



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince

Amir receives Crown Prince, Premier and First Deputy PM

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Seif Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yusuf Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received on Sunday at Al-Seif Palace His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

He also received First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yusuf Al-Sabah.

Kuwait condemns Somalia attack

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry condemned the terrorist attack in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, that killed and injured tens of innocents. The ministry stressed the State of Kuwait's utter rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism, affirming its support to the Somali government in all the measures it would take to protect its safety and stability.

It conveyed the deepest condolences to the Somali government and the families of the victims, wishing those injured a speedy recovery.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal

Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Sunday a cable of condolences to President of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud, on the demise of terrorist attack victims that took place in the capital of Mogadishu.

His Highness the Amir wished the injured a speedy recovery, affirming Kuwait's strong condemnation of this terrorist act that killed innocents.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Sunday a cable of condolences to President of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh

Continued on Page 5

Opinion

Public Institution For Social Security – imperfect role, in need of competent officials

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

I HAVE been receiving calls from top officials who praised my articles, particularly for the inclusion of important and useful ideas that should be taken into consideration by the state. I accordingly expect them to work on implementing these suggestions, or at least ask their consultants to review the dormant developmental plans that are stored away so that they can be prepared to be put into motion.



Al-Jarallah

expression is guaranteed, genuine free consultation seems to be lacking.

I will now return to the issue of the Public Institution For Social Security (PIFSS) to evaluate its potential contribution to the national economy and its impact on roughly 14,000 retirees who depend on its support.

The institution supports nearly ten percent of Kuwait's population. When the actuarial deficit of PIFSS reaches KD 20.868 billion, it is imperative for the government to cover this deficit to ensure PIFSS operates efficiently.

We therefore require experienced officials with a strong background in investment to enhance PIFSS's capital. It needs sufficient resources to undertake huge ventures that can address the actuarial deficit effectively.

It is true that recent governments allocated plots for PIFSS to invest but this alone is insufficient to address a deficit nearing \$70 billion. The annual increases in pensions further compounds the crisis faced by PIFSS, despite these increases being relatively modest. It resembles the use of a painkiller to manage a chronic illness.

Retirees simply seek to spend their remaining years without financial troubles, debts, or unmanageable installments that

Continued on Page 5

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'Cash transactions led to money-laundering'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Qais Al-Ghanim, the head of the Real Estate Appraisers Association, has highlighted past issues of money laundering in the Kuwaiti real estate market, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Historically, cash transactions in real estate, especially in land purchases in external areas, he said, facilitated significant money laundering. This resulted in rapid price increases and was a common tactic in real estate exhibitions.

However, recent regulatory changes by the Ministry of Justice have had a substantial impact. The Ministry's decision to mandate payments via "certified checks" has significantly curtailed money laundering activities within the real estate sector.

Despite these improvements, Al-Ghanim noted that some legal loopholes still exist, potentially allowing money laundering to continue in various forms.

Al-Ghanim emphasized the need for further governmental action to address these remaining gaps, as ongoing money laundering can lead to increased social disparities, with individuals rapidly amassing wealth under suspicious circumstances.



Documents exchanged after signing the agreement.

Army chief sounds high alert as 'flare-up' in region feared

Full-scale war to prove devastating: analysts



KUNA photo

Minister of Information and Culture, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi chairs the meeting.

'Landmark event in local media history'

Kuwait Grand Media Award next year: minister

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, announced on Sunday that the Kuwait Grand Media Award will be inaugurated next year, coinciding with Kuwait being named the Arab Media Capital for 2025. "All technical aspects and basic preparations have been discussed to ensure the award's success, making it a landmark event in the history of Kuwaiti media," Minister Al-Mutairi stated during a meeting with relevant public benefit associations to finalize the award details.

The meeting also reviewed best practices and experiences from the Arab region in the field of media awards. Minister Al-Mutairi emphasized that the Kuwait Grand Media Award is part of the ministry's strategy and vision to enhance purposeful creative content, develop media production, and elevate its standards to meet the state's aspirations of preserving Kuwaiti media identity.

The award aims to identify innovative trends in Kuwaiti media production, encourage creativity, and ensure the award becomes a significant annual event in the Kuwaiti media landscape. "The award's

Total expenses at KD 24.5bn; budget details for '24/'25 out

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Council of Ministers has issued Decree-Law No. 8 of 2024, outlining the budget for ministries and government departments for the fiscal year 2024/2025.

According to the decree, the total revenues for the budget have been estimated at 18.9 billion dinars. This

figure includes 2.7 billion dinars from non-oil revenues.

The total expenditures for the budget are set at 24.555 billion dinars, resulting in an expected deficit of 5 billion, 636 million, and 382 thousand dinars.

The decree details the revenue breakdown for the fiscal year 2024/2025.

Continued on Page 5

philosophy is based on the concept of media empowerment for purposeful and sustainable content," he added, "contributing to the development and enhancement of Kuwaiti media and the professional growth of media professionals."

Minister Al-Mutairi highlighted that the award seeks to achieve several strategic goals, including showcasing Kuwaiti media's status and pioneering

role in the region by honoring outstanding media professionals and institutions. It also aims to develop media infrastructure and foster international cooperation by involving global experts in the judging panels and facilitating experience exchanges with media professionals worldwide.

Continued on Page 5

Deal signed to empower Kuwaiti women enroll in 'private sector'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: In a move to enhance youth employment and development in Kuwait, the Director-General of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), Marzouq Al-Otaibi, has signed a cooperation pact with the American Institute for the Middle East (AMIDEAST) that focuses on a program aimed at empowering Kuwaiti women for careers in the private sector, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the meeting, Al-Otaibi welcomed the AMIDEAST team and representatives from the US Embassy.

He highlighted the critical role of training programs in enhancing co-

professional skills and preparing Kuwaiti youth and recent graduates for private sector roles. Al-Otaibi praised AMIDEAST's commitment to professional development and its contribution to qualifying young Kuwaitis for meaningful employment.

Omar Al-Qahtani, a representative from AMIDEAST, expressed gratitude for PAM's efforts in supporting Kuwaiti youth through specialized training courses. He emphasized AMIDEAST's commitment to community service in Kuwait and its readiness to support this initiative.

Continued on Page 5

'Link to improve medicine reach'

By Marwa Al Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Ministry of Health yesterday launched the digital linkage project between hospitals and medical warehouses in Subhan with the aim of improving medicine security and optimizing the supply chain for medicines and medical supplies.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Health highlighted that the project represents the result of the ministry's efforts for the development of health services.

It stated that the project was implemented through comprehensive stages, which included standardizing types of medicines and supplies across hospitals and warehouses, setting schedules for orders and their quantities, defining procedures for examination, delivery, and distribution to hospital pharmacies, and finally, executing the project by determining the required quantities of medicines and supplies for each hospital.

The ministry explained that the project was successfully implemented at Farwaniya, Mubarak, and Jahra hospitals. Currently, preparations are underway to sequentially implement the linkage at the remaining hospitals. Laboratory supplies have also been integrated to expedite laboratory processes. Specifically, Subhan warehouses are now connected to Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Farwaniya hospitals. An emergency orders policy has been activated to swiftly meet urgent needs via telephone.

Continued on Page 5

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (Agencies): Lieutenant General Pilot Bandar Al-Muzain, Chief of General Staff of the Army, emphasized the critical importance of maintaining the highest levels of readiness and vigilance during his inspection of several Air Defense Force sites on Saturday evening, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During his visits, Al-Muzain underscored the necessity of continued hard work to safeguard the security and safety of the homeland, reinforcing the military's commitment to national defense.

Meanwhile, the United States has urged its citizens to leave Lebanon and is increasing its military presence in the Middle East as a precautionary measure, according to Jonathan Finer, the White House National Security Council deputy adviser, on Sunday. "Our objectives are de-escalation, deterrence, and the defense of Israel," Finer stated during an interview with CBS' "Face the Nation."

