 19, (AP): US Rep Byron Donalds won the Republican nomination for Florida governor and former Rep. David Jolly picked up the Democratic nod in Tuesday’s primaries, setting the stage for a fall campaign to replace outgoing Gov Ron DeSantis and decide the state’s future political direction.

November’s election will test President Donald Trump’s grip on his adopted state and Democrats’ ability to resurrect Florida as a national political battleground. Florida has moved notably to the right since Trump’s victory in 2016, though Democrats hope to regain ground from his slumping popularity ratings.

DeSantis, a leading conservative figure who has both clashed and collaborated with Trump over the years, is barred from running for a third consecutive term.

Also Tuesday, progressive state

Rep. Angie Nixon won the Democratic nomination for a US Senate special election, defeating retired Army Lt. Col Alexander Vindman, a onetime National Security Council official who testified in Trump’s first impeachment in 2019.

Nixon, who was heavily outspent by Vindman, will face Sen. Ashley Moody, winner of the Republican nomination, in November to fill the last two years of Marco Rubio’s Senate term. Rubio left the seat to become Trump’s secretary of state last year.

Donalds would be Florida’s first Black governor if he wins in November. He defeated a former DeSantis running mate, Lt. Gov. Jay Collins, political newcomer James Fishback and others Tuesday.

The 47-year-old congressman Donalds told his supporters at a Universal Studios resort hotel that he’d heard from Republican rivals who pledged their help in winning the



Florida Republican gubernatorial candidate Byron Donalds speaks to supporters during a primary election party on Aug 18, 2026, in Orlando, Fla. (AP)

general election.

“The primary is over,” Donalds said. “Tonight we put aside our dif-

ferences. Tonight we are one united Republican Party.”

Donalds described Trump’s back-

ing as important but not determinative.

“Obviously, he has the strongest following of anybody in our party,” he said. However, he added, “you can’t just sit back and think the president’s endorsement is going to carry you.”

Donalds has promised to push tax cuts, overhaul Florida’s insurance regulations to lower consumer costs and seek greater price transparency from healthcare providers.

The Democrats’ candidate for governor, Jolly, is a former Republican congressman who switched parties last year. He did not shy away from his partisan history as he addressed supporters Tuesday night.

“To my Democratic friends, thank you for welcoming me into the party,” he said.

Jolly’s speech detailed a platform that balances between both political parties: an embrace of capitalism

and a lean government, but one that “needs to do its part to fill the gaps,” such as with education and housing.

Also:

JUNEAU, Alaska: Republican US Sen **Dan Sullivan** and Democratic former Rep. **Mary Peltola** wasted no time preparing for their general election campaign after Tuesday’s primary in Alaska, criticizing each other’s records and previewing the next phase of a high-stakes Senate race that has drawn national attention.

With control of the chamber on the line, Sullivan stepped up his attack against Peltola in the days leading to the primary, questioning her effectiveness while in Congress and seeking to align her with Lower 48 “liberals.” Peltola positioned herself as someone who would represent “regular” people and push back against special interests and wealthy politicians.



Fire crews drop water on a wildfire along Highway 3 in Manning Park, British Columbia, as fires burn throughout the southeastern part of the province on Aug 12. (AP)

Wildfire in British Columbia destroys 150 structures

About 150 structures were destroyed or damaged by a fast-moving wildfire in western Canada that forced more than 20,000 people to evacuate last week, officials said Tuesday in the first detailed accounting of the toll.

About 2,200 people remained un-

der evacuation orders and roughly 25,000 were on alert across British Columbia, Emergency Management Minister Kelly Greene said. Improving conditions allowed most residents of hard-hit Summerland to begin returning home.

The Bald Range wildfire erupted

Aug. 7 and raced toward Summerland and nearby communities so quickly that some crews had to stop fighting the fire to help people escape. British Columbia declared a provincial state of emergency the next day. An 80-year-old woman was killed. (AP)

America

Minnesota attorney general sues Texas gov: Minnesota’s attorney general sued the governor of Texas on Tuesday, seeking to compel the extradition of an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent charged with wounding a man and then lying to justify the shooting during the agency’s crackdown in Minneapolis.



Attorney General Keith Ellison is asking a federal judge to bar the sheriff in Cameron County, Texas, from releasing ICE agent Christian Castro, and to order Texas Gov. **Greg Abbott** to sign his extradition warrant so that Minnesota officers can take custody.

Minnesota officials have clashed with the federal government over who has jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute federal officers for on-duty conduct. Ellison is a Democrat and Abbott is a Republican ally of President Donald Trump.

Castro was arrested in Texas in May on Minnesota charges of assault and falsely reporting a crime in the Jan. 14 wounding of Julio Cesar Sosa-Celis. Castro, 52, is accused of firing a gun through the front door of a Minneapolis home, striking Sosa-Celis in the leg with a bullet that lodged in a child’s bedroom wall. Prosecutors say Castro then falsely accused Sosa-Celis and another man of attacking an ICE officer with a broom handle and a snow shovel. (AP)

Ohio industrial building blast kills 2: Explosions rocked an Ohio industrial recycling business early Tuesday, killing two workers and sparking a large fire, officials said.

Flames and dark smoke poured from Brent Industries in Toledo as fire engines surrounded the build-

ing, TV news video showed.

Crews later discovered the bodies of two employees, a man and a woman, inside the smoldering building, said Toledo Fire Chief Allison Armstrong. Two or three other employees had minor injuries, she said.

Two explosions occurred shortly before 5 a.m., during a shift change, Armstrong said. Crews had to deal with hazardous materials, runoff and the threat of more explosions while first searching for victims and accounting for the other employees, she said.

Environmental officials said monitors showed that there was no hazardous threat in the air.

Demetrius Langston said he felt the explosion half a mile (0.8 kilometers) away. He ran outside with his phone and captured video of a huge plume of smoke rising into the dark sky. (AP)

Lala strengthens into hurricane: A storm system moving west away from Hawaii has quickly strengthened into a Category 3 hurricane, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said late Tuesday.

The hurricane was about 335 miles (535 kilometers) south-southeast of Maro Reef, the hurricane center said. The storm was moving west-northwest at 125 mph (205 kph).

The hurricane center called it the first major hurricane of 2026 in the Central Pacific. Forecasters said they expected the storm to remain a hurricane for the next several days. They predicted it would strengthen tonight before slowly weakening.

A hurricane warning was issued for the uninhabited Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. A warning means hurricane conditions are expected in roughly 36 hours.

The storm had battered parts of Hawaii Sunday as it passed by without making landfall and weakened from a hurricane into a tropical storm. Crews were working to clean up and restore power in parts of the state. (AP)

ICC slams US decision to sanction court’s president and senior staff

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, Aug 19, (AP): The International Criminal Court on Wednesday slammed the latest US sanctions targeting senior ICC staff, including its president, as a “flagrant attack” on the global tribunal’s independence and vowed to continue seeking justice for atrocities around the world.

The State Department announced Tuesday that it had hit ICC president Tomoko Akane, a Japanese national, and ICC senior trial lawyer Abdoulaye Seye, who is from Senegal, with sanctions that freeze any assets they have in US jurisdictions or come into contact with the U.S. financial system.

The Trump administration has now slapped sanctions on nine of the ICC’s 18 judges, both of its deputy prosecutors, its former chief prosecutor and one other prosecution office staffer, the court said. The US accuses the court of overstepping its mandate by investigating and seeking to prosecute senior military and political officials from countries, such as Israel and the United States, that are not members of the court.

In a statement, the court said that



A general view of the exterior of the International Criminal Court is seen in The Hague, Netherlands, March 12, 2025. (AP Photo/Omar Havana, File)

when “judicial actors are threatened for applying the law, it is the international legal order itself that is placed at risk.” It said the court “will continue to fully discharge its mandate with independence and impartiality.”

In a statement Tuesday, Secretary

of State Marco Rubio branded the ICC “a corrupt and fatally politicized supranational court that has maliciously abused its authority and exceeded its mandate.”

The move came weeks after Rubio announced that the US was launching a “sweeping campaign to dismantle the threat posed by the International Criminal Court to US sovereignty.”

Rubio said he will pressure the court’s 125 member states to withdraw from the institution, sanction organizations that work with the court and ban staff from traveling to the United States.

Since then, Venezuela and Chad have announced they plan to leave the court, bringing the number of countries to pull out of the court in the past year to five. It takes a year for a country’s decision to quit the court to be formalized.

The sanctions can impact the daily lives of court officials. They prevent the ICC officials and their families from entering the United States, block their access to even basic financial services making even going to a grocery store difficult.



Ukrainian flags and photographs are placed in memory of civilians and soldiers killed during the war with Russia at Independence square in central Kyiv on Aug 18. (AP)

Fired Ukraine defense minister demands elections

Zelenskyy’s office probed for corruption

KYIV, Ukraine, Aug 19, (AP): Ukrainian anti-corruption agencies announced Wednesday that they are investigating senior officials in President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s office, a day after the country’s recently fired defense minister called for national elections despite the ongoing fight against Russia’s invasion.

The political drama was an unwelcome distraction for Zelenskyy as Ukraine’s war with its bigger neighbor stretches into its fifth year.

Investigators are conducting an operation to expose a criminal organization allegedly led by a sitting and a former lawmaker, involving senior officials from the presidential office and other individuals, according to a joint statement from Ukraine’s National Anti-Corruption Bureau and the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office.

Further details would be released later, the agencies said in a joint statement.

The revelation brought another test of Zelenskyy’s political resilience as he remains dogged by high-level graft investigations.

Last year, his chief of staff Andriy Yermak resigned and was later named as a suspect in a major graft probe involving a luxury construction project in the biggest threat to Zelenskyy’s government since Russia’s invasion in February 2022.

Also last year, a major embezzlement and kickbacks scandal involving the state-owned nuclear power company brought the resignations of Ukraine’s justice and energy ministers.

The European Union has identified deep-seated corruption as one of the major hurdles to Ukraine’s desired membership of the block.

Zelenskyy is already under pressure over his firing last month of Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov, one of the longest-standing members of his team and a close ally since he helped Zelenskyy win the 2019 presidential

election.

Zelenskyy, seeking to reconcile tensions between the defense ministry’s young and tech-savvy innovators and Ukraine’s seasoned, Soviet-trained battlefield leaders, risked angering both sides by reshuffling his wartime leadership. He ousted both Fedorov, whose changes to military procurement aimed to stamp out corruption, and commander-in-chief Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi.

The move sparked days of street protests in support of Fedorov. For Zelenskyy, it was the second time in a year that a wartime decision triggered a strong public backlash, after he moved in mid-2025 to curb the powers of anti-corruption agencies.

Fedorov, in a video address posted to YouTube late Tuesday, called for elections to be held in Ukraine in a bombshell statement that appeared to directly confront Zelenskyy, who says a ballot can’t be held under the martial law that is currently in place due to the war.

“We must find a legal, safe and realistic mechanism that will allow Ukraine to restore a full democratic process even amid a prolonged war,” Fedorov said.

He said Ukraine is facing a systemic crisis in how it is governed, arguing that the current system is oriented toward protecting itself and resisting change. He also condemned corruption among officials without naming anyone, saying it had weakened Ukraine’s ability to fight the war.

Zelenskyy’s office did not immediately comment on Fedorov’s address. It was not immediately clear whether Fedorov’s appeal for a ballot would resonate with Ukrainians.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has balked at negotiating a peace deal directly with Zelenskyy, said the Ukrainian president is an illegitimate leader because his term expired in 2024.

Queen Camilla opens up about keeping King Charles III cancer diagnosis private

LONDON, Aug 19, (AP): Britain’s Queen Camilla has said she knew about her husband’s cancer diagnosis days before it was publicly announced and found it difficult not to talk about his condition when she visited a cancer center during that period.

King Charles III announced on Feb. 5, 2024, that he was being treated for an undisclosed form of cancer, breaking with the royal family’s tradition of keeping health concerns private. The king’s openness in talking about his diagnosis has been credited with persuading more men to be tested for prostate cancer and other forms of the disease.

The queen said she was “longing” to talk about Charles’ diagnosis when she opened a Maggie’s cancer support center at the Royal Free Hospital in London a week before the announcement but knew she couldn’t. Camilla has been president of Maggie’s, which runs cancer centers at 27 hospitals around the UK, since 2008.

“Nobody could say anything at that time. That was quite difficult,” Camilla said in a video released



Britain’s King Charles III and Queen Camilla attend the state opening of Parliament at the Palace of Westminster in London on May 13. (AP)

Wednesday to mark the charity’s 30th anniversary. “I almost said something but, you know, I felt that it wasn’t the time say.”

Recent updates on the king say his health is moving in a positive direction as he continues to receive cancer

treatment. Camilla’s eight-minute video is based on a conversation between the queen and Maggie’s Chief Executive Laura Lee, who said the number of men who visit the charity’s centers has risen 12% since the king announced his diagnosis.

Japan, OAS award Haiti \$3 mln to help country prepare for elections

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Aug 19, (AP): Japan and the Organization of American States signed a deal Tuesday to award Haiti a \$3 million grant to help it register voters as the troubled country prepares to hold general elections for the first time in more than a decade.

The money will help Haiti's government update its voter lists and procure 350,000 blank identification cards, the OAS said in a statement.

Gang violence has displaced a record 1.5 million people across Haiti, with many leaving their IDs and other important documents behind when fleeing their homes under attack by armed men in Port-au-Prince and beyond.

The OAS said the grant also would help reduce the backlog of Haitians awaiting identification, expand services in rural communities and improve power and internet connections in decentralized offices.

Last month, Haiti's government began voter registration in Port-au-Prince, where an estimated 70% of territory is controlled by gangs.

The first round of elections is scheduled for Dec 13, although



Haiti's Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé, far right, Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Albert Ramdin, second from right, and CARICOM Secretary-General Carla Barnett greet senior police officials at the National Palace in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Aug 17. (AP)

experts have said ongoing gang violence could push back the date once again.

Haiti hasn't had a president since Jovenel Moise was killed at his private residence in July 2021. Moise became president following the November 2016 elections.

"The country can hold elections in three months if it chooses to. The question is, what kind of elections?" said Diego Da Rin, an analyst with the International Crisis Group.

If the government insists on holding elections on Dec 13, "a large part of the electorate will be left out," he warned.

US Navy destroyer with 300 sailors aboard broke down for 4 days in Pacific

WASHINGTON, Aug 19, (AP): A US Navy destroyer with about 300 sailors aboard suffered a major breakdown in the Pacific Ocean last month that left it without power for four days, the Navy confirmed in a statement.

The USS Benfold "reported an engineering casualty involving its generators, causing a loss of power" on July 24, Navy spokesman Cmdr. Matthew Comer said in the statement. The breakdown meant the crew went without drinking water, meals, functioning toilets and air conditioning for days aboard the ship, Comer said.

The incident, which only became public on Friday when it was first reported by USNI News, comes as the Pentagon grapples with serious questions about the quality of life aboard naval vessels and the military's ability to supply ships during the conflict with Iran.

Democratic lawmakers are calling for investigations into conditions aboard the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln. Reports last week revealed that the ship, which has spent a record-setting 250 uninterrupted days at sea, has experienced shortages of supplies, including food and hygiene products, while crew members have suffered from stress and poor mental health.

Comer stressed that there were no injuries to the crew of the Benfold, "who



In this photo provided by US Navy, Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold (DDG 65) conducts routine underway operations in the Philippines Sea on June 24, 2022. (AP)

demonstrated resilience, grit, professionalism, and unwavering steadiness in their response," but that the ship needed assistance from the George Washington carrier strike group.

The cruiser USS Robert Smalls provided meals to the stricken destroyer.

Ultimately, Comer said the Benfold had to be towed to Subic Bay, in the Philippines, for repairs, arriving on July 28. The crew was then provided food and lodging off the ship.

On Aug. 8, the Benfold left port "with all engineering, combat systems, and crew support systems functioning normally," the statement said.