This move comes amid heightened regional tensions following the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas' top leader, in Tehran on Wednesday, which occurred just one day after an Israeli strike in Beirut killed

Fuad Shukur, a senior military commander from Hezbollah, another Iran-backed group like Hamas.

A recent economic report highlights the potential severe impacts of escalating geopolitical risks and the prospect of a full-scale war on the economic prospects of the region, particularly in Lebanon and the occupied territories, as well as on Iran's economy, which is already struggling under international sanctions, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Continued on Page 5

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya discussed on a phone call on Sunday the Kuwaiti-Omani bilateral relations with the Omani Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bader bin Hamad Al-Busaidi.

During the call, they discussed bilateral relations and ways to strengthen and enhance the relations. (KUNA)

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DUBAI: A missile attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck a Liberian-flagged container ship traveling through the Gulf of Aden, authorities said Sunday, the first assault by the group since Israeli airstrikes targeted them.

The Houthis offered no explanation for the two-week pause in their attacks on shipping through the Red Sea corridor, which have seen similar slowdowns since the assaults began in November over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. (AP)

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:41	Asr	15:30
Sunrise ..	05:10	Maghrib ..	18:38
Zohr	11:54	Isha	20:03

Local

BIOMETRIC/FINGERPRINT APPOINTMENT: <https://meta.e.gov.kw/En/>

HH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister send similar cables

HH the Amir offers condolences to India over landslide victims

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences Sunday to President of India Droupadi Murmu over the victims of land-slides in the south of the country.

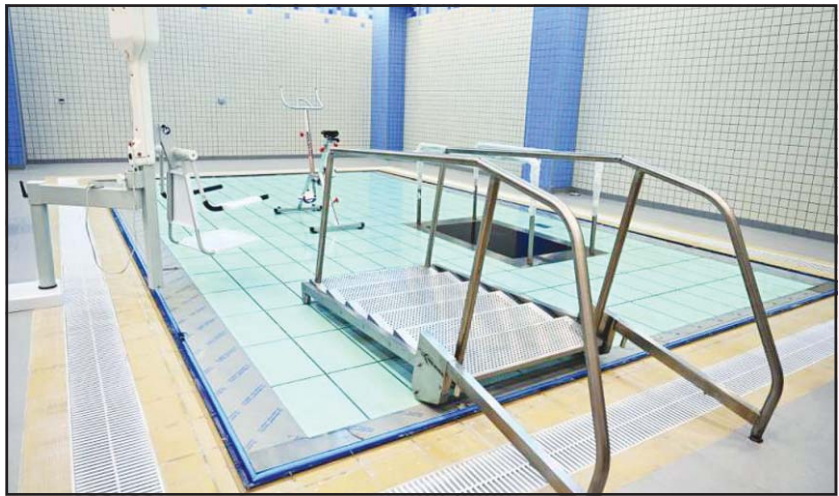
In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed sincere condolences over fatalities and wished speedy recovery for the injured.

His Highness the Amir also wished the success of the rescue and search efforts for missing persons. His Highness the Amir prayed to God to help officials in the friendly Republic of India to overcome the repercussions of this natural disaster.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to President Murmu over the victims of the landslides in the south of the country.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince expressed sincere condolences over fatalities and wished speedy recovery for the injured. He wished the success of the rescue and search efforts for missing persons.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to President Murmu over the victims of the landslides in the south of the country.



Unconventional pool equipment.

Al-Rai photo

Center caters to various medical conditions

New Adan Hospital physical therapy center sets new standards in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY Aug 4: The Ministry of Health continues to enhance health services for citizens with the opening of the new physical therapy center at New Adan Hospital, marking a significant improvement in medical services with its state-of-the-art facilities, reports Al-Rai daily.

The center, equipped with the latest medical devices, spans 6,000 square meters and stands as the largest physical therapy center in the country. Built to international specifications, it caters to various medical conditions involving movement difficulties, muscle weakness, and bone and spine pain.

The center offers rehabilitation services for stroke and Parkinson's disease patients, children with growth delays or Down syndrome, occupational and speech therapy services, gait analysis laboratories, and more.

Dr. Ali Al-Muhanna, head of the physical therapy department at Adan Hospital, told the daily, "The physical therapy and rehabilitation building is the largest in Kuwait in terms of area and medical staff. It consists of five floors, including the basement, ground floor, and three upper floors."

Dr. Al-Muhanna highlighted that the center includes separate physical therapy departments for men and women, offering services for bone and joint pain, fractures, rehabilitation, sports injuries, and aquatic therapy.

Occupational

The occupational therapy department caters to all age groups, featuring treatment halls for children, a sensory treatment room for adults, a women's treatment room, a room for swallowing difficulties, a men's treatment room, splint rooms, and a gait analysis laboratory for adults and children.

Moreover, the center houses a speech therapy department, research and educational laboratories, study halls, and a theatre.

The neurology clinics at the center provide rehabilitation for stroke, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, and paralysis patients. Other clinics include balance clinics, a women's health clinic, and a children's clinic, which treats and rehabilitates patients with growth delays, Down syndrome, fractures, and plexiform paralysis.

The center has a capacity of 76 beds, distributed among 30 beds for men, 30 for women, and 16 for children. It includes eight treatment halls, three for men, three for women, and two for children, along with three therapeutic swimming pools. The center is equipped with the latest medical devices, making it the largest physiotherapy facility in the country.

Deputy Head of the Physical Therapy Department, Noura Al-Jawir, explained that patients can access services through referrals from health centers or outpatient clinics at Al-Adan Hospital, or by opening a file and booking an appointment via the ASK. MOH application, provided the patient is affiliated with Al-Adan Hospital based on their regional address.

Al-Jawir emphasized the role of physical therapy in evaluating and treating a range of conditions, including muscle, ligament, and tendon injuries, fractures, sprains, infections, and joint function restoration. Physical therapy is especially beneficial for the elderly, aiding in osteoporosis, Alzheimer's, urinary incontinence, and overall fitness levels.

Physical therapy also enhances limb response and muscle strength, particularly for patients with cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, and related conditions. It aids in the rehabilitation of heart and lung patients, improving physical endurance, and plays a crucial role in diagnosing and treating children's conditions such as growth delays, cerebral palsy, and inner ear balance disorders, as well as gynecological problems.

Hydrotherapy

Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Ali, a physiotherapist at the center, introduced hydrotherapy as a new service in the Al-Ahmadi Health District, featuring three swimming pools for men, women, and children.

The pools are equipped with unconventional devices and an adjustable floor to accommodate different treatment conditions and patient heights, providing more options for therapeutic exercises.

Dr. Dana Al-Saqr highlighted the gait laboratory, equipped with the latest technology to analyze patients' walking patterns, identify issues, and determine the presence of diseases in muscles or bones. The laboratory primarily receives neurological and orthopedic cases.

Dr. Nayef Al-Harbi, a physical therapist at the center's gym, noted that therapeutic exercises primarily target spine conditions or fractures. The gym uses devices tailored to the type of injury, muscle strengthening, or nerve stimulation, helping patients regain their pre-injury condition.

Engineer Hassan Akbar, a medical device specialist, assured that all devices have a five-year maintenance warranty from the supplier. Maintenance activities are logged to monitor the device's history and assess the need for warranty renewal based on usage.

Exemption from fingerprint discussed

CSC starts verification of university certificates of its non-Kuwaiti staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has started verifying the university certificates of its non-Kuwaiti employees, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

This is in compliance with the administrative circular issued by CSC Undersecretary Diaa Al-Qabandi on Aug 1, 2024. The circular, which was marked 'important and urgent', was issued to all sectors.

The daily obtained a copy of the circular that instructed directors and heads of units in all sectors at the CSC to advise the non-Kuwaiti employees to complete the verification of university certificates.

Al-Qabanda affirmed the need to inform all non-Kuwaiti employees about the importance of submitting the required documents within the legally prescribed dates in order to avoid the negative comments of supervisory authorities.

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Fingerprint system: A delegation from

the Kuwait Sports Club for the Deaf held a meeting with the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Dr. Essam Al-Rubaiyan, reports Al-Rai daily.

The delegation included the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the club Anwar Al-Harbi, a member of the Supreme Council of the Public Authority for the Disabled Affairs (PADA) Hamad Al-Marri, and sign language interpreter Ahmed Al-Habib.

The meeting was held to discuss the exemption of employees with hearing disability from marking their attendance by fingerprinting, similar to those with physical and visual disabilities. They also discussed some important topics related to the law on the disabled.

Al-Rubaiyan expressed his cooperation and great interest in working on solving the issues related to the deaf.

Al-Harbi expressed his gratitude to Dr. Al-Rubaiyan, and his appreciation for the warm reception he received and for the interest in helping hearing impaired children.

By **Mohammad Al-Musleh**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Despite the extremely hot weather that the country is experiencing; the travel sector is witnessing a noticeable decline in the number of travelers this summer season, with local tourism experts and travel agencies expecting the travel rate to drop by 15 percent compared to last summer.

Experts pointed out that people are reluctant to travel this summer in spite of the availability of special offers for many destinations and the affordable flight tickets due to the inflation and high prices in some European countries.

They said the East Asian countries witnessed the steepest decline in ticket sales as their current climate is hot and humid – similar to the climate in Gulf countries.

On the other hand, reliable sources said some decision-making departments in the airlines operating in the country are conducting extensive studies to determine the reasons behind people's reluctance to travel; taking into consideration the availability of attractive offers and special travel packages.

Sales Development Manager at Gulf Travel Elias Mansour confirmed that the reservation systems are witnessing a significant decline in travel demand, as some European embassies limit the number of Schengen visa application appointments daily; in addition to the soaring prices and exorbitant cost of hotels and other types of accommodations. "The electronic reservation systems have recorded a steep decline in ticket purchases from travel agencies. The offers provided by agencies are unique in terms of hotel reservations, ticket prices and others; yet there has been no noticeable turnout from those wishing to travel compared to last summer. The reservation systems for the month of August did not record high reservation rates compared to last year," he added.

Director of Alam Al-Salehiya Tourism and Travel Company Ayman Zandah disclosed that the percentage of decline in travel reservations ranges from 10 to 15 percent compared to last year. "We often wonder about the reasons behind the low demand this year; especially in light of the current stability of conditions, the corona pandemic and the accompanying closures that affected the market. Kuwait is witnessing the highest temperature in the world, but the demand for travel is declining. The tourism and travel companies have presented many offers related to ticket prices and other travel needs; yet they have not witnessed a significant number of bookings," he asserted.

He added the East Asian countries are experiencing the steepest decline in the number of travelers due to several factors, most notably their hot and humid weather like that of Gulf countries.

'Waed' successful

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Public Authority for Youth Affairs emphasized the significance of the "Waed" (Promising) project as a pivotal initiative for empowering youth towards a promising future. This project serves as a distinguished platform for training and equipping youth with essential life skills through active participation in field activities, reports Al-Nahar daily.

Acting Director General of the Youth Department at the authority Dr. Walid Al-Ansari highlighted this during the closing ceremony of the 2nd edition of the Waed project, which was held under the patronage of Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Anthal Al-Huwaila.

Al-Ansari affirmed the keenness to support initiatives aimed at enhancing youth capabilities and leveraging their time for their own advancement.

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.			
By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-30 km/h and some high clouds will appear.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	46	34	

Kuwait Airport	47	32
Abdaly	46	30
Jahra	47	32
Salmiyah	42	34
Jal Aliyah	45	30
Nuwaisib	47	32
Wafra	47	32

Dimitrov highlights strong bilateral ties with Kuwait

Bulgaria's diverse landscape & cultural harmony attract Kuwaiti tourists: envoy

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Bulgarian Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Dimitar Dimitrov speaks of the importance of bilateral ties between Bulgaria and Kuwait.

He said Kuwaitis have had a longstanding affection for Bulgaria, dating back to the 1970s and 1980s, when they frequently visited the country by car mainly for the purpose of tourism.

Dimitrov described Bulgaria as one of Europe's oldest nations, boasting a diverse landscape that includes seas, green areas, mountains, rivers, and plains and emphasized Bulgaria's unique cultural blend, where places of worship for all three major monotheistic religions coexist side by side in the capital city, Sofia, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Dimitrov pointed out that Bulgaria offers complete freedom for people of all faiths, with Muslims actively participating in state institutions, including parliament and government.

Kuwaiti visitors to Bulgaria consistently report feeling safe, thanks to the hospitality and tolerance of the Bulgarians. The availability of halal food and high-quality hotels in Bulgaria further enhances its appeal as a destination for Kuwaiti tourists, says the Bulgarian envoy.

Dimitrov also said many Kuwaitis have purchased property in Bulgaria and view it as their second home, spending extended periods there. He noted that there is interest among Kuwaitis in forming an association for property owners in Bulgaria.

From an economic perspective, Bulgaria is noted



Dimitar Dimitrov

for its financial stability, despite not being among the wealthiest European nations. The country's stable economy and favorable tax system present attractive opportunities for investment, including interest from Kuwaiti companies in renewable energy sectors, he said.

Touching on the issue of visas situation, he added, for those who hold Article 17 (bedoun) passports, Bulgaria is awaiting official information from Kuwait to determine how this denomination of people will be treated, saying this information will help Bulgarian authorities decide on the recognition of such passports.

On the topic of educational cooperation, Dimitrov highlighted the high demand from Kuwaiti students for medical and engineering programs at Bulgarian universities.

He mentioned that while many Kuwaiti students have graduated from Bulgarian institutions and made significant contributions to Kuwait's health sector, academic accreditation requires Bulgarian universities to take formal steps with Kuwaiti authorities.

Efforts are underway to draft a new agreement in higher education and scientific research to replace the old cultural agreement, which aims to strengthen bilateral cooperation in these fields.

Dimitrov expressed gratitude towards Kuwait University for its longstanding support, including scholarships for Arabic language students from Bulgaria, and anticipated an increase in the number of Bulgarian students in the upcoming year.

Other Voices

Saddam ... and the American founding fathers

By **Ahmed alsarraf**

On their independence from Britain, and before that, n July 4, 1776, thirteen American states declared those who later became known as the "Founding Fathers" signed the Declaration of Independence, which later became a global document, in its great contents, some of whose provisions were not included in any similar document, such as the following text:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights."

This is one of the most famous sentences in the English language, and the most powerful in expression and arrangement in American history, and it has become for many people the moral standard that the United States must defend.

This point of view has influenced many, including President Abraham Lincoln, who later led the battle to 'abolish slavery' in America, after his victory in the Civil War between the conservative northern and southern states.

But what happened to the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence?

Looking back at the sources, we find that the fates of these signatories were varied, as many of them faced significant challenges in their lives after signing the Declaration. John Hancock, who was the president of the Continental Congress and later became governor of Massachusetts, was not directly harmed, but he faced significant political and economic challenges.

Thomas Jefferson, who is credited with writing the Declaration, lived to become the third president of the United States, and his political life was filled with both achievements and challenges.

Benjamin Franklin, who appears on the \$100 bill, was a scientist and diplomat who later became one of the most prominent Founding Fathers of the United States. He spent his last years in public service and was not directly harmed.

John Adams, who later became the second president of the United States, although he faced great political challenges, was not directly harmed. The rest faced different fates, many of them lost their



alsarraf

property, others were imprisoned and tortured by the English governor, and others were held for long periods as prisoners.

This is in addition to the poverty, challenges and economic hardships that the majority faced, and despite that, they are all considered national heroes in the history of the United States, who made great sacrifices for freedom and independence.