Meanwhile, the ships from the George Washington strike group, including the aircraft carrier USS George Washington, were spotted heading toward the Middle East. The carrier was expected to replace the Lincoln, which the acting navy secretary, Hung Cao, said last week would be returning home soon.

North Korea's Kim expands military cooperation with Russia

S.Korean, US militaries shorten drills by about half after Trump ordered reduction

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug 19, (AP): The South Korean and US militaries confirmed Wednesday they were significantly scaling back major joint drills, days after President Donald Trump ordered the reduction in an apparent bid to reengage with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Trump had ordered his Pentagon chief to "substantially reduce" the allies' summertime Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises, just before they began Monday for an 11-day run. Trump cited what he said was a good relationship with Kim and South Korea's refusal to support him over Iran.

South Korean officials said Trump's surprise announcement came without prior notice, baffling many people in the Asian country and raising concerns about joint defense readiness.

South Korea's military said Wednesday the allies agreed to adjust the duration and scale of the exercises at the request of the US. It said the ongoing drills would

end Friday, not Aug 27 as initially planned. It added the allies also agreed to downsize some joint field training exercises.

The Pentagon said that it was "continuing training that enhances tactical capability" but certain events have been canceled or converted to simulations. "These adjustments preserve essential readiness and training objectives. There will be no degradation to US training objectives," a Pentagon statement said.

Many experts say Trump's move threatens to hurt the combined US-South Korean defense posture and eventually weaken their decades-long alliance.

A reduction or suspension of military drills matters because military commanders change periodically. A one-year suspension of drills would mean commanders unfamiliar with the procedures of the drills would be taking part when they resume, according to Yang Uk, an analyst at Seoul's Asan



South Korea army soldiers take part in an anti-terror drill as a part of the Ulchi Freedom Shield military exercise between the U.S. and South Korea in Seoul, South Korea, on Aug 19. (AP)

Institute for Policy Studies.

Ulchi Freedom Shield is largely a computer-simulated command post

exercise meant to hone the allies' ability to deal with potential North Korean aggression. The two coun-

tries usually hold a set of field training exercises during the command post exercise period.

The drills and a similar springtime exercise are a central pillar of the US-South Korea alliance, which dates to the 1950-53 Korean War. But it's also a long-running source of tensions with North Korea, which has denounced the exercises as a rehearsal for an invasion and responded with provocative missile tests. Days before this month's drills began, North Korea launched two ballistic missiles into the sea.

This month's drills were initially supposed to be held in two phases in simulation of North Korean attacks - the first part until this Friday on defensive operations and the second part until Aug. 27 on counteroffensive operations. North Korea is extremely sensitive to counteroffensive drills, according to South Korean media.

North Korea hasn't responded to Trump's overture. But earlier Wednes-

day, its state news agency, KCNA, published a commentary slamming the US-South Korean military drills as "frantic" and "extremely dangerous" and vowing to completely frustrate its rivals' hostilities.

"The dangerous escalation of the war drills staged by the US and its vassal forces is posing a more serious threat to the security" of North Korea, the commentary said. "Our exercise of right to self-defense will continue to completely neutralize the enemies' military threat."

Many experts said Kim, now emboldened by his advancing nuclear program and expanding military cooperation with Russia, won't likely embrace Trump's overture and return to talks anytime soon unless he's promised bigger concessions. In response to Trump's previous outreach, Kim suggested last year that he can only return to talks if the US drops its demand for North Korean denuclearization as a precondition for diplomacy.

Court orders imprisoned ex-PM Khan taken to hospital, allows family visits

ISLAMABAD, Aug 19, (AP): Pakistan's Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered authorities to take imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan to a private hospital in the capital for a medical examination, following months of concerns from his family and personal physicians about his health and access to medical care, his lawyers and party officials said.

A three-judge panel ordered that Khan be taken to Shifa International Hospital in Islamabad in the coming days and examined by a medical board that will include specialists and one of his personal physicians, Faisal Sultan.

The court also ordered prison officials to allow Khan weekly meetings with family members and telephone calls with his sons. Khan's family has been struggling to secure access to him and have him examined by physicians of his choice.

Hours after the order, authorities allowed one of Khan's sisters to visit him. Pakistan had barred visitors earlier this year after receiving intelli-



Supporters of Pakistan's imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan hold a demonstration outside Islamabad High Court, in Islamabad, Pakistan on Dec 2, 2025. (AP)

gence reports about a possible attack on the prison where he is being held.

The order came months after Khan petitioned the court, asking to be transferred from a high-security prison in the nearby garrison city of Rawalpindi to a hospital and to be al-

lowed access to his personal physicians, family and lawyers.

The court said the order was being issued because Khan's health was at stake and access to medical care is protected under Pakistan's constitution, according to Khan's lawyer Salman Akram Raja.

He urged Khan's supporters not to gather outside the hospital when the former premier is taken there, saying they should avoid inconveniencing other patients.

Earlier this year, Khan was repeatedly taken to a government hospital for treatment of an eye condition.

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party welcomed the court ruling and called on authorities to implement it without delay, saying the order addressed longstanding concerns about his health and access to medical care.

However, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said in televised remarks that the government had reviewed the part of the order concerning Khan's medical treatment and would ask the court to seek a review of the decision.



People gather outside after first responders doused an early morning fire at a building that housed multiple hotels and guest houses in Kolkata, India on Aug 19. (AP)

Fire in building housing several hotels in India kills 9, injures 6

NEW DELHI, Aug 19, (Agencies): A fire broke out in a five-story building that houses several hotels in Kolkata in the early hours Wednesday, killing at least nine people and injuring six others in the capital of India's West Bengal state, police said.

The blaze erupted around 1:45 am in the building close to the West Bengal Fire Department headquarters in central Kolkata, the Press Trust of India news agency reported, describing the building as "dingy."

Those killed included two women and a four-year-old child, police said. At least 80 people have been rescued from the building, according to the news agency, citing a senior official.

Koushik Chowdhury, a state minister, said after visiting the site that some among the dead were Bangladeshi nationals, PTI reported.

The minister said many of the victims were believed to have died from smoke inhalation. Several people were unable to escape to safety and some rooms lacked windows, he said, adding that rescue teams managed to save a couple from a room that had a window.

The government would conduct fire safety inspections at hotels across the state in the wake of the blaze, the minister said.

Authorities said the fire was brought under control and that their immediate focus was on rescuing anyone still trapped inside and investigating the cause of the fire, which was not immediately known.

Forensic experts were collecting evidence at the scene

and an investigation was launched into the cause of the fire and whether safety regulations were followed, police told PTI.

Chowdhury said a short circuit may have caused the fire.

Firefighters struggled to reach people trapped on the upper floors as thick smoke engulfed the building, a police officer told the news agency.

Five fire engines were deployed to bring the blaze under control, while police and disaster management teams carried out rescue operations, the report said. The injured were taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Also:

NEW DELHI: Air India has ordered a mandatory dope test for all its pilots days after a captain, found responsible for mid-air turbulence, tested positive for marijuana, multiple local media reports said Thursday.

According to local television news channel NDTV, the dope test is mandatory for both Air India and Air India Express pilots.

The tests will be conducted concurrently with training at the Gurugram academy, post-flight at Air India's flight briefing centers and offices, the media report said.

Earlier this month, 17 people, including four cabin crew members, onboard an Air India flight from **Phuket** to Delhi were injured after experiencing turbulence. The aircraft lost approximately 300 feet in altitude, triggering a mid-air scare among the passengers.

Africa

Opposition battles Nigeria's Tinubu: Nigeria on Wednesday kicked off campaigns for the presidential election scheduled in January, with incumbent President **Bola Tinubu** seeking reelection against a fractured opposition.

Africa's most populous country will hold the election against a backdrop of worsening economic and security crises that have caused anger among voters against Tinubu's government.

The presidential vote will be held Jan. 16 alongside parliamentary elections, while gubernatorial elections will be held Feb. 6.

Tinubu is challenged by 18 opposition candidates but analysts predict a three-man race, including the two top contenders that he defeated in 2023. They are former Vice President Atiku Abubakar of the African Democratic Congress, a serial presidential candidate, and Peter Obi of the Nigeria Democratic Congress, a former state governor who blew the last race wide open with his mass appeal to Nigeria's youth. (AP)



Tinubu

Gold mine collapse kills 30 in CAR: A gold mining site collapsed Tuesday in the western part of Central

African Republic, killing at least 30 miners and leaving others trapped, authorities and residents said.

The low-tech, artisanal mine collapsed Tuesday morning in the Abba region of the Nana-Mambere prefecture, according to Florian Gaguende, one of the surviving miners. He said rescuers were searching for additional miners believed trapped, but that the chance of finding them alive "is getting slimmer."

The sub-prefecture's deputy mayor, Souleymane Bi, said rescuers and residents managed over several hours to pull 30 bodies from the collapsed mine, and that injured miners were receiving treatment. (AP)

Fighting in Somalia kills dozens: Hours of fierce fighting between government troops and militias that killed dozens of combatants in Somalia's southwestern city of Baidoa also left at least four civilians dead and 98 others wounded, a hospital official said Tuesday.

The fighting erupted early Monday when militia groups attacked government positions on the outskirts of the city, which is home to more than half a million people displaced by conflict and drought. Somali officials said at least 30 attackers were killed, but did not immediately give a toll for government troops.

Dr. Abdikafi Omar Mohamad, head of the emergencies department at Bay Regional Hospital in Baidoa, said the fighting also killed at least four civilians and injured 98, including 28 women and an elderly man hit by stray bullets. (AP)

Developing human capital and building a workforce for sustained performance

National Bank of Kuwait launches 4 new Middle Management Program cohorts to enhance the readiness of future leaders

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: As part of its ongoing strategy to develop human capital and build banking leaders capable of keeping pace with the rapid developments in the banking industry, National Bank of Kuwait launched four new cohorts of its Middle Management Program.

The Middle Management Program is one of NBK’s most prominent initiatives, designed to prepare employees transitioning from supervisory to senior management roles by equipping them with the leadership skills necessary to effectively manage teams and make strategic decisions that support institutional performance.

The program is based on a comprehensive vision for leadership development, including enhancement of managers’ abilities to motivate teams, strengthen communication and people management skills. This contributes to building leaders capable of sustaining performance and enhancing competitiveness.

Since its launch in 2016, the program has achieved remarkable milestones, graduating over 800 middle managers across 40 cohorts in various departments within the group, and scored high satisfaction rates that reflect the quality of the training content and effectiveness in developing leadership performance within the Bank.

The updated 2026 version of the program has undergone significant content enhancements, reflecting NBK’s commitment to keeping pace with the latest global best practices in leadership development. New modules have been added focusing on digital leadership and artificial intelligence applications, emphasizing the incorporation of these technologies with leadership skills and raising awareness of the related regulatory, ethical, and risk management aspects.

The content has also been improved with modules focusing on innovation and creativity in leadership, and the reintroduction of time and stress management topics in a modern format. Moreover, mentoring and coaching skills have been developed to support improved team performance and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

The program is offered in partnership with Euro-money, employing a comprehensive training methodology that combines interactive learning with practical application through strategic exercises, individual



Najla Al-Sager: The Middle Management Program is a cornerstone of our leadership development strategy. We empower our employees to lead high-performing teams and achieve operational excellence. The program graduated over 800 managers across 40 cohorts, achieving high satisfaction rates. We focus on combining strategic learning with practical applications to keep pace with the rapid developments in the sector.



NBK’s Middle Management Program

and group activities, personal assessments, and case studies. This allows participants to directly apply their acquired skills in the workplace, enhancing their ability to manage teams and effectively address challenges.

The new cohorts are expected to include approximately 100 participants from various Groups and international locations across the bank, distributed across four training sessions held throughout the year according to a schedule so that the program continues its role in developing promising banking leaders capable of supporting the Bank’s growth and development.

On this occasion, Najla Al-Sager, SVP – Head of Talent Management and Learning at National Bank of Kuwait, said: “The Middle Management Program is a cornerstone of our leadership development strategy, through which we empower managers at all levels of experience to acquire the competencies and skills necessary to lead high-performing teams, achieve operational excellence, and foster a culture of innovation across the Bank”.

“Through this program,” Al-Sager added, “we are committed to combining strategic learning with practical application, ensuring that our staff are equipped with the mindset and tools to keep pace with the demands of the evolving work environment and contribute effectively to the Bank’s growth and long-term success”.

Al-Sager also emphasized that NBK enjoys a unique work culture, thanks to its comprehensive training and development programs that ensure a bright and sustainable professional future for its employees, further noting that investing in human capital is a key strategic pillar for achieving sustainable growth, ensuring NBK’s continued excellence, and solidifying its leadership.

It is worth mentioning that NBK has established itself as a leading private sector institution that consistently attracts, trains, and upskills national professionals and talents. It also enjoys one of the highest employee retention rates and is the most attractive private sector institution for national talents, in addition to being the largest employer of national professionals in the private sector.

Empowering Kuwaiti women in STEM and future tech leadership

‘talabat’ renews its strategic sponsorship of CODED’s Academy X for 3rd consecutive year



Amal Bukhamseen, Manager of Corporate Affairs at talabat Kuwait, and Hashim Behbehani, Co-founder and Chief Operations Officer of CODED, with representatives of Academy X sponsors during the press conference.



Amal Bukhamseen signing the renewal of talabat’s strategic sponsorship of Academy X.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: As part of its ongoing corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts and commitment to empowering young talent, talabat, the leading everyday app in Middle East & North Africa (MENA), announced the renewal of its strategic sponsorship of Academy X, further building on its long-standing support of the program.

Led by CODED Academy, Academy X stands as Kuwait’s largest women’s empowerment initiative within the technology and entrepreneurship industries. This continued partnership reflects talabat’s proactive role in nurturing national talent, advancing digital literacy, and supporting Kuwait’s broader ambitions for innovation and economic development under Vision 2035.

The announcement was made during a joint press conference attended by all program sponsors to discuss its vision, upcoming cohorts, and future ambitions. Among the key speakers at the event was Amal Bukhamseen, Manager of Corporate Affairs at talabat Kuwait, who highlighted the importance of building an inclusive technology ecosystem and creating stronger links between education and real-world industry experience.

“Empowering the next generation of female leaders in STEM remains a core pillar of talabat’s social responsibility strategy,” said Amal Bukhamseen. “We are proud to renew our partnership with CODED Academy for the third consecutive year. By equipping these young women with future-focused skills, emerging technologies, and practical industry knowledge, we aim to build their confidence and empower them to innovate, create, and lead.

- Supporting Kuwait’s largest initiative for women in technology and entrepreneurship
- 2026 curriculum introduces dedicated Claude (AI) training
- Hands-on learning through mentorship and real-world project experience

Our investment in youth is ultimately an investment in Kuwait’s digital future.”

On his part, Hashim Behbehani, Co-founder and Chief Operations Officer of CODED, said in a statement at the launch press conference: “Academy X is more than a training program; it’s a platform that opens new horizons for young women to experience innovation and shape the future. We believe that AI and technology skills are no longer an optional luxury, but rather an essential tool for success in various fields, from entrepreneurship and marketing to design and digital solutions development. At CODED, we work to foster an environment that empowers participants with the knowledge, experience, and confidence to transform their ideas into tangible projects and achievements. The successes we witness year after year from Academy X graduates confirm the immense potential of young Kuwaiti women when given the right opportunities and support.”

Behbehani added: “We also extend our sincere thanks to our partners and sponsors who share this vision and contribute to empowering a new generation of ambitious young women to play an active role in building a more innovative and impactful future.”

While the core curriculum of Academy X remains anchored in high-impact foundations—including app and web development, user interface and user experience design (UI/UX), leadership, soft skills, and entrepreneurial fundamentals – this year features a new addition. The curriculum will now include a dedicated session focused on Claude (AI), training participants on how to write effective prompts to build functional applications while also exploring how AI can be leveraged to support marketing, business development, and digital innovation. This addition aims to equip participants aged 14–18 with some of the latest tools and technologies driving the global tech market today.