We remember all these lessons, these days, recalling the lessons of Saddam's invasion, from which we did not learn much, and to praise what the founding fathers of America did, and the great role of that country in liberating our homeland and our people from the yoke of Saddam's rule and his criminals, when it sent about half a million soldiers to liberate us, despite the fact that some of our newspapers, at the time, and our representatives were cursing it and boasting about Arabism and absent pride.

America paid billions of taxpayers' money to liberate Kuwait, and bore the cost of writing off Egypt's debts and others, to urge them to stand with us. Its largest share of the 292 soldiers who were killed in the war to liberate Kuwait were from the coalition forces, and it rejected all of Saddam's tempting offers to give it military facilities, and cheap Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil in exchange for being left alone, but America mocked him and his ridiculous offers!

Only an ingrate would deny America's great role in liberating Kuwait, in an operation unprecedented in history, where it did not take a single dollar or a barrel of free oil in return for everything it offered. Nor did any American soldier or any of the Allied forces, even reach for a box of matches or a small doll.

Her great leadership also played a role in winning Congress over to the war side, and exerting strenuous efforts to neutralize the Soviet Union and China, and dealing firmly with the position of French President Chirac, Saddam's friend, in addition to her greater role in convincing Israel not to respond to the Iraqi missiles, to foil Saddam's plan to drag it into the battle, and to give the occupation a national dimension.

Our biggest streets should have been named after Bush, Thatcher and Schwarzkopf, as Western European countries did after World War II, but it seems they didn't need this 'favor' anyway!

In conclusion, we hope that the American position on the Palestinian issue will change and that they will be recognized as an independent state.

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Iraq pledges to protect Kuwaiti investors from extortion

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Chairman of the Iraqi Federal Integrity Commission, Judge Haider Hanoun, and Kuwait's Ambassador to Iraq, Tariq Al-Faraj, held discussions on strengthening cooperation in combating corruption, exchanging expertise, and transferring knowledge, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The two officials highlighted ongoing efforts to finalize a memorandum of understanding between the Commission and Kuwait's Anti-Corruption Authority "Nazaha."

Judge Hanoun emphasized the importance of protecting foreign investors and ensuring a secure environment for them, issuing a stern warning against any attempts

at extortion for economic gain at investors' expense. He encouraged Kuwaiti investors to enter the Iraqi market, assuring them of swift action and protection against any extortion attempts they may encounter.

According to the Iraqi News Agency (INA), Ambassador Al-Faraj affirmed that Kuwaiti authorities are actively assisting and cooperating with their Iraqi counterparts, particularly in extraditing suspects. He also mentioned that Kuwait is initiating the revocation of citizenship for those accused of embezzling tax deposits and who are wanted by the Iraqi Integrity Commission, alongside freezing and seizing their assets.



Al-Jarida daily photo
A file photo of ministry's road maintenance, part of asphalt paving works.

Portal open until August 15

PAAET launches e-admission for 2024/2025 academic year

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training said admission applications will now be received electronically from all affiliated colleges, institutes, and for training courses for the academic year 2024/2025 until August 15, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Dr. Fawzi Al-Duwaikhi, Dean of Admissions and Registration at the Authority, said students with secondary school certificates or equivalent who wish to join PAAET can access the electronic registration system and follow the application process steps.

The Authority's pavilion at Avenues Mall is equipped to handle student inquiries until next Tuesday and Dr. Al-Duwaikhi emphasized the importance of entering accurate data and reviewing information related to each specialization, including the announced percentages and eligible categories.

The Deanship of Admission and Registration will be available in Admission Hall No. (7) at the Authority's Adeiliya building during official working hours to address student inquiries and issues throughout the registration period. Note that entry to the hall will be limited to students only.

While most students will complete their registration electronically, some categories will need to visit the

2 new pedestrian bridges proposed

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Municipal Council member Abdullah Al-Enezi has submitted a proposal for the construction of two pedestrian bridges on Road 80 (Jahra Road) - one opposite Qairawan residential area and the other opposite Doha residential area.

He affirmed that this proposal is intended to enhance safety for pedestrians and road users, and to protect them from potential traffic accidents.

halls to finalize procedures.

This includes holders of old secondary school certificates (2011 and later), foreign and bilingual secondary school certificates from within Kuwait, and certificates from outside Kuwait. These applicants must make an appointment in advance via the Authority's website.

Major road maintenance contracts in pipeline as ministry reviews proposals

30-day evaluation for 12 deals across governorates

KUWAIT CITY Aug 4: The Ministry of Public Works is evaluating the technical and financial proposals from companies competing for major road maintenance, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The evaluation process, which will take 30 days, involves reviewing

18 proposed practices. Once this process is complete, contracts will be awarded to companies that meet the technical and financial criteria.

The Ministry has allocated 12 contracts for road maintenance across various governorates, with two contracts designated for each governorate.

Moreover, six contracts are set for highway maintenance. The Ministry has requested the Central Agency for Public Tenders to approve the issuance of documents for these tenders.

In related news, the Ministry is currently addressing grievances from companies regarding the draft study and detailed design work for the "First Phase" railway tender.

This follows the completion and approval of the Technical Tenders Study Committee's report. Once grievances are addressed, the envelopes for companies meeting the tender requirements will be opened. The Central Tenders Committee has confirmed that five companies have met the conditions for the railway tender.

The Ministry remains committed to overcoming any obstacles to ensure the successful implementation of the project, which is crucial for supporting the country's economic development goals.



A number of Palestinian families at the Al-Najat Charity camp.

Al-Najat Charity builds camp for displaced Palestinians

Kuwait's Al-Najat Charity Society has set up Al-Najat Camp in the western region of Khan Yunis, located in the southern Gaza Strip, through its collaboration with the Wafaa Foundation for Development and Capacity Building in Palestine.

According to Wafaa Foundation Director General Muhaisen Attawneh, the camp accommodates approximately 100 displaced Palestinian families and extends

its support to 284 families outside the camp by providing essential services such as water and food.

The camp features a sewage system, a prayer room, and a medical checkpoint for primary care. Attawneh emphasized the importance of this initiative amid the ongoing displacement crisis, as tens of thousands are forced into makeshift camps throughout the Gaza Strip coastline due to the conflict. (KUNA)

Psychology degree added to CSC's list

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Civil Service Commission announced the addition of graduates with a Bachelor's degree in Educational Psychology from the College of Education to the Ministry of Education's list of needed specializations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This decision is based on the directives of the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr. Adel Al-Adwani.

The CSC also stated that it will begin nominating those registered in the central employment system who hold this qualification starting today, Sunday



AUGUST

Room Promotion



Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 57.173 net	BHD 128.000
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 65.000	BHD 145.000

Promo period from 1st August to 31st August 2024 Terms & conditions apply*



Seyassah photo
Young participants listen to instructions from head of committee Al-Qabandi.

Participants undergo rigorous training

Kuwait's 33rd diving commemoration trip scheduled to begin on August 10

KUWAIT CITY Aug 4: The Maritime Heritage Revival Committee at the Kuwait Marine Sports Club is finalizing preparations for the 33rd diving commemoration trip, scheduled to happen from August 10 to 15 under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The committee's head, Ali Al-Qabandi, said the participants have been actively engaged in both practical and theoretical training at the club's headquarters in Salmiya.

This training aims to emulate traditional diving practices and prepares them for the voyage's challenges, including the preparation of diving ships and marine arts.

The training is supervised by Al-Nokhadha Hamed Al-Sayyar, the general supervisor of the committee, with assistance from members of the committee and veteran historian Thamer Al-Sayyar.

Al-Qabandi praised the strong turnout of Kuwaiti youth, noting that the number of

participants has reached the maximum allowed for each of the four ships involved. These ships, lowered into the sea on Saturday morning, are a gift from His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad.

The trip's activities include a "Dashha" Day ceremony on August 10 at 8:30 am on the club's coast, marking the departure of the diving teams from Al-Nawakhatha, Al-Mujamadiyah, and Al-Ghassa as they head to the Al-Khairan area for traditional diving.

Media reporters and photographers will have access to cover the trip closely, particularly during a visit to Bandar Al-Safan Diving in Al-Khiran on August 13.

The journey will conclude with the "Al-Qaffal" Day ceremony on August 15 at 5:30 pm on the club's coast, celebrating the return of the ships with a large public celebration and presentations of marine arts.

Al-Qabandi highlighted the trip's national significance and the high level of parental care and popular interest it garners.



KUNA photo
Foundation stone laying for the construction of the Falcon Ghanima Complex in Al-Mahra, eastern Yemen.

KRCS breaks ground on Yemen dev't complex

ADEN, Aug 4, (KUNA): The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has laid the foundation stone of Ghanima Abdulaziz Al-Sager complex project in Al Mahrah Governorate, east of Yemen, as part of "Kuwait by Your Side" campaign.

In a press release on Saturday, the humanitarian response institution, the executor of the project, said that undersecretary of Al Mahrah Governorate Awadh Quwaizeran and local officials have laid the cornerstone for this development project.

Quwaizeran lauded the KRCS for supporting development in Yemen in all sectors,

thanking His Highness the Amir, Kuwait, the government and Kuwaitis for this support.

Head of the institution office in Hadramout Salem Bawazir said it is one of the largest projects carried out by the institution on an area of 6,000 square meters.

It has five main buildings, including a 13-classroom school, a two-storey health center and a mosque, in addition to a development center for children and women and other facilities, he added.

The project is part of Kuwait's continued backing to Yemen and Yemenis in different sectors, he noted.

MoE rolls out data backup website

88 smokers seek help this summer

More people show interest in ‘quit smoking’ campaign

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Society for Combating Smoking and Cancer, Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh, said more and more people are attending the society’s ‘quit smoking’ clinic during summer. Approximately 88 patients were received from May to July, representing 55.7 percent of the total number of 158 patients visiting the clinic in the first seven months of this year.

Al-Saleh noted that from January to April, the clinic received 70 smokers, accounting for 44.3 percent. This indicates a rise in the number of those wishing to quit smoking during the current summer season compared to last winter.

He highlighted that the rate of

those wishing to quit smoking was higher among the age group of 50 years and above, at 40 percent of the total visitors. In contrast, the rates were 20 percent for the age group of 22 to 40 years, 30 percent for adolescents and young people aged 13 to 21 years, and 10 percent among females of various age groups.

In a separate context, Al-Saleh announced the launch of the International Conference on Tobacco Control under the slogan ‘The Scourge of Smoking and Conflict of Interest’ from October 27 to 28.

The conference will be held under the patronage of the Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, and jointly organized by the Association and the Ministry of Health as part of the activities and events of the National Program for Tobacco Control.



Aljarida daily photo
Kuwaiti summer brought an increase in the number of people wishing to quit smoking.

By Abdulrahman Al-Shimmari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: In a step to protect its data from any accident or disaster at the National Center affiliated with the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT), the Ministry of Education has created an alternative website to save and retrieve data.

Reliable sources stated that the Information Systems Center Administration in the ministry is fully responsible for managing data and user records for all electronic devices and systems. Sources said this endeavor aims to keep pace with the rapid digital transformation and provide electronic services in educational institutions.

Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Mansour Al-Dhafiri asked the directors general of educational districts and the director of the Religious Education Department to inform all schools about the need to eliminate encroachments and violations around school buildings, and to follow up and coordinate with Kuwait Municipality regarding the removal of these encroachments according to the systems and regulations.

The newspaper obtained a copy of Al-Dhafiri’s letter, in which he stressed the need to deal with encroachments outside the schools as an urgent and important issue to ensure the safety of students, teachers and administrative staff in all schools.

Meanwhile, the assistant undersecretary for Educational Facilities and Planning emphasized the need to instruct the educational districts to determine the encroachments and violations inside or adjacent the school buildings; considering they pose a danger to the students, teachers and employees. He urged the Municipality to remove these encroachments in accordance with the regulations.

Ministry updates school safety protocols



KUNA photo
Course lecturer Deputy Editor-in-Chief for International Affairs, Aqab Al-Qubaa’a, (center), during the introductory meeting with the trainee students.

KUNA holds news writing course for students

Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) held a course on “Basics of Writing News” on Sunday as part of the agency’s ninth training program for university students. The course lecturer, Deputy Editor-in-Chief for International Affairs Aqab Al-Qubaa, said in a press statement that the course, which lasts for a week and covers the theoretical aspect, includes the basics of writing news and its types, linguistic employment in news, and logical connection in information, in addition to the artistic forms and templates for producing news.

Al-Qubaa added that the course also sheds light

on common mistakes in the Arabic language and addresses introductory verbs and the art of creating and formulating news headlines with general practical exercises.

KUNA launched its ninth training program for university students last Thursday with an introductory meeting for the trainee students, introducing them to the training program schedule, which includes theoretical and practical aspects and field visits to various state institutions and bodies. The program will continue until September 1. (KUNA)

On the digital transformation that the government is keen on completing in all State departments, educational sources revealed that the ministry has started introducing the ‘digital curricula’ in primary and intermediate stages – Grade Four to Grade Nine; in addition to the inclusion of artificial intelligence and cybersecurity in the Grade 10 curriculum.

Sources disclosed that the ministry will include Robotics in the intermediate stage curriculum on a trial

basis in two schools -- one for boys and the other for girls -- in all educational districts. Sources affirmed that the annual plan of the ministry includes the review, amendment and development of curricula and reference books in line with the latest educational, technical and information developments.

Sources stated that the ministry, in cooperation with a training institute, continuously organizes courses in the field of cybersecurity and the use of ro-

bots in competitions at the State level; as well as the level of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the world.

Sources added the ministry keeps pace with technological developments by using devices for the new curricula and programs in schools like the QR codes for reference books, especially the scientific contents of these books and preparation of educational resources to support books that can be added with the same QR code.

Cub scouts summer camp concludes

MoE prepares for next school year

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Ministry of Education continues its preparations for the next school year, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources from the educational sector.

Sources told the daily that the Public Education Sector will form an action team for each school to follow up the preparations for the new school year; indicating the team members will be chosen from the school itself to monitor and overcome obstacles to the preparations for the upcoming school year, in coordination with the relevant authorities in the educational districts and the ministry.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Kuwait Scouts Association recently concluded the second summer camp, which was held for more than a week at its headquarters in Hawally, reports Al-Anba daily.

During the closing ceremony, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the association Hussein Al-Maqseed stressed that the association is keen on providing the best environment for the cub scouts through the summer camp. “We encourage students to participate in scout activities that combine fun and physical fitness. Our goal is to develop the students psychologically and socially, away from the school routine,” he explained.

He expressed his deep gratitude and appreciation to all those behind the success of the summer camp, including the Board of Directors of the association headed by Dr. Abdullah Al-Taraji, as they continue to support

activities in the interest of the students.

Meanwhile, Chairperson of the Development Committee for Stages and People with Disabilities and camp leader Sarah Abdel Salam revealed that the second summer camp is part of the programs and activities of the committee. She said the committee has been keen on diversifying the activities based on the age of participants; stressing the camping period was an opportunity for the cub scouts to learn, play and gain new friends.

Abdel Salam pointed out that the camp was full of educational activities and entertainment programs that contributed to efforts to develop the skills and abilities of the cub scouts, while promoting team work. She praised the active participation of the students, while highlighting the importance of activities that refine the personality of children and to change them for the better.

KWA, ROPME collaborate on conservation initiatives

Cooperation forged in protecting marine environment and drinking water sources

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Water Association (KWA) Dr. Saleh Al-Muzaini revealed that Executive Secretary of the Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME) Dr. Mohammad Al-Ahmad and a delegation from KWA discussed ways to strengthen cooperation between the two sides in protecting the marine environment and source of drinking water after desalination, confirming the rapid and steady increase in the demand for water.