Academy X continues to serve as a premier platform for young Kuwaiti women to gain hands-on experience in tech-focused entrepreneurship. Throughout the intensive program, students engage in practical workshops, interact with industry mentors, and collaborate in teams. The program concludes with a capstone project where participants apply their newly acquired skills to develop and pitch innovative digital solutions addressing real-life challenges within their communities, presenting their ideas to a panel of industry experts and specialists.

Through this renewed partnership, talabat and CODED reaffirm their shared mission to empower the next generation of female tech leaders ready to drive sustainable development and shape the digital landscape of tomorrow.

The Conversation

From light bulb to frozen pipes: Hidden cost of ‘affordable’ energy

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

By Destenie Nock
Carnegie Mellon University

One light bulb. That was what electrification brought to my grandmother Mag’s two-story farmhouse in Boynton, Virginia. No one wrote down the year the rural electric cooperative workers brought the wire to her house in the late 1940s.

Newspapers celebrated rural electrification for making people’s lives better: People could run refrigerators, water pumps, dishwashers and, in some places, air conditioning.

Mag’s family did not think one bulb in the first floor of their two-story house counted as history. Their lives barely changed after they got electricity.

Every day she hauled buckets of water from a stream for cooking and bathing: In her words, “them buckets were heavy.” Her father still inspected tobacco leaves by oil lamp in the barn just past the out-house, and someone traveled into town once a week to buy ice for the icebox. Mag’s mother continued cooking on a woodstove where heat was cost-effective and human-powered. As my father says, “Chopping wood is free.”

With that one bulb, the farmhouse didn’t pay much for electricity. Around that time, some rural cooperative customers paid US\$3.50 a month for 40 kilowatt hours of electricity - the equivalent today of around \$80. Yet to me, that history of my grandmother’s single light bulb and low bill is more than a relic of early electrification. It’s a reminder that relatively low bills don’t mean energy is affordable. The family could not afford an electric line large enough to pump water until 1986, two years after my father graduated from college.

At least six times a year my father travels to the farmhouse, fixing it up for modern life. I research energy affordability, so one of my contributions to the effort has been to look into programs to get an energy-efficient heating system and maybe some air conditioning for the house.

I found that utility companies seem to focus on one way to lower bills: reducing energy use. The local utility company’s website says 52% of a home’s energy usage is due to heating and cooling, and it offers several ways to use less energy.

The utility isn’t trying to make energy itself cost less. It’s mistaking low bills for affordability, when they can still be signals of a person or family struggling.

I saw a modern version of my grandmother’s experience in the top-floor apartment of a duplex my husband and I rented to a family with a newborn in 2022 in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. The apartment had heat, as Pennsylvania law required, but no air conditioning.

During a stretch of high summer temperatures, the family complained about the indoor temperature. We went over to help them figure out where they could purchase a window unit. When we entered the home, their thermostat read over 83 degrees Fahrenheit (28.3 Celsius).

The newborn baby sat in the mom’s arms covered in little white bumps, a heat rash. The kitchen became even hotter whenever the family cooked on the gas stove.

I told my husband that we should just go get a window unit, since the family had no car and the bus would take at least an hour to get to Walmart. My husband agreed it was important, but after spending over \$15,000 rehabilitating the apartment and fixing the heating system, our funds were thin. The local

electric utility had some air conditioning incentives, but we weren’t sure whether our tenants qualified.

I study energy usage during heat waves, and there is a lot of research about heat deaths occurring because people cannot afford to adequately cool their homes. We bought a window unit on a credit card that we hadn’t maxed out.

Because of high demand, the one we found was undersized and not capable of cooling the entire apartment. The father improvised by moving the baby’s crib into the living room and using cardboard and tape to seal the gap in the window. Three days later, the baby’s bumps vanished and the older children rode bicycles around the living room.

This family had paid on time, so they would not have appeared on the electric company’s list of people who had trouble paying their bills. However, their quality of life desperately needed more energy that they could not afford.

Winter can also bring energy affordability crises. A woman I’ll call Hannah once told me that no matter what she did, her natural gas heating bill stayed high. By November 2025 it was approaching \$190 a month, and based on the previous year she expected it to triple by January. Hannah told me that even though she kept her thermostat at 65 F (18.3 C), the temperature upstairs rarely rose above 62 F (16.7 C).

She lived near my Pittsburgh neighborhood, so I went over to help look for the problem. Inside, we sealed gaps around the doors and windows. The house was still pretty cold after an hour. We braved the mice and took the stairs to the basement, which was freezing. One of the windows was missing a glass pane. We used spray foam and cardboard wrapped in plastic to close it. Upstairs the temperature started approaching 64 F (17.8 C).

As we sat in the warming house, she told me that her hours working at a hardware store had been cut, and she wanted to save money before Christmas, when she had holiday travel plans.

After the holidays, I asked whether the weather sealing had helped. She sighed. Before she left for her Christmas trip, Hannah had turned off the heat, hoping to cut down her bill. While she was gone, the outdoor temperature dropped below 20 F (-6.6 C).

When she got back, she couldn’t open the front door, and part of the front porch had morphed into an ice skating rink. Without heat, her indoor pipes had frozen and cracked. When temperatures climbed above freezing, water poured out all over everything - and froze again when it got colder. Her landlord had to call a handyman to break through a window and slide across the living room to unlock the front door.

Her landlord probably spent tens of thousands of dollars repairing the apartment, while Hannah had to search for another place to live. All because she was trying to cut her bill by about \$100.

When my grandmother’s family got electricity, it wasn’t a necessity. They used a woodstove and an icebox, and they lived largely the same way after getting a light bulb as they had before. That’s no longer possible. Today, nearly every basic household need requires energy.

By 1991, energy scholar Brenda Boardman’s landmark work on fuel poverty declared that energy for warmth was a necessity, and said a household should spend less than 10% of its income to keep its home adequately warm, which the World Health Organization says is 69.8 F (21 C).

The more recent concept of “energy burden” includes the idea that a home should spend less than 6% of its income on energy bills. But it says nothing about comfort - about enough heat to stay warm, or enough cooling to prevent babies from getting heat rashes. (AP)

Delivers investment returns, takaful coverage, and flexibility

KFH: Build your children’s educational future with Jameati investment plan

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continues to offer its Jameati investment plan, reinforcing its commitment as a trusted financial partner helping parents secure higher education for their children.

To qualify for this long-term plan, account holders should be between 21 and 61 years of age, and the targeted child should be 14 years old or younger. The investment period spans 4 to 18 years. Once the child reaches college age, the accumulated savings and generated returns are disbursed to cover higher education expenses, paving the way for a successful future.

Several features

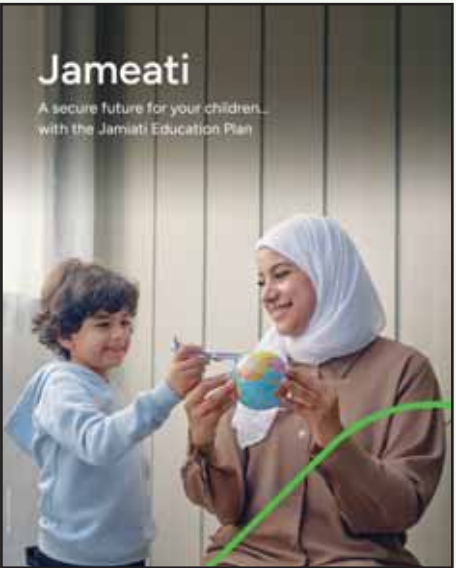
KFH’s Jameati investment plan offers numerous benefits, allowing customers the flexibility to adjust their total investment amount or monthly contributions at any time. Additionally, customers can withdraw up to 60 percent of their balance during the first year, as well as up to 60 percent each year after the initial withdrawal. The full investment amount, along with all accumulated profits, becomes fully available at the end of the plan term.

Customers may also cancel the investment plan at any time. Upon cancellation, the invested principal and all profits earned up to that date will be

refunded directly to the customer’s account.

This innovative plan provides an excellent opportunity for KFH customers to plan for their children’s academic ambitions through a robust, long-term savings and investment solution. By combining investment returns, Takaful coverage, and high flexibility, this solution enhances family financial stability and builds confidence in meeting future educational needs.

Furthermore, this investment opportunity aligns with KFH’s strategy to fulfill evolving customer demands. It reflects the Bank’s commitment to promoting lasting financial security within the community through active saving, investing, and structured financial planning.



Jameati Investment Plan poster



Digital Card

Delivering faster, smarter services

ABK enhances mobile app with instant card issuance

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is redefining convenience in digital banking, enabling customers to request and instantly issue credit and prepaid cards digitally and with ease through its continuously enhanced mobile app. The service marks a major milestone in the Bank’s ongoing digital transformation journey, delivering advanced solutions that put customers fully in control of their cards, instantly, securely, and without ever needing to visit a branch.

Through this service, customers can request and activate their cards directly via the ABK mobile app, use them for online shopping and digital payments backed by the highest security standards, as well as effortlessly top up their cards and manage spending anytime and anywhere.

Commenting on the launch, Khalil AlQattan, Chief Digital Transformation and Innovation Officer at ABK, said that the introduction of digital issuance of credit and prepaid cards through the app reflects the Bank’s comprehensive digital development strategy and its unwavering commitment to innovation, delivering the latest banking solutions that anticipate customers’ evolving expectations and match the pace of their fast-moving lifestyles.

He said, “The launch of digital cards directly transforms the customer experience by delivering instant, secure and environmentally friendly financial solutions. The ability to issue, activate and use a card within seconds, with no waiting time nor the need to print a physical plastic card, reflects our unwavering commitment to pioneering banking services that are aligned with future aspirations and the demands of today’s fast-paced lifestyles.”

AlQattan explained that this



Khalil AlQattan, Chief Digital Transformation & Innovation Officer

step is a decisive move toward greater financial inclusion in the local market by offering flexible solutions suited to customers’ changing spending behaviours. He noted that the solution puts users firmly in the driver’s seats, empowering them to set spending limits across every payment channels, access their cards virtually for secure online shopping, and instantly activate or suspend them through the app. This represents a powerful step forward in strengthening customers’ financial confidence and giving them complete command over their digital transactions.

He added that the initiative underscores the Bank’s sustained investment in cutting-edge digital infrastructure and its unwavering commitment to delivering a seamless banking experience built on the highest standards of security and quality at all times.

In closing, he affirmed that ABK will continue pushing the boundaries of innovation, introducing more advanced products through its app, to deliver exceptional value and a best-in-class banking experience to every customer segment.

First Lexus SUV Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) introduced in Kuwait

ALSAYER Lexus introduces all-new electrified RZ500e

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. W.L.L and Lexus announced the launch of the all-new RZ500e, marking the first introduction of a Lexus SUV Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) in the region. Purpose-built from the ground up as a dedicated BEV, the RZ500e represents a significant milestone in the brand’s electrification journey and symbolizes the next phase of VOLT POWER in its commitment toward carbon neutrality.

2026 Lexus RZ 500e — The New Generation of Electric Luxury

The 2026 Lexus RZ 500e combines powerful performance, intelligent technology, and the renowned Japanese craftsmanship that defines the Lexus brand.

- Key Highlights:**
- **More Powerful Electric Performance:** Delivers up to 375 horsepower, paired with the intelligent DIRECT4 all-wheel-drive system. Its enhanced dual-motor setup provides exceptional stability and precise control in a wide range of driving conditions.
 - **New 77 kWh Battery:** Offers a longer driving range and improved efficiency, along with faster charging and battery pre-conditioning technology, making charging quicker and more convenient.
 - **Quieter and More Comfortable Ride:** Enhanced sound insulation and a stiffer body structure create a smoother, more refined driving experience.
 - **Futuristic Cabin:** Features a premium interior equipped with a fully featured 14-inch digital display, delivering a modern and intuitive driving environment.
 - **Advanced Lexus Safety System-+:** Provides proactive protection and greater driver confidence through a comprehensive suite of advanced driver-assistance technologies.
 - **Steer-by-Wire Technology:** For the first time, Lexus introduces Steer-by-Wire technology on selected grades and in certain markets, offering quicker steering response, greater precision, and a more engaging connection between the driver and the road.

- **Intelligently Engineered BEV system delivers higher torque output, extended driving range, and reduced charging time**
- **Enhanced DIRECT4 all-wheel drive system deepens the Lexus Driving Signature**

Since pioneering electrification in the luxury segment with the RX400h in 2005, Lexus has continuously pursued a balance between driving performance and environmental responsibility. With the RZ500e, Lexus deepens that philosophy, delivering a fully electric SUV that embodies the brand’s distinctive driving character and emotionally engaging design, brought to life through advanced electrification technologies.

The new RZ500e features a completely redesigned BEV system, refined platform dynamics, and an evolved all-wheel-drive system. Together, these advancements enhance “The Natural” driving concept and further deepen the uniquely enjoyable driving feel recognized as the Lexus Driving Signature.

Commenting on the introduction of the new RZ500e, Lexus International Chief Engineer said: “Lexus is committed to refining electrification technologies to enhance the fundamental joy of driving and deliver new driving experiences. At the Toyota Technical Center Shimoyama (TTC-S), engineers and professional drivers work together on test courses designed to replicate demanding road conditions, rigorously refining the vehicle’s core performance. Moving forward, Lexus will continue to push the boundaries of its signature driving experience by seamlessly integrating cutting-edge hardware and software.”

According to Mahmoud Abou Zahr Senior Business Director Lexus Kuwait: At ALSAYER, we believe going electric shouldn’t mean compromising on convenience. As part of our Volt Power initiative, every Lexus RZ500e customer in Kuwait can now experience our most advanced electric drive technology, backed by the added benefit of a complimentary home charging station installation. It’s our way of mak-

ing the transition to electric mobility as seamless and rewarding as the drive itself.”

At the heart of the RZ500e is a fully redesigned battery electric system developed with relentless focus on core BEV performance. A newly developed high-capacity lithium-ion battery incorporates improved battery cells and an increased number of cells, enabling the integration of high-output motors and a newly developed eAxe featuring enhanced inverter efficiency. This results in significantly higher motor output, improved energy efficiency, and reduced power loss across the system.

The increased battery capacity and optimized battery pack structure contribute to an extended driving range, ensuring greater confidence for customers whether commuting daily or traveling longer distances. Improvements to the onboard charger and charging functionality further enhance charging performance, reducing charging time and improving overall convenience. By optimizing battery characteristics, cooling systems, and charging control strategies, Lexus ensures that the RZ500e delivers both performance and practicality suited to modern driving lifestyles.

Additionally, the BEV system utilizes a water-cooling configuration that supports sustained performance while maintaining thermal stability. By thoroughly reassessing battery capacity, battery pack structure, and charging systems, Lexus achieves not only stronger acceleration performance but also enhanced energy efficiency, reinforcing the RZ’s capability as a refined and capable luxury BEV.

Beyond powertrain advancements, Lexus has elevated the driving experience through refinements to the dedicated e-TNGA platform, which was developed exclusively for

battery electric vehicles. This architecture places the battery beneath the floor, creating a low center of gravity that enhances stability, improves body balance, and contributes to dynamic handling characteristics while maintaining excellent ride comfort.

The exterior design of the RZ500e expresses the evolution of Lexus’ iconic design in the category into a “spindle body,” creating a clean, aerodynamic form that emphasizes both performance and elegance. The sculpted body lines and aerodynamic surfaces combine to project a confident yet progressive presence on the road.

Inside, the RZ500e delivers a clean and open interior designed around comfort and functionality. The cabin layout emphasizes modern luxury and intuitive operation, supporting a calm and focused driving experience. Carefully selected materials and advanced sound insulation create a refined atmosphere aligned with Lexus craftsmanship principles.

To ensure optimal comfort in the region’s climate, the RZ500e adopts exclusive tuning for its air conditioning system. Features include IR cut glass to reduce heat intrusion and seat ventilation for enhanced occupant comfort. These refinements ensure stable cooling performance even in high-temperature environments, reinforcing the RZ500e suitability for regional driving conditions.

As the first Lexus SUV BEV, the RZ500e represents more than a new model launch. It signals Lexus’ continued evolution toward a carbon-neutral society while maintaining the emotional and dynamic qualities that define the brand. By combining a fully redesigned BEV system, refined driving fundamentals, advanced all-wheel-drive control, and exceptional quietness, the RZ500e delivers a uniquely Lexus interpretation of electric mobility.

With the introduction of the RZ500e, Lexus brings the next chapter of VOLT POWER, where advanced electrification technologies enhance performance, elevate driving pleasure, and contribute to a more sustainable future.



Save money and gas with a used hybrid vehicle. Here are some picks

Buying a used car can be a smart money move. During a typical ownership cycle, the cost of a used vehicle is usually significantly lower than buying or leasing a new car. Choose one that’s only a few years old, and it will likely have relatively low miles and plenty of reliable years ahead at a nicer price than getting a new vehicle. You can save even more by selecting a fuel-efficient hybrid model known for reliability.

To create this list of the best used 3-year-old hybrids, Edmunds examined fuel economy ratings, brand-level reliability, crash test scores, and overall appeal as a daily driver. Any one of these five hybrids from the 2023 model year will likely serve you well while saving you money. The prices listed below are what you can expect to pay at nationwide dealerships such as CarMax or Carvana.

Toyota redesigned the Prius for the 2023 model year, keeping its traditional aerodynamic hatchback shape while adding rakishly attractive styling. For the first time, the new design made the Prius a car you might want for its looks as much as for its fuel efficiency. Toyota also dramatically improved the car’s performance without reducing fuel economy. Open the rear hatch, and the Prius has

a roomy trunk that expands with the back seat folded down. The downsides to this version of the Prius include a cramped interior and poor outward visibility, but you might decide those are small prices to pay for one of the most fuel-efficient hybrids that money can buy.

2023 Prius average price: approximately \$30,000
EPA-estimated fuel economy: up to 57 mpg combined

The Honda Accord is about as roomy as you can get for a midsize sedan. There’s plenty of rear legroom for adults, and there is an abundance of room in the trunk for all of your things. For the redesigned 2023 Accord, Honda installed its latest hybrid powertrain, which delivers satisfying acceleration and impressive fuel economy. It also made the hybrid powertrain standard on most of the Accord’s available trim levels. The main issue with the Accord is that you must buy the top Touring trim to get the hybrid powertrain and the most desirable technology features. Also, make sure to choose one equipped with blind-spot warning, an important safety feature.

2023 Accord Hybrid average price: approximately \$28,500
EPA-estimated fuel economy: up to 48 mpg combined

The Honda CR-V is a longtime favorite for small SUV shoppers, and there are plenty of reasons why. The CR-V offers roomy seating, a smooth ride over bumps, and plenty of cargo space. As with the Accord, Honda redesigned the CR-V for the 2023 model year and equipped it with its latest hybrid powertrain. The Sport and Sport Touring trims come with the hybrid as standard. As with the Accord, the CR-V’s best infotainment tech features are available only on the top trim level. Blind-spot warning is not standard, so select accordingly.

2023 CR-V Hybrid average price: approximately \$33,000
EPA-estimated fuel economy: up to 40 mpg combined

It wasn’t long ago that the idea of an eight-passenger, three-row midsize SUV offering fuel economy estimates in the mid-30s would have been considered an impossibility, but the Highlander Hybrid makes it a reality. This is a sensible SUV that’s easy to drive and can seat up to eight people with its third-row seat raised. That third-row seat is pretty small, though, so it’s best to think of it for occasional use only. The 2023 Highlander Hybrid received some tech upgrades, so look for one with the big 12.3-inch center touchscreen. (AP)

From medications to groceries: Amazon drones carry up to 5 lbs

Amazon set to expand drone delivery of lightweight packages to 500 US cities

NEW YORK, Aug 19, (AP): Millions more people may be able to get smaller, lightweight Amazon packages delivered by drones by the end of the year under a plan the company announced Thursday to expand the airborne shipping to suburban areas in nearly 500 U.S. cities.

Customers could receive the drone deliveries in as fast as 30 minutes, Amazon said in a news release. The drones can carry packages up to 5 pounds.

The plan will intensify the battle between Amazon and Walmart to provide consumers with the fastest delivery times. Both giants rely on a mix of drones and drivers to deliver everything consumers have ordered.

Amazon’s plan would expand its drone delivery operation more than six-fold nationwide into hundreds of new communities, including the Chicago, Atlanta, Cleveland and Boise metro areas. The drones will primarily fly in the suburbs well away from skyscrapers and major airports that could cause problems.

Hundreds of thousands of packages have already been delivered by Amazon drones this year, but even after this expansion drones will still only handle a fraction of the hundreds of millions of package deliveries each year. In addition to only being able to carry 5 pounds, the drones Amazon builds face countless challenges from tree cover to landscaping and inflatable pools that can make it hard to find a good drop zone.

There are also regulatory hurdles to overcome in every community where Amazon wants to set up operations. Noise concerns also pose a potential challenge.

“It’s still an experiment. It’s still in test and learn mode,” said Sucharita Kodali, who is a retail analyst with Forrester.

Initially, consumers might order something delivered by drone because they are curious about it, but it’s not clear how often they will continue to use the



An Amazon company logo marks the facade of a building, March 18, 2022, in Schoenefeld near Berlin. (AP Photo/Michael Sohn, File)

service, and Amazon is still working out the economics, Kodali said.

The service will be free for Amazon Prime members who are ordering more than \$50 worth of goods, but smaller orders will cost members \$2.99. Non-members will pay \$4.99 for drone delivery.

Prime members get free deliveries while non-members pay a flat fee if the shipment is under \$35 for standard delivery or up to \$12.99 for same-day shipments when available.

Kodali said drones could prove more useful for certain light-weight deliveries that are needed urgently like prescription medications.

DoorDash and other delivery companies also are experimenting with using drones to deliver foods and other goods.

Amazon’s CEO Andy Jassy told shareholders in his annual letter in April that the company has learned a great deal by flying drones in 11 sites across Arizona, Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Nebraska, and Texas. In each location, the drones launch from an Amazon warehouse and cover about 175 square miles, so it takes multiple drone launching locations to serve a large metro area.

“Prime Air now has a design that’ll scale, plans to serve communities with 30 million customers by year-end, and expects to deliver half a billion packages by the end of this decade (with an aim to deliver inside 30 minutes),” Jassy wrote.

Amazon is also continuing to invest in its warehouses, smaller fulfillment centers closer to customers and its fleet of trucks as the company competes to deliver packages within minutes or hours instead of just days.

Amazon is already certified by the Federal Aviation Administration and the company has been awarded waivers to fly drones beyond the line of sight of the pilots. Amazon has invested in safety measures to help drones avoid collisions with anything else in the sky while they are making deliveries.

The federal government has proposed a rule that would allow more drone operators to fly beyond the horizon, but that hasn’t been finalized yet.

Digital sales surge 8.7%

Target lifts outlook as turnaround takes hold

NEW YORK, Aug 19, (AP): Target reported its second straight quarter of comparable sales gains on Wednesday, saying that a merchandising overhaul under the retailer’s new CEO is attracting more customers and boosting sales throughout its stores.

The retailer also benefited from a tariff refund of \$994 million after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled this year that the Trump administration had overstepped its authority when the tariffs were implemented.

There is a lot of interest in how tariff refunds from the U.S. government will impact retailers and whether those refunds will be used to lower prices for customers.

Chief Financial Officer Jim Lee, when asked about tariff refunds this week, said the company continues to invest in lowering prices. Target reduced the prices of more than 10,000 items over the past year and “there’s more to come even as we’re facing headwinds overall,” Lee said.

Comparable sales, those coming from stores and digital channels operating for at least 12 months, rose 3.8% in the second quarter. The company also upgraded its annual profit and sales outlook, citing the solid performance during the first half of the year.

Target is emerging from more than a year of weak comparable sales. A 5.6% jump in the first quarter offset a 3.8% decline in 2025. The second-quarter gain followed a 1.9% drop a year ago.

Target CEO Michael Fiddelke, a 20-year company veteran who became chief executive in February, said the latest quarter was “an important step forward in the plan we laid out earlier this year to open a new chapter of growth for Target.”

Target also reported an increase in the number of customers going to its stores and shopping on its website from May through July.

“We’re encouraged by the progress made so far, and we’re also clear-eyed about the important work still ahead,” Fiddelke said.

In March, Fiddelke unveiled a \$6 billion plan to reverse Target’s sales slump and to reclaim the retailer’s reputation as a place to go for affordable yet stylish apparel and home goods.

More than half of Target’s back-to-school merchandise is new, the company said.

That includes a limited-time collection of teen and tween clothes, school supplies and accessories in pastel colors and floral prints from the women’s lifestyle brand LoveShack Fancy. Target also collaborated with Hollister on a dorm decor collection.

Target recruited fashion designer and TV personality Isaac Mizrahi this summer to fill the newly created role of creative director at large. Mizrahi has been brought in to mentor Target designers, advise on product design and innovation, and forge new partnerships.

It is Mizrahi’s second partnership with Target. He became the first major fashion designer to collaborate with



A shopper exits a Target store, Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026, in Woodbury, Minn. (AP Photo/Ellen Schmidt)

the retailer in 2002 for a successful run.

Fiddelke is also remodeling Target stores and improving staffing. The company has more than 100 full-scale remodels underway, with a goal of reaching 130 this year, Fiddelke said Tuesday.

During the second quarter, comparable store sales - sales from established physical stores - increased 2.7%, while increased same-day deliveries pushed digital comparable sales up 8.7%.

Target is one of the first big retailers to report second-quarter financial results, which could give industry analysts and economists another read on whether ongoing price pressures from the conflict in Iran impacted consumer behavior.

The Commerce Department released a report Friday showing weak retail sales in July. The University of Michigan’s consumer sentiment index, also released Friday, showed greater pessimism about the economy this month, likely driven by stubbornly high prices.

Target’s overall sales increased in all six of its main merchandising categories, led by double-digit growth in what the company calls Fun 101 - a division that includes consumer electronics, toys, trading cards, sports paraphernalia, books and gaming items.

Net income was \$1.87 billion, or \$4.11 per share, for the three months ended Aug. 1, easily beating the \$2.34 per share that Wall Street had expected, according to a survey by FactSet. It also outpaced last year’s \$935 million, or \$2.05 per share. Yet this year also included millions from tariff refunds, which amounted to \$1.65 in earnings per share, Target said.

Net sales rose 5.3% to \$26.54 billion for the period.

Target now expects sales to increase 5%, up from its earlier predictions for a 4% gain. It also expects earnings per share for the full year to be in the range of \$9.90 to \$10.90. Analysts expect \$8.52 per share for the year, according to FactSet.

Shares in Chinese humanoid robot maker Unitree soar in its Shanghai trading debut

HONG KONG, Aug 19, (AP): Shares of Unitree, one of China’s largest humanoid robot makers, initially soared as much as 629% in its public stock trading debut Wednesday in Shanghai, in the latest highlight of investor optimism over China’s technological advances.

The company, founded in 2016 by entrepreneur Wang Xingxing in the eastern Chinese technology hub of Hangzhou, raised around 6.1 billion yuan (\$904 million) in its listing on the Shanghai Stock Exchange’s Nasdaq-style STAR market. The shares were priced at 150.80 yuan (\$22.36) a share. Its shares closed 460% higher at 845 yuan (\$125.31).

Advanced robotics, often referred to as “embodied” artificial intelligence, is a key sector in the heated technology rivalry between China and the U.S. China leads the U.S. in terms of production capacity of humanoid robots and the ability to scale up manufacturing.

Last year, of the roughly 15,000 humanoid robots shipped globally, Unitree and AGIBOT, another major Chinese humanoid robot maker, each shipped more than 5,000, according to technology research and advisory group Omdia, way ahead of their U.S. counterparts. For the first half of 2026, Omdia’s estimates put Chinese humanoid robot makers’ total global shipments at around 18,500 units.

But analysts say for now, many of these humanoid robots are still mainly used for demonstrations, performances and research rather than real-world applications. Unitree’s humanoid robots, for example, dazzled audiences at China’s annual Spring Festival gala by performing backflips and martial arts.

“The real competitive test will be whether companies - Chinese or American - can achieve reliable performance and attractive returns on investment in large-scale industrial and commercial deployments,” analyst Kangyuxiao Li at investment research firm Morningstar said in a commentary.

Unitree said proceeds from the IPO will be used for advanced robot research and development and development of its robot manufacturing base.

The company is the first publicly traded humanoid robotics maker in mainland China. Analysts believe the IPO could set a precedent for valuations of other robotic company stock offerings.

It “gives mainland investors direct exposure to one of the sector’s leading companies,” said Li at Morningstar.

Unitree’s debut coincided with the World Robot Conference in Beijing, featuring more than 300 exhibitors. Chinese leaders made robots a development priority.

UBTech, another major Chinese humanoid robot maker, has shares traded in Hong Kong. Its shares fell more than 10% on Wednesday.



Exhibitors watch a robot play table tennis at a booth of Unitree, one of China’s largest humanoid robot makers, during the World Robot Conference at the Beijing Yichuang International Convention and Exhibition Centre in Beijing, Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2026. (AP Photo/Andy Wong)

Unitree reported about 1.7 billion yuan (about \$250 million) in revenue in 2025, mainly from sales of its humanoid robots and quadruped robots, often referring to four-legged robot dogs. More than 40% of that revenue was from overseas.

Last year, the U.S. accounted for roughly 13% of Unitree’s revenue, the company said. But that was before the U.S. Federal Communications Commission banned imports of new foreign-made humanoid and quadruped robots in July on national security grounds.

Unitree cautioned that the U.S. ban, which it said applies to its new models, could affect its future sales in the U.S. market. Existing models of its advanced robots can still be sold, but Unitree faces the risk that the U.S. could further expand its restrictions.

Lian Jye Su of Omdia said Chinese robot makers will likely seek to expand in major markets outside of the U.S., such as Europe.

Sugar ban lifted by Trump, but abuses continue

Watchdog calls for US import ban as forced labor persists in Dominican sugarcane fields

SAN JUAN, Aug 19, (AP): A report released Tuesday by a human rights group found that forced labor persists on massive sugarcane plantations across the Dominican Republic, which exports sugar and other products to the U.S. - its largest market.

The nonprofit Corporate Accountability Lab said it spent more than three years investigating the working conditions on plantations owned by Central Romana Corporation, Ltd., the largest employer and landowner in the Dominican Republic. Its owners have ties to U.S. President Donald Trump and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the report noted.

Central Romana Corporation was previously investigated by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which accused the company of isolating workers, withholding wages, fostering abusive working and living conditions and pushing for excessive overtime. In 2022, the U.S. imposed a ban on imports of sugar and related products made by the company, but the ban was reversed last year under the Trump administration.

One of the owners of Central Romana is the Florida-based Fanjul Corp., which owns Florida Crystals. The Fanjul family has close ties to Trump and the Dominican government, the report stated.

The human rights group called on the U.S. government to reinstate the ban.

“As long as sugar and other well-positioned interests enjoy the benefits of such market access while ignoring labor rights abuses in their supply chains, U.S. policy will remain complicit in the very kinds of abuse it claims to oppose,” the nonprofit said.

Local civil society groups estimate that up to 8,000 workers toil in the company’s sugarcane fields that span more than 173,700 acres.

They have long complained about a lack of wages and of being forced to live in cramped housing that often lacks water or electricity, as verified by Associated Press journalists in recent years. Many of them are Haitian migrants or descendants of them, who, despite being born in the Dominican Republic, do not have citizenship.

The report quoted one unidentified worker as saying that he doesn’t have any documents to get another

job: “Why would we stay? This way we are their slaves.”

Corporate Accountability Lab called on Central Romana Corporation to enroll workers in the country’s social security system; pay them at least the minimum day wage; allow them to join an independent union and protect their health, among other things.

One unidentified worker was quoted as saying that company employees assign jobs and make decisions about how much someone is owed: “They are always underpaying us, but we can’t fight for them to pay us justly because we don’t have that kind of power.”