In a press statement on Sunday, Al-Muzaini stressed that all KWA employees are fully prepared to co-operate with ROPME to preserve water and apply the principle of sustainability. He said “the public is aware of the water problem, but practical steps to ensure water sustainability have yet to start. The water issue requires correct scientific thinking, focus on developing modern methods, advanced technology and sustainable water rationalization.”

He disclosed the association has a ‘water efficiency’ program that highlights ways to manage drinking water in the building and adopt

practices that help maintain the flow of water to the building in an appropriate manner by installing smart devices to regulate water consumption and contribute to its sustainability.”

Moreover, Al-Ahmad also affirmed his readiness to coordinate with the association; stressing that he is fully prepared to improve relations between the two sides and to address the issues that countries are currently facing. He called for the implementation of the water efficiency program in the organization’s building to reduce water consumption and find alternative ways solve the high water consumption issue.

Army chief

Continued from Page 1

According to the report published on The National website, Lebanon’s economy is already grappling with economic and political stagnation. A full-scale war could exacerbate these issues, leading to a significant contraction in GDP. The Lebanese economy is at risk of collapse if the conflict intensifies.

Analysts suggest that while a full-scale war is not inevitable, ongoing tensions could still cause considerable economic damage across the Middle East. Naem Aslam, Chief Investment Officer at Zai Capital, expressed skepticism about Iran’s capability to engage in a full-scale war, noting that markets do not currently price in such a scenario.

Jack Kennedy, Head of Country Risk in the Middle East at Standard & Poor’s Markets Agency, warned that if the conflict escalates, coordinated attacks could come from multiple fronts, including Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and the Palestinian territories.

Gary Dugan, CEO of CIO Global Investments, pointed out that escalating conflict might lead to tighter sanctions on Iran rather than easing them. Meanwhile, the occupied territories have been forced to borrow extensively to finance the war.

Elliot Garside from Oxford Economics noted that increased domestic borrowing to cover the budget deficit might lead to more debt issuance, potentially lowering the credit rating of the occupied territories and making future financing more challenging and expensive. The occupied territories’ economy is projected to grow by 1.5% in 2024 and 4.2% in 2025.

The report also notes that an extended regional conflict would likely impact investor confidence and affect sectors such as tourism, shipping, retail trade, and real estate. Standard & Poor’s estimates that the tourism sector in Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt, which accounts for 12% to 26% of current account revenues, could lose approximately \$16.1 billion due to the escalation of the war. Maya Senous, an economist at

Oxford Economics, emphasized that travel, tourism, transportation, and retail sectors would be most affected by a full-scale regional war. A rise in oil prices due to Iran’s direct involvement could reignite global inflation, adding to economic pressures worldwide.

Nassib Ghobril from Byblos Bank predicts that the Lebanese economy could shrink by 10% to 15% this year due to potential widespread damage to infrastructure from the conflict. The tourism sector, already suffering from the ongoing conflict, is expected to face further delays in recovery.

Gary Dugan noted that broader attacks on the occupied territories could worsen its economic situation, especially given its large budget deficit. There are also signs that international companies are postponing investments in the region due to the unstable situation.

Public Institution

Continued from Page 1

could lead to punitive measures such as travel bans and other legal consequences outlined in relevant laws.

Undoubtedly, retirees’ suffering extends beyond theories and slogans. In all countries worldwide including the Gulf countries, social security institutions manage powerful investments that benefit their respective nations. For instance, the General Pension and Social Security Authority in the United Arab Emirates engages in huge investments across industries, real estate, infrastructure such as roads, and other sectors. Similar practices are observed in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

Therefore, discussing the investments of PIFSS in infrastructure and flagship projects is not fiction but reality. What is needed are flexible legislation and a foundation for PIFSS to initiate these ventures.

PIFSS could significantly enhance its ability to support retirees by taking on development projects on islands such as Boubyan and Failaka. These could include entertainment venues, tourist resorts, and various service projects, alongside profitable projects such as construction of labor cities.

Such initiatives would generate revenues for PIFSS, benefit retirees, and contribute to the national economy through fees collected by the state. This approach not only addresses the growing actuarial deficit but also strengthens the overall economy.

I would like to address His Highness the Prime Minister and the decision-makers. Reports and studies indicate that Kuwait often overlooks available opportunities and treats them as insignificant items that are set aside.

The world is rapidly advancing towards the future, and we must question how long our robust financial institutions will endure deficits. Why don’t we help ourselves?

‘Link to

Continued from Page 1

The new electronic system streamlines the process of requesting medicines and medical supplies, with hospital orders typically comprising 200 to 600 items per request. This improvement aids in better managing inventory disbursement and ensuring timely distribution.

The linking system reduces documentary cycles and guarantees the availability of medicines and medical supplies promptly, thereby promoting safe healthcare practices and supporting medicine safety for patients.

In another development, the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi officially opened the Integrated Dental Department at the new Farwaniya Hospital as part of the government’s 100-day work program.

This department aims to offer comprehensive treatment services to hospital patients and employees, especially groups that are most in need of these services, such as bedridden patients in the hospital.

The department is equipped with two dental clinics, an X-ray room, and a sterilization room, which contributes to providing integrated healthcare and therapeutic effectiveness. This initiative underscores the hospital’s commitment to specialized treatment services within its new facilities.

The inauguration of a dental department in the new Farwaniya Hospital, following the establishment of

a similar department in the new Jabra Hospital, underscores the Ministry of Health’s holistic strategy to enhance the quality of dental services. This initiative reflects the ministry’s dedication to improving and developing health infrastructure, and ensuring the delivery of optimal medical care to citizens.

Kuwait condemns

Continued from Page 1

Mahmoud, on the demise of terrorist attack victims that took place in the capital of Mogadishu, and wished the injured a speedy recovery.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Sunday a cable of condolences to President of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mahmood, on the demise of terrorist attack victims that took place in the capital of Mogadishu.

Total expenses

Continued from Page 1

Total oil revenues are estimated at 16 billion, 234 million, and 144 thousand dinars.

Taxes on income, profits, and capital gains are projected to bring in 613 million, 162 thousand dinars, while social contributions are estimated at 115 million dinars.

Revenues from goods, services, and other sources are expected to reach 1 billion, 848 million, and 570 thousand dinars, and revenues from asset disposal and other non-operating sources are estimated at 107 million, 742 thousand dinars. This totals 18 billion, 918 million, and 618 thousand dinars in revenue.

The decree also specifies the expenditures for various government entities as follows:

Ministry of Defense’s budget is set at approximately 1.9 billion dinars; Ministry of Interior’s 1.8 billion dinars; Ministry of Education 2.7 billion; Ministry of Health 2.8 billion dinars; Ministry of Higher Education 788.2 million dinars; Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy 3.4 billion dinars; Ministry of Foreign Affairs 65.7 million di-

nars and the General Accounts Department affiliated with the Ministry of Finance has the highest allocation ever at 6.4 billion dinars.

Additional approximate budget details include the Ministry of Public Works: 952.4 million dinars; Ministry of Information: 254 million dinars; Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs 465.8 million; Ministry of Communications 140.7 million dinars; General Department of Civil Aviation 226.9 million dinars; National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters 35.8 million dinars; Central Statistical Administration 7.7 million dinars; Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor 372.3 million dinars; National Guard 524.8 million dinars; Court of Auditors 73.5 million and the Amiri Diwan 259.8 million dinars.

In addition to these budgets, the Council of Ministers has issued 37 decrees to link the budgets of various government agencies and bodies to the fiscal year 2024/2025.

These decrees are:

■ Decree No. 9 of 2024: Budget for the General Fire Force, with expenditures of 213 million, 16 thousand dinars and revenues of 3 million, 538 thousand dinars, resulting in a deficit of 209 million, 478 thousand dinars.