The nonprofit asserted that a “climate of fear ... pervades the industry” as it called on sugar customers to adhere to a proposed code of conduct that would be developed by workers.

“I want to complain every week, but since everyone is so scared, nobody will support you,” one unidentified worker was quoted as saying.

Such fears were reflected in a recent study by the U.S. Department of Labor, with the U.S. government also describing living conditions on plantations as “inhumane” and “abusive.”

The report by Corporate Accountability Lab included comment from Central Romana Corporation, which was quoted as saying that the report was “riddled with inaccuracies and untruths” and that the company had not violated local laws or international labor standards. The company did not immediately respond to a request seeking additional comment.

Corporate Accountability Lab called on the Dominican government to regularize the immigration status of all those recruited to work on sugarcane fields, to disburse owed pensions and enforce labor and environmental laws.

The organization found that two types of workers are most vulnerable: elderly cane cutters who have not received their retirement benefits and those who are stateless.

“Governments of all countries should prohibit the importation of sugar and sugar-based products made with forced labor in the Dominican Republic,” the nonprofit said.

Afghan grape farmers turn to raisins as Pakistan border closures slash exports

KABUL, Aug 19, (AP): It’s grape season in Afghanistan’s southern province of Kandahar, and the harvest this year is plentiful. But that’s small comfort for the region’s grape producers and workers, who say fighting between Afghanistan and Pakistan has left them unable to access their primary market.

For months, the two countries have traded fire sporadically across their long, mountainous border, leaving hundreds of people dead. Islamabad accuses Afghanistan’s Taliban government of harboring militants who carry out attacks inside Pakistan - a charge Kabul denies.

With the fighting have come border closures, severing a critical trade route and preventing Afghan producers from reaching what is the primary export market for many goods.

Unable to export their fresh fruit, Afghan grape producers have turned to the domestic market, where the increased supply has sent prices tumbling. To adapt, many producers are now drying their grapes and turning them into raisins - a cheaper product that sells for less.

In a long warehouse in Kandahar’s Zhari district, fans whirl overhead, stirring the hot summer air around bunches of plump, green grapes draped over sticks set up in rows to dry.

But even for raisins, prices have tanked.

Sakhi Jan, who owns a grape orchard in Zhari, says that with 10 people in his household to feed, he’s barely getting by. Seven kilograms (15.5 pounds) of raisins used to sell for around 1,000 to 1,200 afghanis (\$13 to \$16), he says. Now, the same amount sells for just 400-450 afghanis (\$5-\$6).

In a country where poverty is rife and malnutrition strikes the most vulnerable, such income losses can be critical.

“We are grateful, but things aren’t like they used to be, the struggle is much harder now,” Jan said. “In the past, work was steady, we used to sell some grapes, and people generally had good work but now the hardship is immense.”

Opening the border crossings and allowing trade to flow once more is critical, he stressed.

“We urge both our government and Pakistan to open these routes and reach an agreement,” he said. “The current situation is causing great hardship.”

Abdul Baqi Bina, the deputy director of the Kandahar Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said the border closure has dealt a severe



Ahmad Shah arranges green grapes to dry into raisins at a warehouse in Zhari district, Kandahar province, Afghanistan, Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2026. (AP Photo/Sibghatullah)

blow to Afghanistan’s fruit exports - not just grapes, but also pomegranates.

In 2025, five southern Afghan provinces that make up the country’s main grape-producing region exported 44,225 tons - \$13.8 million worth of grapes. Nearly all - 43,000 tons - went to Pakistan and the remainder headed to Bangladesh, Iraq and India, Bina said. So far this year, only 256 tons have been exported, at a value of \$100,000.

For grape exporter Haji Abdul Hai, it has been a disaster.

“In my 50 years of life, I have never seen these roads closed to the extent they are now,” he said, adding that previous border closures would usually last for a few days, or one crossing would close while another remained open.

“But now, we are facing truly major difficulties,” he said.



Abla Al-Failakawi shares her expertise with participants during the net weaving workshop, part of the 18th Summer Cultural Festival.

From mesh to masterpiece

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19, (KUNA): Threads were transformed into vibrant, colorful and intricately patterned artworks in the net weaving workshop conducted by Abla Al-Failakawi and Amal Al-Shatti as part of the 18th Summer Cultural Festival organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), in collaboration with Bait Al-Sadu.

Al-Failakawi told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Tuesday that net weaving entails the use of wire mesh and decorating it with wool or cotton threads to create patterns based on the square unit, which can be arranged in various designs.

She said the participants learn the fundamentals of this art form during the workshop, and then apply them by selecting and mixing a range of colors to suit the space

where the artwork will be displayed.

She explained that the beauty of net weaving lies in the possibility of developing the idea, increasing the mesh size, and utilizing it in different applications. She added that this art can be used to produce furniture, utensils and decorative items.

She indicated that the workshop initially focuses on teaching participants the basics and simple techniques, then provides them with space for creativity and innovation.

The workshop is part of an initiative to promote arts and crafts, providing participants with an opportunity to discover their creative skills through practical experience and strengthening their connection to traditional crafts and methods of employing them in contemporary artworks.



KUNA photos

Abla Al-Failakawi demonstrates the art of net weaving as participants explore traditional techniques and contemporary creative possibilities.

Timekeeping: A reflection of culture, power, and progress

NEW YORK, Aug 19, (AP): It flies. It heals all wounds. It can be of the essence, and it can be money. We thrill in the best of it, lament the worst. We're warned not to waste it, since we can't turn it back - even as we try to make up for when it's lost.

And probably more than anything when it comes to time, most of us try to manage it - in our everyday lives and on a global scale, from the biology of our circadian rhythms to what constitutes a work day. Clocks. Calendars. Pendulums. Hourglasses. Sundials. Time zones.

For something that's been a pretty universal impulse to mark the shift of light and dark, the movement of the stars and the rhythms of the tides, the cycles of summer heat and winter cold, one might assume there's been a universal way of measuring time. That assumption would be wrong.

Take the shifting of the clock twice a year in most of the United States, once forward and then back again, a system that "moves" the time to let people enjoy daylight hours later into the evening.

While people love the light, a lot of them loathe having to make the change. So much so that the House of Representatives last month overwhelmingly passed legislation calling for the shift to become permanent year-round. Its prospects for passage in the Senate aren't high, and when the country tried it in the 1970s it was wildly unpopular and short-lived. But it continues to be brought up, an indication that the way we keep the clock counts.

The methods different peoples and communities have used to track their lives haven't existed in a vacuum. They've been impacted by culture, by religion, by economics and technology, by the governing principles



Left: People gather on top of the Feldberg mountain to watch the sunset near Frankfurt, Germany, June 21, 2025. Right: Performers celebrate the Glasgow Central railway station clock during the Commonwealth Games opening ceremony in Glasgow, Scotland, July 23, 2026. (AP)

both within nations and among them. Turns out, like pretty much anything where people are involved, there's a politics to time.

"Every measurement of time is arbitrary," says Elizabeth Cohen, a political science professor at Boston University who has written about how we chronicle time and how it impacts the way people relate to each other. "Every deadline could have been a fraction of a second or a large increment of time different than it was," she says. "None of it is natural."

Take calendars. We use them to give a structure to our lives, but the spectrum of what that has looked like is vast through human existence. Some followed the sun, others the moon, and others still a combination of both. Maybe all the months were the same length, maybe they weren't. What we call a seven-day week might have had four, or six, or some other number of days in other

timekeeping systems.

Even today, when the main calendar in use globally is what we know as the Gregorian calendar, with its 12 months and leap years, other calendars are still consulted for religious or cultural purposes in places from Israel to Thailand. And daylight saving time? With its connection to our perceptions of what hours of light become available to us, it reflects "a desire for natural time," says Michael O'Malley, professor of history at George Mason University.

People "are outside longer, so they feel it as a connection to nature," he says. "But it only makes sense in a society that's completely hypnotized by clocks so you think the clock is time."

It's not just about the how. When we think about how culture evolved around time, there's also the why.

For most of human history, there were ties to the rhythms of the natural world: the phases of the moon,



the rising and setting of the sun, the ebb and flow of the tides. And in agricultural societies, the importance of when to plant and when to harvest.

Tracking the sun's journey across the sky was a local endeavor. While the idea of a day broken down into 24 equal segments was important to groups like astronomers or seafarers, daily life was broken into "systems that tended to expand and contract based on the time of year and the location," says Kevin Birth, a professor of anthropology at Queens College.

"But since people weren't really traveling back and forth with any great rapidity back," he says, "then it really didn't matter."

Industrialization - in the form of the Industrial Revolution that started in 18th-century England and spread - pushed people to shift notions of time. No longer was it about the sun's cycle or the turn of the seasons. Industrial production meant schedules - people paying attention

to the clock because they were due for specific shifts.

"It was one of the goals of industrialization to instill in people this regular, unvarying sense of time," O'Malley says.

Contrast that to a preindustrial farmer, he says. "You could have an ethic of hard work, but that work is not going to be governed by a clock. It's typically going to be governed by natural cues. The clock establishes this external authority that's not you."

In the United States, by the mid-1800s, another issue arose: time zones. There were more than 40 based around cities, which O'Malley says forced railroad companies to switch dynamically as trains traveled.

Worried that other entities would standardize the zones and disrupt their businesses, the companies acted. "The American Railway Association got all the American railroads

to agree that on Nov. 18, 1883, they would declare a four-zone system in effect in America," O'Malley says. "And they just announced it."

It's hardly the only occasion where the perception of time has involved national or global concerns.

Take the Prime Meridian, the entirely made-up longitude line running from the North Pole to the South Pole, that divides Earth into eastern and western hemispheres and is used as the basis for global time-keeping as well as navigation.

It runs through Greenwich, England, and was selected at an international conference in 1884. Was that because Greenwich was the ideal place? No, Birth says - it simply was established during "a period when the British Empire was one of the dominant empires in the world."

Time zones themselves "are about politics," he says, pointing out that they are not divided in a standard format. Countries decide their own, and in the U.S., the individual states can decide if they observe Daylight Saving or not.

A prime example is China, which stretches more than 3,000 miles (5,000 kilometers) across Asia. It has one official time zone for the country, instituted when the Communist Party took power in 1949 as a form of national unity.

The entire country runs officially on Beijing time, but the reality on the ground when the sun rises in eastern China hours before it rises in western China is people adjust with their own local times for daily life, Birth says.

Time can also be a tool used in a society to manage dissent and protest, Cohen says. She pointed to examples like governments instituting curfews or protesters engaging in slowdowns or strikes.

App offers homework and study support to help teens learn

OpenAI launches ChatGPT for teens with stricter safety rules

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug 19, (AP): OpenAI on Tuesday introduced a version of ChatGPT designed for teenagers - the first generation to grow up with artificial intelligence - who are already using it for schoolwork, questions about daily life and even companionship.

The San Francisco-based company says ChatGPT for Teens is tailored for kids ages 13 to 17 with stronger protections including content restrictions around things like suicide, self-harm and romantic or sexual chats. It also provides homework and study support designed to help students learn rather than spit out answers and school essays.

The idea is to guide teens toward healthy AI use in an age-appropriate environment, the company said.

"We want to treat teens like teens, which means that we have to make sure that we're showing up with the right developmental stage when we're not either talking down to them or treating them like kids, but we're also making sure that they're not exposed to material that they shouldn't be exposed to," said Ann O'Leary, vice president of global policy at OpenAI.

The effectiveness of the safeguards remains to be seen, said Brendan Bouffard, associate general counsel for AI and privacy at children's advocacy group Fairplay. He said it is unclear whether OpenAI's actions are enough to address young users' compulsive use of and emotional dependence on chatbots.

"Announcements like these can be seen as a step in the right direction," he said. "But I also would caution against parents being lured into this false sense of safety based on the announcement."

Parents, educators and child development experts have been sounding alarms over children's use of AI chatbots, which have been blamed for facilitating cheating on schoolwork and even suicide. While even adults can fall victim to anthropomorphizing AI and developing unhealthy relationships with it, teenagers' brains are not yet fully developed and they can be particularly vulnerable.

Last year, research from a watchdog group found that ChatGPT would tell 13-year-olds how to get drunk and high, instruct them on how to conceal eat-



The ChatGPT app is displayed on an iPhone in New York, May 18, 2023. (AP)

ing disorders and even compose a heartbreaking suicide letter to their parents if asked. In interactions with researchers posing as vulnerable teens, ChatGPT typically warned against risky activity but went on to deliver startlingly detailed and personalized plans for drug use, calorie-restricted diets or self-injury.

In the U.S., more than 70% of teens are turning to AI chatbots for companionship and half use AI companions regularly, according to a 2025 study from Common Sense Media, a group that studies and advocates for using digital media sensibly.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has said the company is trying to study "emotional overreliance" on the technology, describing it last year as a "really common thing" with young people.

For users of ChatGPT for Teens, the chatbot is prevented from suggesting it has personal feelings toward the user or implying that it is conscious or experiences emotions, according to OpenAI. That's in addition to blocking romantic or sexual chats.

"We went through and identified what are the hypothetical cues that a model could give that might make a teenager kind of develop a relationship to it," said Allison Mishkin, head of child development at OpenAI.

OpenAI doesn't verify users' ages, but it already uses age assurance to estimate if someone is under 18 based on factors such as their types of queries. If someone is identified or identifies themselves as a minor, they are automatically placed into the teen version of the chatbot. This is similar to Meta's approach to teen accounts on Instagram, which have stricter content, chat and privacy restrictions than regular accounts.

To use parental controls, both the teen user and their parent or guardian have to opt in. But O'Leary said the idea with the teen chatbot is to "make sure that this is safe, even if you don't use parental controls." Parents with linked teen accounts can set "quiet hours" when their teen can't access ChatGPT, and receive safety notifications in limited high-risk situations, such as the possibility of a user hurting themself.

"We are adding additional notifications related to eating disorders, while limiting what is shared and focusing on moments when offline support may matter most," OpenAI said.

Bouffard of Fairplay said some of what he would consider to be the most important safeguards, such as restricting ChatGPT's long-term memory, are not in place by default in the teen accounts and would require the intervention of parental controls. That creates "a major gap in safety" despite the default protections around content and other areas of concern, he said.

Obituary

'World lost a uniquely gifted artist'

Beard, drummer who powered ZZ Top's biggest hits, dies at 77



ZZ Top drummer Frank Beard performs in Boston on Aug. 28, 2016. (AP)

NEW YORK, Aug 19, (AP): Frank Beard, the drummer for the Texas boogie-rock trio ZZ Top who kept the tempo for the band's biggest hits like "Sharp Dressed Man," "Gimme All Your Lovin'" and "Legs," has died. He was 77.

Beard was in hospice care when he died Tuesday at his ranch in Richmond, Texas, with family members at his side, according to publicist Bob Merlis. Band co-founder and guitarist Billy Gibbons, on tour with bassist Elwood Francis, hailed Beard in a statement.

"Today, Elwood and I lost a great friend and collaborator, and the world lost one of the most naturally innovative drummers and a great and true son of Texas. His signature backbeat was key to keeping ZZ on top. The band of which he was part for six decades is going to keep on keeping on as he had wished," Gibbons said.

ZZ Top sold more than 50 million records and had six singles that reached No. 1 on Billboard's Mainstream Rock Airplay chart. Seven of their albums have been in the Billboard 200's Top 10 and they earned three Grammy Award nominations.

"I've found the people I was meant to play with," Beard says in the 2019 documentary "ZZ Top: That Little Ol' Band from Texas." "I never wanted to quit, and never wanted to get fired."

Drummers went to social media to pay tribute to Beard's influence, including Rage Against the Machine's Brad Wilk, who wrote his mind was blown seeing Beard's two-hand shuffle live in high school. Former Guns N' Roses drummer Matt Sorum called Beard "a very special and unique man behind the kit."

Beard, from Frankston, Texas, met Gibbons in a band called The Moving Sidewalks and later introduced bassist and vocalist Dusty Hill who had been in several bands with Beard.

The trio formed ZZ Top in 1969, naming themselves in part after blues singer Z.Z. Hill and influenced by the British power trio Cream and Jimmy Reed. They maintained their original lineup for more than five decades. Their signature look - long, bushy beards on Gibbons and Hill, and dark sunglasses for all - didn't change much, either.

When Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards helped induct the trio into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2004, he joked: "These cats know their blues and they know how to dress it up. When I first saw them, I thought, 'I hope these guys are not on the run, because that disguise is not going to work.'"

ZZ Top songs - with their sly and humorous lyrics - were popular in Hollywood, which used "Gimme All Your Lovin'" in "Happy Feet," "Sharp Dressed Man" in "Evan Almighty," "Legs" in "Air," "Sleeping Bag" in "I, Tonya," "Tush" in "Dazed and Confused," "Mexican Blackbird" in "From Dusk Till Dawn" and "La Grange" in "Armageddon."

"The best way to describe ZZ Top is we're interpreters of a great American art form," Gibbons told The Dallas Morning News.

Their debut release, "ZZ Top's First Album," came out in 1970. Their sound was described as a hybrid mixing elements of rock, blues and funk into a steaming-hot Houston stew. They called themselves a "Little Ol' Band From Texas."

Music

20th album delivers hits with some filler

Weezer goes back to basics on 'Gold Album'

ATLANTA, Aug 19, (AP): Weezer, kings of nasal power pop, will release their 20th studio album on Friday. It is also known as "Weezer (Gold Album)," continuing a tradition of self-titled, color-identified records. And rest assured, it delivers the band's signature energy for the faithful.

That said, no boundaries are pushed here. But really, does Weezer need to push boundaries? It should be acceptable by now - 30-plus years removed from the destroyed sweaters of 1994's "Blue Album" - that the talented foursome, with lead vocalist Rivers Cuomo at the helm, does what it does best: Clock in and jam.

Opener "Say Yes" is an easy earworm, where Cuomo questions his place and his worth. It's a thinly veiled reflection that can't help but be read in reference to the Weezer career journey: "Somebody here's gonna slip me a happy pill / Make me feel dumb if I just can't seem to feel the thrill."

Cuomo and the boys have made it, and their "Gold Album" is good. Sure, there are filler tracks like "C.E.O." and "Nowhere," which went exactly there - with its redundant hook and shallow premise. But even those missteps are overpowered by stellar efforts, such as "We Might as Well Be Strangers" featuring the alt-country indie rock band Wednesday. Something has been lost, and



This image released by Warner Records shows the self-titled album by Weezer. (AP)

Cuomo sings believably about it in the lament: "Happy birthday / Thanks for the Valium."

There's a pattern to the Weezer song matrix. Something awkward is said, Cuomo sings his way toward the predicament, and the band breaks

through it all with a furtive blast of memorable hooks and trusty chord progressions. "We Might as Well Be Strangers," is a solid song and a perfect example, with its examination of a relationship giving way to nicely soaring guitar work. It's one of the top tracks.

Weezer has always had one foot in the room of stardom and the other waiting outside, laughing about how they've been accepted. They've long taken wry shots at the fame machine (think 2014's "Eulogy for a Rock Band," or this album's "The LA Sound") while basking in the oddity that a band of their ilk was ever allowed in to begin with. On their "Gold Album," fans of Weezer will appreciate their consistency and longevity.

That's because Weezer is in a retrospective mode now: Still joking. Still rocking. Still touring. Their self-described meta songs about aging will probably age just fine.

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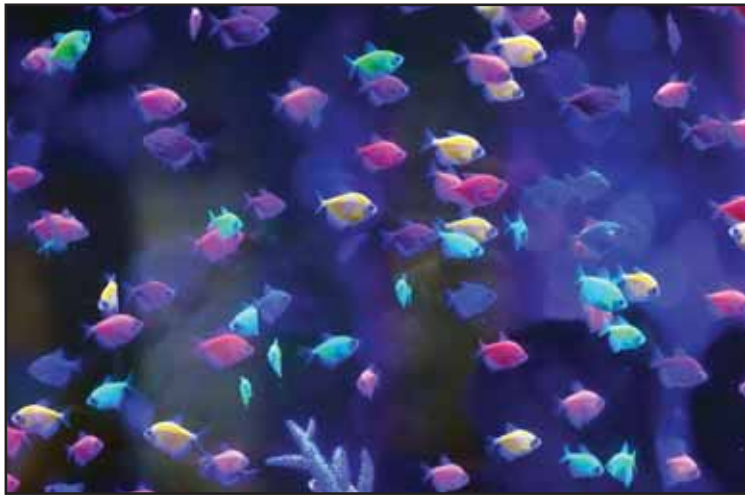
"Weezer (Gold Album)," by Weezer
Three stars out of five
On repeat: "Say So," "We Might as Well Be Strangers"
Skip it: "C.E.O.," "Nowhere"
For fans of: Barenaked Ladies and other heady, smart aleck bands

Pompano beach brings visitors up close with ancient ocean creatures

Florida's new museum is all about jellyfish



Iryna Pelypkanych, general manager of the Jellyfish Museum, is interviewed at the facility Friday, Aug. 14, 2026, in Pompano Beach, Fla. (AP)



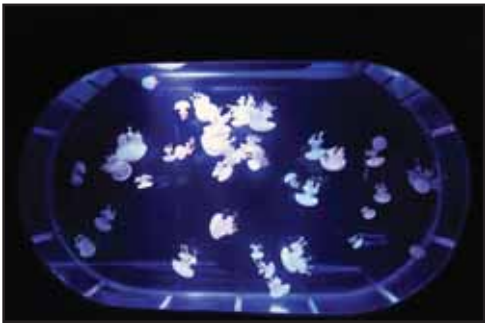
low fish are displayed at the Jellyfish Museum, a facility that is home to about 20 unique species of jellyfish found in Florida and other parts of the world, Friday, Aug. 14, 2026, in Pompano Beach, Fla. (AP)



Spotted jellyfish are displayed at the Jellyfish Museum, a facility that is home to about 20 unique species of jellyfish found in Florida and other parts of the world, Friday, Aug. 14, 2026, in Pompano Beach, Fla. (AP)



Moon jellyfish are displayed at the Jellyfish Museum, a facility that is home to about 20 unique species of jellyfish found in Florida and other parts of the world, Friday, Aug. 14, 2026, in Pompano Beach, Fla. (AP)



Papua jellyfish are displayed at the Jellyfish Museum, a facility that is home to about 20 unique species of jellyfish found in Florida and other parts of the world, Friday, Aug. 14, 2026, in Pompano Beach, Fla. (AP)

Meta trial begins over youth harm

OAKLAND, Calif., Aug 19, (AP): Meta is once again on trial over dangers its platforms may pose to children. It is once again arguing that it works tirelessly to keep them safe.

A pivotal trial for the parent company of Instagram and Facebook kicked off in a California federal court Tuesday, with four states seeking billions of dollars in damages as well as fundamental changes to how Meta runs its platforms.

A jury will decide whether the states' attorneys general have made their case that the tech giant designed its apps to "hook the users, hold them for as long as they can, harvest their data and hide the truth from the public," as Megan O'Neill, a deputy attorney general for the California Department of Justice, put it in her opening statement.

California, Colorado, Kentucky and New Jersey were among the 29 states that sued the tech giant in 2023 over child safety and privacy - the other 25 will go to trial later. The company also faces lawsuits in state courts, including one underway in Tennessee.

The lawsuit accuses Meta of contributing to the youth mental health crisis by knowingly and deliberately designing features that addict children to its platforms and hides these harms from the public. It also argues that Meta routinely collects data on children under 13 without their parents' consent, in violation of federal law.

The company has defended its safety record and said it has a strong case.

POMPANO BEACH, Fla., Aug 19, (AP): The floating tentacle predators pulse and swirl in hypnotic patterns in the dark museum space, lit primarily by images projected on the walls and the glowing light from the saltwater tanks.

The private Jellyfish Museum in Pompano Beach, Florida, just north of Fort Lauderdale, is believed to be the first museum in the United States dedicated solely to the translucent invertebrates, and one of the few such spaces in the world, according to the city and the museum's founders.

It was created by Alex and Yana Yanovsky, who previously developed successful aquariums in Ukraine, including their first jellyfish museum in Kyiv. The couple left those facilities behind when they fled Ukraine following the 2022 Russian invasion, operations manager Jessica

Eisenbarth said.

The museum, which opened this past spring, is the couple's first aquatic attraction since immigrating to the U.S., but they'd like to expand.

"When they left Ukraine, they moved to Florida, and then they immediately wanted to share their passion here," Eisenbarth said.

Jellyfish have survived for over 500 million years, making them older than dinosaurs and even trees. Their ancient origins are part of their allure, along with their hypnotic, pulsing movements. They have no heart or brain, and are made up primarily of water, giving them a translucent look.

Yana Yanovsky came up with the idea for the jellyfish museum after noticing how popular the jellyfish were at their other aquariums.

"Jellyfish are some of the most

resilient creatures on Earth. While they lack a brain, they maintain a simple nerve net that allows them to respond to their environment," Yana said in a statement provided by the city. "Their movement is mesmerizing, almost meditative, and they play an important role in marine ecosystems."

Monty Graham, director of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, said he's not surprised someone made an aquarium dedicated specifically to jellyfish. He credits the Monterey Bay Aquarium in California with kicking off the popularity of jellyfish exhibits at aquariums all over the world. Monterey Bay Aquarium began displaying jellyfish in temporary exhibits in 1985 and opened a permanent gallery in 1996.

"Jellyfish are cool, they're things

that people don't get to see up close unless they're scuba diving," Graham said. "So here was this opportunity, in a controlled environment, very beautiful settings. It clicked all the buttons and checked all the boxes, and it was a very good, positive thing."

The nearly 10,000-square-foot (900 square meters) Jellyfish Museum houses roughly 20 unique species of jellyfish found in Florida waters and other parts of the world. Different species can be rotated through the museum's 21 tanks. Some current occupants include Japanese sea nettles, moon jellyfish, spotted jellies and upside-down jellyfish, the last of which can be found among Florida's mangrove swamps.

The jellyfish are acquired through licensed aquaculture partners, according to the city.



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, the Zhuque-3 Y2 rocket takes off at the Dongfeng commercial space innovation pilot zone in northwestern China on Aug. 19. (AP)

China recovers rocket stage on land for first time, after earlier recovery at sea

BEIJING, Aug 19, (AP): China has successfully recaptured the first stage of a rocket on land for the first time, state media reported Wednesday, as the country seeks to advance its space program.

Although this marks China’s first successful recovery on land, it is the second time the country has recovered a rocket stage, following a successful recovery on a sea platform in July.

Chinese state news agency Xinhua said the reusable rocket, Zhuque-3, was launched Wednesday morning and that the rocket’s first stage was recovered afterward.

Elon Musk’s SpaceX and Jeff Bezos’ Blue Origin have been recovering rockets since 2015, helping drive down launch costs by reusing hardware that would otherwise be discarded after carrying satellites and other payloads toward space.

Xinhua said that Wednesday’s recovery also marked China’s first use of deployable landing legs and deemed the result “a major breakthrough in the country’s reusable rocket technology.”

On July 10, the first stage of a Long March-10B rocket separated from the second stage after liftoff and returned to a platform at sea. That time, it was recovered using a net-capture system.

The next day, on July 11, Japan conducted the first test flight of an experimental reusable rocket, which took off and safely landed.

Japan is also trying to catch up with the technology

needed to cut launch costs and compete in the global space market.

Also:

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla: A NASA spacecraft circling the moon is providing the sharpest views yet of the crater carved by a crashing SpaceX rocket.

The space agency released before-and-after photos of the impact area on Tuesday.

The Falcon rocket’s upper stage plowed into the moon at 5,400 mph (8,700 kph) on Aug. 5 after drifting through space for more than a year. It launched a pair of private moon landers with experiments and even a tiny rover in 2025 as part of NASA’s push to commercialize lunar exploration.

Based on these new photos by NASA’s Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, the fresh crater appears to be 60 feet (18 meters) across and less than 10 feet (3 meters) deep, according to scientists.

Dark and bright streaks are clearly visible emanating like butterfly wings from the crater. The darker lines represent excavated material that was close to the surface and shaped by eons of solar wind, cosmic rays and micro-meteorite strikes. The brighter rays indicate fresh rocks and dirt that were hurled from farther down.

The spacecraft photographed the crater a week after the collision from 60 miles (96 kilometers) up, while zooming along at one mile per second.

Approaching teenagers with curiosity and non-judgment is helpful

Teens turning to AI chatbots for emotional support – here’s how to keep kids safe

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



By **Phoebe S. Moore**, UMass Chan Medical School; **Megan Kelly**, UMass Chan Medical School, and **Yael Dvir**, UMass Chan Medical School

It’s 2 a.m., and a teenage girl, worrying about a friend issue, lies awake. Rather than wake her parents, she picks up her phone, opens an AI app and types, “I’m so stressed out, I can’t sleep.”

A reply arrives swiftly: “I’m sorry you’re dealing with this. Want to tell me a bit about what is stressing you?” The conversation unfolds, and 20 minutes later she is calmer and able to sleep. The supportive voice that calmed her? A large language model, or LLM, chatbot.

While this is a hypothetical scenario, it represents a very common pattern of artificial intelligence use by teens.

Many teens are turning to AI chatbots, which are designed to simulate empathy and maintain human engagement, for companionship, emotional support and mental health advice. Research shows that this is increasingly common, with 72% of teens having interacted with AI companion chatbots, and 13% to 20% having sought support through AI for emotional concerns in a two-month period in 2025.

In another recent study, 63% of the teens and young adults who used an AI chatbot for mental health advice had not disclosed it to anyone.

As clinical psychologists and a child psychiatrist who work with adolescents, we’ve seen this shift firsthand.

In 2025 we published guidelines for clinicians on how to address teen chatbot use safely, and we’re now working to help parents and other trusted adults do the same.

Unlike social media platforms, which connect teens with peers, AI chatbots such as ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini function as simulated conversation partners and companions, offering on-demand responses that can feel supportive and engaging. While a small number of purpose-built therapeutic chatbots have been studied in controlled settings, most teens are using general-purpose tools that were never designed or validated for mental health support. This includes stand-alone platforms such as ChatGPT and chatbots built into apps that teens already use, such as Snapchat’s My AI.

These chatbots are everywhere, highly accessible and difficult for teens to avoid. Teens often describe chatbot interactions as emotionally meaningful or supportive, sometimes even preferring chatbot conversations to talking with friends.

Teens, still forming their sense of self and often craving social validation, may be especially prone to experiencing these simulated relationships as real. This trend is happening in real time, and a pressing question is how to guide teens to use chatbots safely.

There is evidence that some therapeutic AI chatbots can help adults with mild symptoms when used alongside professional mental health support. Woebot, for example, a fully automated cognitive behavioral therapy-based chatbot, reduced depressive symptoms in college students after two weeks of use. Some early evidence shows potential for helpfulness for younger teens as well.

But these are specialized tools tested in research studies - not the general-purpose chatbots like ChatGPT that most teens actually use. These systems typically lack effective crisis protocols or pathways to escalate care when someone is in danger.

A November 2025 Common Sense Media report rated general-purpose chatbots as unacceptably risky for teen mental health support.

General-purpose chatbots can generate inaccurate or misleading advice that is presented with high confidence. For some users, this can create confusion or reinforce unhealthy beliefs.

Adolescents, especially those experiencing loneliness, anxiety or social-communication challenges, may form strong attachments and turn to chatbots in place of human connection. This can, in turn, distort their expectations of real relationships.

Most concerning is how these systems handle thoughts that pose real risk to teens, including thoughts of risky social behaviors, self-harm or even suicide.

Studies of chatbot performance in detecting and responding to thoughts of suicide, by both therapeutic and general-purpose chatbots, show inadequate response. Even when the chatbots offer resources like the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, a national crisis line, conversations with concerning content are often permitted to continue without a hard stop.

The safety of the interactions tends to degrade over the course of long conversations. So 2 a.m. ruminations can become even riskier interactions at 3 a.m. as chatbot responses become more chaotic and less subject to safety guardrails.