■ Decree No. 10 of 2024: Budget for the Central Agency for Public Tenders, with expenditures of 14 million, 255 thousand dinars and revenues of 6 million, 745 thousand dinars, resulting in a deficit of 7 million, 480 thousand dinars.

■ Decree No. 11 of 2024: Budget for the National Human Rights Committee, with expenditures of 3 million, 57 thousand dinars and revenues of 6 thousand dinars, resulting in a deficit of 3 million, 51 thousand dinars.

■ Decree No. 12 of 2024: Budget for the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources, with expenditures of 117 million, 288 thousand dinars and revenues of 9 million, 583 thousand dinars, resulting in a deficit of 107 million, 705 thousand dinars.

■ Decree No. 15 of 2024: Budget for the Public Authority for Investment, with expenditures of 53 million, 755 thousand dinars and revenues of 215 thousand dinars, resulting in a deficit of 53 million, 540 thousand dinars.

■ Decree No. 25 of 2024: Budget for Kuwait Municipality, with expenditures of 244 million, 330

thousand dinars and revenues of 70 million, 959 thousand dinars, resulting in a deficit of 153 million, 371 thousand dinars.

Kuwait Grand

Continued from Page 1

The award will feature various categories such as radio, television, traditional press, and electronic media, encompassing television and radio drama, cultural programs, children’s and family programs, youth, sports, scientific, economic and development programs, news reports, and national and social songs. Additionally, a special Kuwait Appreciation Award for Media will be established to honor individuals who have provided distinguished services and creative contributions of high media value over decades.

A technical committee of specialists and experts will be formed to define the award’s objectives and classifications, set technical and professional standards for each field, determine the nomination period timelines, and establish the award’s executive regulations. The award will be overseen by a higher committee, formed annually, responsible for announcing the award and its categories, selecting the media personality for the Kuwait Appreciation Award, forming judging panels, supervising the marketing campaign and award ceremony, and organizing events associated with the award. Minister Al-Mutairi stressed that the award criteria will prioritize transparency, integrity, diversity, inclusiveness, innovation, creativity, sustainable development, and international cooperation.

Deal signed

Continued from Page 1

The signed agreement outlines a framework for cooperation aimed at skill development, training, and career readiness across various fields.

This strategic partnership is designed to benefit all segments of Kuwaiti society and promote awareness among Kuwaiti youth about opportunities in the private sector.

World News Roundup

Europe

Albanians vote

Ukraine intensifies long-range strikes

KYIV, Ukraine, Aug 4, (AP): Ukraine has sunk a Russian submarine and hit a Russian airfield in the past 24 hours, in line with a surge of long-range attacks against Russian targets, officials said. Russia said Ukrainian drones also hit an apartment building, killing one person.

The uptick in attacks since July come as Ukraine mounts pressure on allies to allow it to use long-range missiles to strike targets in Russia. Western allies, in particular the US, have so far resisted, fearing escalation from Moscow.

Ukraine struck a Russian Kilo-class submarine and an S-400 anti aircraft missile complex in the Moscow-occupied Crimean peninsula, according to a statement from the General Staff on Saturday. The air defense system was established to protect the Kerch Strait Bridge, an important logistics and transport hub supplying Russian forces.

Units of the missile forces, as well as the Navy damaged four launchers of the Triumph air defense system, while in the port of Sevastopol, the “Rostov-on-Don” - a submarine of Russia’s Black Sea fleet - was attacked and sank, the statement said.

The General Staff also confirmed that Ukrainian forces struck the Morozovsk airfield in the Rostov region after launching a massive drone barrage on Russia. Hits were recorded in warehouses with ammunition, where guided aerial bombs were stored. The operation was carried out by the Security Service of Ukraine, the Main Directorate of Intelligence and the Defense Ministry, the statement said.

Meanwhile, Belgorod Gov Vyacheslav Gladkov said that a woman was killed in a Ukrainian drone strike on an apartment building in the town of Shebekino early Sunday. Ukrainian drones also damaged several other buildings in the town, he said.

Gladkov said eight civilians have been wounded in the region by Ukrainian shelling and dozens of drone strikes since the previous day.

In the span of a month, Russia has experienced a surge in the tempo of Ukrainian drone barrages and long-range attacks, targeting Russian military infrastructure, including airfields and oil depots. Analysts say such an intensification is needed if Ukraine is to degrade Russian capabilities.

Also:

LONDON: Police warned Sunday that efforts to deal with the violence that has erupted across towns and cities in recent days in the wake of a stabbing rampage at a dance class that left three girls dead and several wounded means that other crimes may not be investigated fully.

The warning comes a day after dozens of people were arrested as far-right activists faced off with anti-racism protesters across the U.K., with violent scenes played out in many locations across the U.K., from the Northern Ireland capital, Belfast, to Liverpool in the northwest of England and Bristol in the west. Further arrests are likely as police scour CCTV, social media and body-worn camera footage.

In just one incident on Saturday, Merseyside Police said about 300 people were involved in violent disorder in Liverpool, which saw a community facility being set on fire. The Spellow Lane Library Hub, which was opened last year to provide support for one of the most deprived communities in the country, suffered severe damage to the ground floor. Police said rioters tried to prevent firefighters from accessing the fire, throwing a missile at the fire engine and breaking the rear window of the cab.

Further gatherings are scheduled Sunday and police will continue to mount a significant security operation, deploying thousands more officers onto the streets, many in riot gear. Police have also made more prison cells available and are using surveillance and facial recognition technology. “We’re seeing officers that are being pulled from day-to-day policing,” Tiffany Lynch from the Police Federation of England and Wales told the BBC. “But while that’s happening, the communities that are out there that are having incidents against them - victims of crime - unfortunately, their crimes are not being investigated.”

The violence erupted earlier this week, ostensibly in protest of Monday’s stabbing attack in Southport. A 17-year-old male has been arrested.

Suspects under 18 are usually not named in the UK, but Judge Andrew Menary ordered Axel Rudakubana, born in Wales to Rwandan parents, to be identified, in part to stop the spread of misinformation.

Police said many of the actions are being organized online by shadowy far-right groups.



QEPARO, Albania: Albanians in the southwestern town of Himara are to vote Sunday for a new mayor after their previous choice, a member of the country’s ethnic Greek minority, was stripped of his title, convicted and imprisoned on vote-buying charges in what he and neighboring Greece have claimed was a politically motivated case.

Voting started on Sunday with less than 7% of about 23,000 voters casting their ballots in the first two hours, according to the Central Election Commission, the country’s governing election body. The process is normal and without any problems so far, it said. Some minor technical issues in some polling stations, with the election documentation, management or voters’ identity cards have been reported by local media.

Media also has reported that at least four buses have come from neighboring Greece with locally registered voters. Both rival candidates have invested in bringing Albanian immigrants back to cast their ballots, a normal move in every election in the tiny Balkan country.

The case against Fredis Beleris, a dual Albanian-Greek national who was elected to the European Parliament with Greece’s governing conservative party in June, has strained relations between Tirana and Athens, with Greece threatening to hold up Albania’s bid to join the European Union.

Beleris, 51, was arrested two days before the May 14, 2023, municipal elections in Himara, a town populated by ethnic Greeks on what has been dubbed the Albanian Riviera, a coastal region with burgeoning tourist development that has been rife with property disputes. He was charged and ultimately convicted of offering about 40,000 Albanian leks (360 euros, \$390) to buy eight votes, and is serving a two-year prison sentence.

Both candidates in Sunday’s election - governing Socialist Party candidate Vangjel Tavo and Petraq Gjukuria from the Together We Win coalition - are members of the local ethnic Greek community.



US Republican presidential candidate former president Donald Trump cheers as he departs after speaking at a campaign rally at Georgia State University in Atlanta on Aug 3. (AP)

Politics

Some activists step up criticism of Shapiro, Kelly

Trump slams Georgia’s Republican governor

ATLANTA, Aug 4, (AP): Donald Trump picked a new fight Saturday with Georgia’s Republican governor as he campaigned in the key swing state where he’s looking to avenge his narrow 2020 loss - a defeat he continues to blame on GOP officials for not giving into his false theories of election fraud.