Lawsuits filed and settled in 2025-26 have alleged that interactions with language models such as ChatGPT led to teen suicidal behavior and tragic losses, highlighting that commercial chatbots lack effective guardrails and crisis protocols.

Given these concerns, some chatbot programs have instituted restrictions. Character.ai, for instance, recently banned open-ended chat for users under 18. The app now requires age verification and allows parents to opt in to receive notifications.

However, many options exist for teens to still experience open-ended chats with AI, and teens often bypass safety-oriented restrictions online.

Parents and other trusted adults

can be on the lookout for teens’ problematic behaviors, such as:

Spending increasing amounts of time chatting with AI companions.

Reducing time and effort in relationships with family, friends, teachers and others.

Showing distress or irritability when chatbot access is limited.

Reaching for chatbot interactions rather than human supports in moments of emotional distress or crisis.

These patterns mirror problematic social media use by teens - a trajectory that offers a cautionary lesson.

Broad acknowledgment of social media’s risk came only after harms became entrenched; in 2023 the U.S. surgeon general warned that social media poses a “profound risk of harm” to youth mental health.

In our assessment, chatbots pose a comparable risk, and early awareness is crucial.

The most powerful step is straightforward: Talk with teens about their chatbot use.

Approaching teens with curiosity and non-judgment is helpful.

It makes sense to assume a teen is using a chatbot, because this is most likely the case. Rather than a closed-ended question like “Do you talk to chatbots?” which some teens may perceive as judgmental, adults can begin with open-ended questions like “When you use chatbots like ChatGPT, what do you talk about?”

Additional detail can be gathered from questions like “Has anything ever felt uncomfortable, confusing or surprising?” or “How do you use

chatbots or AI companions when you are feeling upset or overwhelmed?”

Many teens can feel relieved that parents are willing to discuss this openly, rather than dismissing or banning it outright. Parents can use what they learn in these conversations to provide guidance.

As families set boundaries around screen time and social media, they can include chatbot use as well. Time limits, particularly late at night when teens may be more emotionally vulnerable, can be helpful. Parents and teens should come to clear agreements about when chatbots should not be used, particularly during moments of crisis or high distress.

It can be useful to review how to access human supports, such as a trusted friend, a parent, a school counselor or the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. You can also research alternative emotional-regulation techniques, such as journaling, distraction, grounding and breathing techniques.

Regular check-ins about how chatbot use is going and whether concerns are coming up can keep information flowing and improve safety. The goal isn’t necessarily to eliminate chatbot use but to set thoughtful boundaries that protect connection with real people and reduce the probability of unsafe interactions.

Our clinical guidelines emphasize helping teens understand what chatbots are and aren’t. Parents can reinforce this as well. (AP)

Best fabric for extreme heat? It is more complicated than you think

WASHINGTON, Aug 19, (AP): When it’s really hot out, getting dressed seems pretty simple: Wear something light, loose and made for summer.

But textile researchers say it’s actually a little more complicated than that.

The fabric matters. But so does how heavy it is, how the clothing is made, how it fits and even what color it is. What works best also depends on what you’re doing and how much you’re sweating.

With extreme heat a growing public health concern, scientists are developing and studying clothing designed to help people stay cooler. But clothing is only one component of the body’s response to heat.

Clothing should allow the body’s natural response to heat to work, said George Havenith, emeritus professor of environmental physiology and ergonomics at Loughborough University.

“It’s a really powerful mechanism from humans that we can defend our body temperature with,” Havenith said. “The most important thing in the selection of clothing would be to make sure you do not hamper sweat evaporation.”

In hot weather, look for lightweight clothing that allows air to move through the fabric and reach the skin, which can help sweat evaporate. Researchers refer to this property as air permeability.

The fiber listed on the tag is only part of what determines that. How fibers are woven or knitted also affects how easily air passes through.

“For greatest airflow, open weave and loose knit structures are best, free of any water- or soil-repellent finishes. Cellulosic fibers, like cotton and flax (linen), tend to be more breathable and comfortable,” said Meredith McQuerry, a professor at Florida State University who studies clothing development and performance.

Linen can be a good option, but “linen” on the label doesn’t tell the whole story. She said shoppers shouldn’t rely on fiber content alone. A more open woven structure will generally be more breathable, re-

gardless of the garment’s fiber.

Wicking is slightly different. Wicking fabrics are designed to move sweat away from the skin and spread it across a larger surface area, which can help it evaporate faster. Engineered synthetic fibers are commonly used in sportswear, said Havenith.

But wicking and cooling are not necessarily the same. Moving sweat away from the skin can make clothing feel drier, but evaporation that happens farther from the skin can provide less direct cooling.

Fit matters too. Havenith recommends garments with enough room for ventilation, especially in hot outdoor conditions. McQuerry, however, noted that the right fit can depend on what you’re doing. Someone exercising outdoors might prefer a tighter-fitting synthetic tank top, while someone sitting on a porch or doing light yard work might be more comfortable in looser cotton T-shirt.

“In casual settings, wearers may prefer a looser fit that allows for more airflow while standing or sitting. If performing physical activity, a tighter fit may be preferred to enable quicker sweat evaporation,” said McQuerry.

People choosing between cotton

and polyester should consider how much they expect to sweat and what they’ll be doing. Cotton absorbs sweat but can become heavy when saturated, while engineered polyester can move moisture across the fabric and dry quicker, one reason synthetic fabrics are so common in athletic clothing.

During exercise, polyester tends to continuously evaporate sweat, while cotton will work well for a short period until it has absorbed all it can, said Po-Chun Hsu, an assistant professor at the University of Chicago who studies materials and sustainability.

“Imagine you are wearing a wet T-shirt? Of course you get this evaporation going on, but then you also block the breathability and you won’t feel very comfortable when it’s completely wet,” he said.

Polyester is widely used because it is inexpensive, durable and versatile, but not all performs the same way.

It absorbs very little moisture naturally, which can make polyester that hasn’t been treated or engineered uncomfortable in hot conditions as sweat accumulates against the skin, said Jonathan Chen, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin who studies textiles and apparel.



A man’s shirt is bathed in sweat before seven in the morning as he parks cars and provides security for a downtown cafe July 20, 2023, in Mexicali, Mexico. (AP)



A passenger jet on approach to Newark Liberty International Airport flies over the setting sun in Newark, NJ on March 27, 2019. (AP)

Flight attendants, pilots have highest risk of dying from radiation-linked cancers: study

NEW YORK, Aug 19, (AP): Flight attendants and pilots are at the highest risk of dying from radiation-related cancers - even more than people who work with radioactive materials, according to a new study.

Cosmic radiation comes from space. Only a small amount reaches the Earth’s surface, but exposure is greater for people flying at high altitudes.

There’s been limited evidence from small studies suggesting that the exposure translates to higher cancer death rates among people who fly often - particularly pilots and flight attendants. The new study “brings important new evidence to bear on this question,” two Australian radiation experts who weren’t involved in the research wrote in an accompanying commentary.

The latest study, published Monday by JAMA Internal Medicine, used national data from more than 12 million death certificates that included information about occupations. The authors looked at death rates from cancers that are

tied to radiation exposures, including leukemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, and cancers of the skin, breast, thyroid, prostate and central nervous system.

Among more than 500 occupations, flight attendants had the highest percentage of deaths from radiation-related cancers, and pilots were second, the researchers found. For those two occupations, the odds of dying were unusually high for each type of radiation-related cancer.

Neither group showed higher-than-normal death rates from cancers that aren’t tied to radiation exposure, noted the commentary writers, Catherine Olsen and Ken Karipidis. That fact “supports the hypothesis that occupational radiation exposure, rather than lifestyle or socioeconomic factors, underlies the observed excess,” they wrote.

The researchers found that flight attendants had about 50% higher odds of dying from a radiation-related cancer than the general working population, and pilots had about 36% higher odds.

In terms of absolute risk, about 6.9% of flight attendant deaths were from these cancers - roughly 1 in 14. Among pilots, it was 6.7%. For the general working population, it was 5%, said the study’s first author, Dr. Vishal Patel of Harvard Medical School.

The authors acknowledged some limitations in their study. They do not know how much exposure each flight attendant and pilot got in the air or from other sources. It’s also possible occupations were misclassified on some death certificates.

They also could not account for another possible contributor specific to the professions: Cancer risk can be worsened by frequent disruption of the body’s internal clock, which can be affected by jet lag, crossing time zones and irregular work schedules.

The Federal Aviation Administration has acknowledged that aircrews are exposed to ionizing radiation, but the government does not set federal dose limits or require monitoring, the authors noted.

Al-Sahel eyes 1st Division League title as ‘promotion’ race reaches final day

Al-Sulaibikhat, Al-Yarmouk and Al-Jazeera all still in contention

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: The 2025-26 First Division League reaches its conclusion tonight, with the title and second promotion spot still up for grabs. The competition has been one of the longest in the league’s history after being interrupted several times due to the security situation in the region.

All four matches will kick off simultaneously at 8:10 p.m. Al-Sahel host Al-Yarmouk at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium, Al-Jazeera meets Al-Sulaibikhat at Nasser Al-Osaimi Stadium, Al-Shamiya faces Khaitan at the auxiliary pitch of Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, while Sporty takes on Burgan at Al-Sahel Stadium.

Al-Sahel leads the standings with 44 points and need a win to officially crown itself champion. The team has already secured promotion to the Premier League and will begin its top-flight campaign next Wednesday against the First Division runners-up.

The battle for the second promotion ticket is much tighter, with Al-Sulaibikhat, Al-Yarmouk and Al-Jazeera all still in contention.

With 41 points, Al-Sulaibikhat is in pole position and have several paths to promotion. A victory



Al-Jazeera and Al-Sulaibikhat players vie for the ball.

over Al-Jazeera would guarantee second place regardless of the result between Al-Sahel and Al-Yarmouk.

A draw would also be enough if Al-Yarmouk fails to beat Al-Sahel.

Al-Yarmouk, on 40 points, must beat Al-Sahel and hopes Al-Sulaibikhat drops points against Al-Jazeera.

A victory alone would not se-

cure promotion, leaving Al-Yarmouk dependent on the result of the other key match.

Al-Jazeera has 38 points and must win against Al-Sulaibikhat while also hoping Al-Yarmouk loses to Al-Sahel.

If those results occur, Al-Jazeera and Al-Yarmouk would finish level on points, with Al-Jazeera holding the advantage on goal differ-

ence. The teams are level in their head-to-head meetings, with Al-Yarmouk winning 3-1, Al-Jazeera prevailing 2-0 and their third encounter ending 3-3.

Meanwhile, the remaining two fixtures have no major bearing on the promotion race. Al-Shamiya, on 10 points, face Khaitan, who have 24, while Sporty, on six points, meet Burgan, on 20.

Best of the Rest

Villa signs Japan goalkeeper Suzuki: Aston Villa signed U.S.-born Japan goalkeeper Zion Suzuki from Parma, a transfer that raises doubts about the future of Argentina international Emi Martinez at the Premier League club heading into the new season.

The 23-year-old Suzuki, who was Japan’s goalkeeper at the World Cup this summer and made a memorable save onto the post from Brazil star Vinícius Júnior’s shot, moved in a deal worth up to 35 million euros (\$40 million), The Athletic reported.

Martinez, Argentina’s World Cup-winning goalie in 2022, has been first choice for Villa for six years but has been close to leaving for the past two offseasons. Juventus reportedly tried to sign him in recent weeks and Martinez wasn’t involved in the UEFA Super Cup loss to Paris Saint-Germain last week. (AP)



Roma seals Mora signing from Porto: Roma completed the signing of talented teenage midfielder Rodrigo Mora from Porto on a permanent basis.

Roma announced the news in a brief statement but did not give any details of the deal. Italian media report Mora has penned a five-year contract.

Mora, who turned 19 only in May, appeared moved almost to tears when he arrived in the Italian capital on Tuesday and was greeted by around 500 fans at the airport. They chanted his name as he signed autographs and posed for photos.

Mora, an attacking midfielder, progressed through the ranks at Porto and scored 16 goals in 80 appearances.

He has yet to make his senior debut for Portugal but was part of the squad that won the Nations League last year. (AP)

Al-Nassr & Al-Ittihad cruise into King’s Cup Round of 16

RIYADH, Aug 19: Portuguese forward João Félix scored twice and provided an assist as Al-Nassr overturned an early deficit to beat Al-Diriya 4-1 in the King’s Cup Round of 32.

Oscar Rodríguez gave Al-Diriya a shock lead after just two minutes, but Al-Nassr responded through Mohamed Simakan, who levelled in the 11th minute from Félix’s cross.

Félix then put Al-Nassr ahead in the 36th minute before Abdullah Al-Hamdan added a third just a minute later.

The Portuguese forward completed his brace in the 68th minute to secure Al-Nassr’s passage to the Round of 16.

Al-Ittihad also advanced comfortably, defeating First Division hosts Al-Najma 3-0.

Nigerian forward George Ilenikhena scored twice before Danilo Pereira completed the victory with



João Félix celebrates after scoring.

a third goal.

Elsewhere, First Division side Al-Jabalain stunned Al-Ettifaq with a 1-0 win to book their place in the next round. Al-Okhhood also progressed after beating Al-Khaleej 2-0, while Neom defeated Al-Faisaly 3-1.

‘Important new chapter in my career’

Rodri hails Barcelona’s soccer values after ‘tough decision’ to leave Man City

MADRID, Aug 19, (AP): Barcelona made official the signing of Spain captain Rodri on Tuesday, with the midfielder celebrating his arrival to a club that understands “the values” of soccer and saying it was a “tough decision” to leave Manchester City.

The midfielder who helped Spain secure its second World Cup title transferred from Man City to join a squad already filled with world champions such as Lamine Yamal, Dani Olmo, Pau Cubarsí, Gavi and Pedri.

The 30-year-old Rodri’s contract will run to 2030, Barcelona said. The announcement was made after the midfielder underwent a medical and the clubs finalized transfer details.

“It’s a very special day, a very important new chapter in my career,” he said. “It was a tough decision. First, because I’m leaving Manchester City, a club that has given me everything and where I’ve been incredibly happy. I’ll be eternally grateful,” Rodri said. “I’m also grateful that they understood it was a good time to leave. Barcelona is a fantastic club, a global reference for its approach to football and the values it represents. I had other options, but Barcelona was my first choice.”

Rodri, who had one year left on his City contract, said upon arriving in Barcelona on Monday that it was “a dream to play” for the Catalan club.

“When offers came in, the first step was understanding that a chapter at my club had ended and it was time to look for a way out. It took me a while to process that. It was the most special club I’ve ever been at,” Rodri said Tuesday. “I studied and

analyzed the offers, they were from very important clubs. Together with my family and friends, we made the decision we thought was best.”

Barcelona agreed to a transfer worth 76.5 million euros (\$88.5 million), according to a person with knowledge of the transaction confirmed to The Associated Press on Sunday. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the details of the deal have not been made public.

Real Madrid was also reportedly interested in signing Rodri at first - and the midfielder had loudly praised Barcelona’s rival in the past - but Spanish media said no agreement could be reached.



Barcelona’s Rodri poses with his jersey during his official presentation at a soccer press conference in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

Barcelona, chasing a three-peat in La Liga, has already boosted its squad with England forward Anthony Gordon, who will help to make up for

the departures of Robert Lewandowski and Ferran Torres, who scored the winning goal in extra time in the World Cup final against Argentina.

The club is also set to add defender João Cancelo.

Rodri won the Golden Ball as the World Cup’s best player and was crucial for Spain’s title-winning campaign.

“I’ve been with many of my teammates for almost two months now, and it’s been a warm welcome,” Rodri said. “It’s a very young dressing room, eager to do important things. I hope to contribute to what they’ve brought me here for. I’m joining a tight and enthusiastic dressing room.”

Rodri spent seven years at City, making 298 appearances, scoring 28 goals and helping the English club win 14 trophies.

He scored the winning goal in the Champions League final victory over Inter Milan in 2023, and won the Ballon d’Or as the world’s best player the following year after being part of Spain’s European Championship-winning team.

Rodri had joined City from Atletico Madrid. He previously played at Villarreal. His departure further weakens City’s midfield, with Bernardo Silva having left for Real Madrid this offseason.

“Rodri has been a quite magnificent servant and played a huge part of what the club has achieved since he arrived,” City director of football Hugo Viana said. “With his achievements, Rodri has more than cemented his place in the history of Manchester City and we all wish him well in the next chapter of his career.”

Kuwait Boxing Federation to hold course for new coaches

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: The Kuwait Boxing Federation will organize a training and qualification course for new boxing coaches from August 30 to September 10 at the Abdullah Al-Salem Leaders Preparation Center in Khaldiya.

The course, led by Abdulrahman Abdullah Bashir, is designed to strengthen the technical skills of coaches and develop qualified personnel capable of contributing to the continued growth of boxing in Kuwait.

Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, a federation board member and chairman of the Technical Committee, said such programs play an important role in improving the standard of local coaches, which would ultimately benefit Kuwait’s performances in international competitions and help athletes achieve better results.

He said the federation was keen to hold the course ahead of the new season as part of its efforts to raise the standard of both coaches and athletes and ensure stronger performances in upcoming competitions.

Al-Mutairi urged coaches to take full advantage of the program by actively



Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi

attending the lectures and practical sessions. He also thanked the Public Authority for Youth and Sports and the Leaders Preparation Center for their continued cooperation and support in providing specialized training programs for boxing coaches.

Club targets strong challenge for major trophies

Kazma reunites with Laelson Costa

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 19: Kazma has brought back Brazilian volleyball star Laelson Costa to bolster the “Orange” team ahead of the upcoming season.

The 37-year-old Costa previously represented Kazma two seasons ago and impressed with his performances. He returns with extensive experience in Gulf volleyball, having played for Bahrain’s Al-Najma, Saudi Arabia’s Al-Ibtisam, and UAE clubs Al Ain, Baniyas and Ajman. His career has also included spells with Egypt’s Smouha and Lebanon’s Al-Zahraa.

An opposite hitter, Costa brings considerable height and experience while offering strength on both sides of the net, making him a valuable addition to Kazma’s squad.

Kazma and new Brazilian coach Re-

nato Santos are stepping up preparations as they target a strong challenge for the major trophies next season.

The club is also working to complete its foreign-player roster after Indonesia’s Farhan withdrew because of national-team commitments following changes to the 2026-27 volleyball schedule. Kazma are expected to sign a Colombian replacement, whose name has yet to be announced, with the player due to arrive in Kuwait in October.

Meanwhile, Kazma has confirmed the arrival of Brazilian fitness coach Renato Santos and statistician Daniel Melo. The duo will join the technical staff as the team prepares to resume last season’s suspended competitions and launch preparations for the 2026-27 campaign.

The previous season was halted in February because of security developments in the region, with competitions scheduled to resume in late October.



Costa smashes the ball as rivals attempt to block.

Monaco parts ways with Pogba after injury-hit spell

MONACO, Aug 19, (AP): Monaco has parted ways with midfielder Paul Pogba after the former France star’s stay was hampered by injuries.

Pogba signed a two-year-deal last year in order to relaunch a career derailed by injuries and a doping ban. But injury problems persisted and the 2018 World Cup winner made only a handful of substitute appearances last season.

“Acknowledging that the objectives initially set have been only partially met, Monaco and Paul Pogba have decided, prior to the first match of the new season, to terminate the contract that bound them until June 2027,” eight-time French champion Monaco said in a statement.

Pogba struggled for fitness in preseason and recently picked up another injury. “Monaco is an exceptional club,” the 33-year-old Pogba said. “Even though I didn’t play as many matches as I had hoped, I will always be grateful for the opportunity.”

Monaco finished seventh in Ligue 1 last season.

At his peak, Pogba scored in the 2018 World Cup final when France beat Croatia 4-2. He played 91 games for France, scoring 11 times.

Venus gets US Open wild card at 46, Serena could join her

NEW YORK, Aug 19, (AP): Venus Williams was given a U.S. Open singles wild card on Tuesday and the tournament is keeping one on hold - perhaps in case her sister Serena wants to join her.

Sloane Stephens, the 2017 U.S. Open champion, was one of six other women to receive a wild card and the U.S. Tennis Association said

the final one is still to be announced.

That almost certainly would go to Serena Williams, if she decides she wants to return to the tournament at 44.

Venus Williams received a wild card last year, returning to the Grand Slam event she won twice for the first time since 2023. The 46-year-old has become the oldest entrant in

singles at the tournament since Renee Richards played at 47 in 1981, according to the International Tennis Federation.

She has continued to play some singles matches and this week joined Serena for their first doubles tournament together since the 2022 U.S. Open. They lost Monday at the Cincinnati Open in a match tie-

breaker against Marta Kostyuk and Peyton Stearns.

The sisters planned to play at Wimbledon but had to withdraw after Serena injured her knee in her singles match. That marked her first time playing singles since the 2022 U.S. Open, and she indicated afterward that she hoped to keep competing if healthy.

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NEWS



Eros Mancuso of Argentina's Estudiantes de La Plata, right, and Jimmy Martínez of Chile's Universidad Católica vie for the ball during a Copa Libertadores round of 16 second-leg soccer match in Santiago, Chile. Estudiantes won 3-0 to advance. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait dominates Table Tennis Championship

Salah leads the clean sweep in Jordan

AMMAN, Aug 19, (KUNA): Kuwait's U-11 girls dominated the singles event at the West Asia Table Tennis Championship in Jordan on Wednesday, claiming gold, silver and bronze.

Hayat Salah won the title after defeating teammate Sheikhha Al-Ali in the final, leaving Al-Ali with the silver medal. Dalal Al-Shamali completed Kuwait's clean sweep by beating Saudi Arabia's Shouq Al-Dossari to take bronze.

The result saw Kuwait occupy all three podium places in the singles competition, which featured 16 players from across the participating countries.

Following Wednesday's events, Kuwait's overall medal tally at the championship has reached three gold, two silver and three bronze medals.

Kuwait is competing across multiple men's and women's age categories, including Open, U-19, U-17, U-15, U-13 and U-11.

The championship concludes Thursday and features 10 national teams from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, Oman, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq.

Kuwait's U-11 girls' team secured the gold medal in the doubles event at the West Asia Table Tennis Championship in Jordan.

Earlier, Sheikhha Al-Ali and Hayat Salah produced a strong performance to defeat Saudi Arabia 3-0 in the final and take the title.

Kuwait is competing across all age categories in both the boys' and girls' events, including senior, U-19, U-17, U-15, U-13 and U-11. The championship features teams from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia,

Lebanon, Qatar, Jordan, Palestine, Oman, Iraq, Bahrain and the UAE, with the competition set to conclude on Thursday.

The Kuwaiti girls have already collected several medals at the tournament. The senior team, represented by Mnouh Al-Shammari, Maryam Al-Halwaji and Khadija Al-Halwaji, won bronze after finishing third in the round-robin competition.

Kuwait also claimed silver in the U-13 category after a 3-1 defeat to Bahrain in the final, while the U-19 team earned bronze by beating Bahrain 3-0 in the third-place playoff.

The U-13 squad consists of Al-Joud Al-Sanawi, Suad Al-Majdi, Al-Zain Al-Ali and Sheikhha Al-Ali, while the U-19 team features Maryam Al-Halwaji, Fatima Al-Shammari and Khadija Al-Halwaji.



KUNA photo
Hayat Salah with Sheikhha Al-Ali and Dalal Al-Shamali.

Competition divided into West and East zones

World Cup in sight

Al-Arabi, Al-Qadsia await Challenge League draw

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, Aug 19: Al-Arabi and Al-Qadsia will discover their AFC Challenge League group-stage opponents today when the draw is held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, following the completion of the preliminary and playoff rounds.

The group stage is scheduled to begin on October 17, with the competition divided into West and East zones.

Al-Qadsia has qualified after finishing third in the Kuwait Premier League, while Al-Arabi has entered the tournament after losing 4-1 to India's East Bengal in the AFC Champions League Two playoff last week at Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata.

Kuwait Club is the defending AFC Challenge League champion, and subsequently earning direct qualification for the AFC Champions League Two.

The West Zone features 12 teams, with Al-Qadsia, Tajikistan's Istiklol and Bhutan's Paro selected to host



Al-Arabi and East Bengal players fight for the ball during in the AFC Champions League Two playoff during the match.

the three centralized group stages.

Alongside the two Kuwaiti clubs,

the West Zone lineup includes Syr-

ia's Homs Al-Fidaa and Ahli Alep-

po, Lebanon's Al-Ansar and Al-Najma, India's Goa, Tajikistan's Istiklol and Regar-TadAZ, Turkmenistan's Ahal, Kyrgyzstan's Muras United, Bangladesh's Fortis and Bhutan's Paro.

The East Zone comprises eight teams: Indonesia's Borneo, Philippines' One Taguig, Myanmar's Shan United and Yangon United, Taiwan's Tainan City and Hang Yuen, Mongolia's FC Ulaanbaatar, plus the losing side from the East Zone AFC Champions League Two playoff.

The group stage will run from October to December, with the quarter-finals scheduled for March 2027, the semifinals in April and the final on May 8.

For the West Zone draw, Al-Arabi, Goa and Ahal are in Pot 1, while Al-Qadsia, Al-Ansar and Al-Najma are in Pot 2. Pot 3 contains Istiklol, Fortis and Ahli Aleppo, with Paro, Regar-TadAZ and Homs Al-Fidaa in Pot 4.

According to AFC regulations, clubs from the same pot or the same country cannot be drawn into the same group.

Kuwait kicks off the Asian Junior Handball Championship campaign

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

AMMAN, Jordan, Aug 19: Kuwait begins its campaign in the 11th Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship today in Amman, Jordan, with a place at the 2027 World Championship firmly in its sights.

The tournament runs until August 31 and features some of Asia's leading youth teams. Under the competition format, the four semifinalists will earn qualification for the 2027 World Championship, making a top-four finish the "Blue Juniors'" primary target.

Kuwait opens its Group B campaign against Syria, while Qatar faces Saudi Arabia in the other group match. Group A features Uzbekistan against South Korea and India against Bahrain.

The Kuwait squad completed an intensive preparation program, including a European training camp in Slovenia and Croatia, where it played several warm-up matches. The team then returned home for a final camp, featuring two friendlies against Bahrain, who are also competing in the Asian championship.

The players and coaching staff enter the tournament with high ambitions, hoping to reach the semifinals and secure a long-awaited World Championship berth. The squad includes several promising talents who are eager to make their mark on the continental stage.

The team has also received strong backing from the Kuwait Handball Federation and the Public Authority

for Sport, with the technical and administrative staffs working to provide the players with the ideal preparation and conditions to achieve their goals.

Meanwhile, Handball Federation board member Mishal Al-Qabandi said a recent coordination meeting with sports directors from local clubs produced constructive discussions on the positives and shortcomings of last season.

The meeting also examined several proposals aimed at developing handball competitions and improving organizational standards ahead of the new season.

Al-Qabandi stressed that the federation values the clubs' views and recommendations, describing them as essential partners in the development of the sport. He added that several technical and organizational issues raised during the meeting would be referred to the federation's relevant committees for further consideration.



A file photo of players preparing for the championship.

Dinusha's dismissal after break triggers stunning collapse

India seals a 165-run victory in Galle as Suthar's 10-wicket haul sinks Sri Lanka



India's Manav Suthar bowls a delivery during day five of the first cricket test match between Sri Lanka and India in Galle, Sri Lanka. (AP)

GALLE, Sri Lanka, Aug 19, (AP): India won the first test in Galle by 165 runs just minutes before a heavy downpour might have saved Sri Lanka on the fifth day Wednesday.

Left-arm spinner Manav Suthar took three wickets in the 76th over of Sri Lanka's second innings and cleaned up the last wicket in the 78th to dismiss the home side for 206.

Suthar picked 6-55 and completed his maiden 10-wicket haul in his second test. At 24, he's the youngest India spinner to take 10 in an overseas test.

India scored 462 and 193 and Devdutt Padikkal led with 167 and 44 to be the player of the match. Sri Lanka responded with 284 runs and began a vain chase of a winning target of 372.

It lost four wickets on Tuesday afternoon and its main resistance between Sonal Dinusha and

captain Dhananjaya de Silva was broken on the last morning. From 175-6 at lunch, Sri Lanka lost the last four wickets for 31 runs across 64 deliveries.

"We knew one big shower was going to come and we didn't want to delay the game," India batter Lokesh Rahul said. "They had one big partnership but we knew if we could break that we could get into their tail. It was a great test match. The wicket played really well all five days."

India won its 600th test and took a 1-0 lead in the two-match series. The second test begins in Colombo on Sunday.

In the morning, Dinusha and de Silva looked to bat out time. They previously endured 74 deliveries before stumps on day four, and extended their partnership to 202 balls faced.

Both batters crossed 50 in the morning. Ravindra Jadeja made the breakthrough for India, getting de Silva caught at short fine leg attempting a sweep. De Silva made 59 from 151 balls in just over three hours. He and Dinusha combined for 95 runs.

Four overs later, close-in fielder Yashasvi Jaiswal played on Niroshan Dickwella's patience as the batter tried to hit Prasidh Krishna and was caught behind on 10.

Dinusha and Keshara Nuwantha made it to lunch but Dinusha's dismissal after the break triggered the stunning collapse leading to India's win.

Suthar ended Dinusha's resistance. He was caught down leg, edging a wayward delivery from the spinner. The first innings centurion also top-scored for Sri Lanka in the second innings: 84 off 128 balls.

Musiala's season start in doubt after two collapses

BERLIN, Aug 19, (AP): Jamal Musiala's readiness for Bayern Munich's start to the season is in question after collapsing in consecutive warmup games because of a neurological issue.

The 23-year-old Germany star went down shortly after entering the field in a friendly against Heidenheim on Tuesday, three days after a similar incident against Leipzig. He received brief treatment on the field before going off on both occasions.

Musiala said in an Instagram post late Tuesday that he has been diagnosed with "brief, temporary, but easily treatable absence seizures caused by a neurological dysfunction" and that they can lead to the moments that occurred against Heidenheim and Leipzig.

But he added there was "no additional health risk" and he wants to keep living his "everyday life and keep up with my passion of playing football."

Bayern has not issued any statements or published any updates on the player's condition. The club has not responded to requests from the Associated Press for comment.

Bayern begins the season on Saturday at Borussia Dortmund in the German Supercup, then starts its Bundesliga title defense against Stuttgart the following weekend.

News agency DPA, citing unnamed Bayern sources, reported on Wednesday that there were no indications that Musiala won't be able to continue his career as before, but there was no information on whether he can play against Dortmund or Stuttgart.

Facing journalists after the Heidenheim game on Tuesday, Bayern board member for sport Max Eberl initially refused to comment on Musiala's condition, saying only that the player would issue a statement later.

"The great thing about football - something I wish we see more of from society or generally - is that when something happens in football that gets everyone's attention, like (Christian) Eriksen's collapse ... or now the situation with Jamal, everyone understands that football is the most beautiful unimportant thing in the world and that there are far more important matters at stake," Eberl said. "It's a good sign. It gives you a good feeling to see society standing together showing that kind of solidarity."

Bayern honorary president and powerbroker Uli Hoenes told Sky in an interview on Wednesday that Musiala's collapses created a "drama" at the club, and they were a "problem, first and foremost, of course, for the person Jamal. Really, I go to bed thinking about him and I wake up thinking about him."

Hoenes said Bayern did not know how to react. "We couldn't prepare for this, and we have to learn first how to deal with this situation," said Hoenes, who promised Musiala would get "unconditional support in every respect."

The player said he's going through a process but he has the best support around him.

"I am receiving excellent medical care for this and am very optimistic," Musiala said in his social media post. "FC Bayern and my personal circle are always by my side, supporting me throughout this process."