Trump attacked Gov Brian Kemp on his social media site before his rally and said Kemp should be “fighting Crime, not fighting Unity and the Republican Party.” He also criticized Kemp’s wife, Marty, for saying she would write in her husband’s name for president this fall instead of voting for the Republican nominee.

At Saturday’s rally, Trump assailed Kemp in a roughly 10-minute tirade, blaming him for his loss to Democratic President Joe Biden and for not stopping a local district attorney from prosecuting him and several associates for his efforts to overturn the results.

“He’s a bad guy. He’s a disloyal guy. And he’s a very average governor,” Trump said. “Little Brian, little Brian Kemp. Bad guy.”

On X, Kemp told Trump to “leave my family out of it” and urged him to stop “engaging in petty personal insults, attacking fellow Republicans, or dwelling on the past.”

Push

Georgia is likely to see another closely contested election as both campaigns push hard in the state, with Democrats riding a new wave of enthusiasm after Biden dropped his reelection bid and endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris. To win this time, Trump will likely need the support both of Kemp’s political operation and from moderate and conservative voters who aren’t as committed to him as members of his base.

Going to Atlanta put Trump in the state’s largest media market, including suburbs and exurbs that were traditional Republican strongholds but have become more competitive as they’ve diversified and grown in population. Thousands of supporters packed the same arena for a Harris rally days earlier.

Draic Coakley, a 23-year-old who works in the trucking industry and

drove from Heflin, Alabama, just across the western Georgia border to attend his third Trump rally, said he believes Trump “sees people like me,” while “Biden and Harris, well, are part of what I think of as the elite.”

“President Trump may be a billionaire, but it’s OK to be rich,” Coakley said. “He gets us. He just gets us, and he gets the country.”

Biden beat Trump in the state by 11,779 votes in 2020. Trump pressured Georgia’s Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to “find” enough votes to change the outcome and his allies tried to present slates of so-called “fake electors” that could replace the Democratic voters Biden won.

Trump was later indicted in Georgia for his efforts to overturn the election, but the case remains on hold while courts decide whether the Fulton County district attorney can continue to prosecute it.

Rare

Kemp certified the electors that Biden won four years ago and repeatedly rejected efforts by Trump allies to replace them. He’s since proven to be the rare Republican nationally who could hold his ground against Trump without sacrificing his power or popularity, with 63% of Georgians approving of his job performance in a June poll conducted for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Kemp won the governor’s office narrowly in 2018 after garnering Trump’s endorsement. But Trump backed a primary rival against Kemp in 2022 - former Sen. David Perdue, who spoke at Saturday’s rally. Kemp trounced Perdue on his way to defeating Democrat Stacey Abrams, a national star in her party, by 7.5 percentage points, a veritable blowout in a battleground state.

Kemp will chair the Republican Governors Association for the 2026 election cycle, when he is leaving office. And he’s widely known to be national Republicans’ top choice to take on Democratic US Sen Jon Ossoff in that midterm cycle.

Kemp has said he didn’t vote for anyone in this year’s primary but will vote for the Republican ticket in November.

Erick Erickson, a prominent con-

servative host in Georgia, said of Trump, “He can’t help himself.”

“Donald Trump is really trying to build unity in Georgia by attacking the sitting Republican Governor whose ground game he will need to win and also that Governor’s wife,” Erickson wrote on X. “And if he loses, it’ll be because of this stuff, not a stolen election.”

Also:

WASHINGTON: Democrats have unified with remarkable speed behind US Vice President Kamala Harris as she has taken over the top of the party’s ticket heading into the November presidential election.

It may be another story when it comes to a running mate.

As Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro and Arizona Sen Mark Kelly have emerged as among the possible finalists, both have faced criticism from some organizations and activists who might otherwise be supportive of Democratic causes, potentially undermining the party’s newfound unity barely two weeks after Harris entered the race.

The vice president’s team says she is interviewing six possible choices over the weekend before an announcement expected Monday. The next day, she and her running mate will appear together at a rally in Philadelphia, then visit six more swing states.

In addition to Shapiro and Kelly, Harris is said to be considering Minnesota Gov Tim Walz, Illinois Gov J.B. Pritzker and Gov Andy Beshear of Kentucky and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg.

Walz changed his weekend travel plans, but his office didn’t answer a question Saturday about whether it was for an interview with Harris. “The governor’s schedule has changed, and he is no longer traveling to New Hampshire this weekend,” Walz spokesman Teddy Tschann said.

Some congressional Democrats have promoted Kelly, a former Navy pilot and astronaut whose state has more than 370 miles of border with Mexico. They say his selection could help defuse attacks by the Republican nominee, former president Donald Trump, who argues that Biden administration’s immigration policies are too relaxed.

injured were in critical condition.

Police haven’t yet publicly identified the people involved in the incident or described how the encounter unfolded. Still, they said there was no ongoing threat to the public.

Videos posted on the social platform X showed emergency vehicles with flashing lights outside the casino, police tape wrapped around several slot machines inside and security employees tending to someone on the floor. The Associated Press left messages with Las Vegas police. A Red Rock spokesperson confirmed the encounter occurred at the Las Vegas property but declined to provide any details. (AP)



Milwaukee shooting injures 5: Five people were wounded in a shooting in Milwaukee early Saturday morning, according to police.

Officers responded to the 3800 block of N. Richards Street on the north side of the city at about 1:45 am, the Milwaukee Police Department said in a statement. Those injured in the shooting were taken to the hospital and police said they are “expected to survive.”

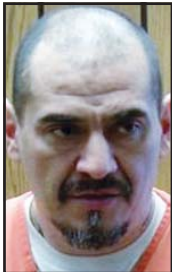
Police did not identify the victims beyond their ages, which range from 28 to 40 years of age. The exact nature of the injuries was unknown.

Authorities said police are searching for unknown suspects, but did not provide any additional information on the shooting.

WISN-TV in Milwaukee reported that the shooting happened outside of a bar. (AP)



This photo taken on Aug 2, 2024 shows smoke billowing from wildfires in west-central Alberta, Canada. (Xinhua)



Alderete



Brunton

America

Firefighters battle Calif wildfire: Firefighters made progress Saturday against California’s largest wildfire of the year ahead of expected thunderstorms that could unleash fire-starting lightning and erratic winds and erode progress made over the past week. Dry, hot conditions posed similar threats across the fire-stricken West.

“We’re not completely out of the woods yet, but we’re looking very, very good,” Cal-Fire official Mark Brunton said in a video update Saturday. “This is moving at a very fast pace.”

Containment of the Park Fire, now California’s fourth-largest wildfire on record, was at 27% as of Saturday afternoon. Brunton said the relatively milder weather the last few days allowed firefighters to build containment lines.

But hotter weather, fuels and terrain will continue posing challenges for the estimated 6,500 firefighters battling the fire, which has spread over 626 square miles (1,621 square kilometers) since allegedly being started by arson in a park in the Sierra Nevada foothills east of the Sacramento Valley city of Chico. For comparison, the city of Los Angeles covers about 503 square miles (1,302 square kilometers).

Suppression crews will also start removing damaged infrastructure in some areas Saturday. People living in the rural communities of Cohasset and Forest Ranch were told they could start returning home Saturday afternoon. (AP)



Man gets 15 yrs for stealing: The man who stole a bronze Jackie Robinson statue that was cut off at the ankles and found days later smoldering in a trash can in a city park in Kansas is going to spend about 15 years in prison, although most of that time is related to a burglary that happened a few days after the January statue heist.

A judge sentenced Ricky Alderete Friday on three different cases that he said in court stemmed from his addiction to fentanyl.

The League 42 youth baseball league plans to unveil a replacement statue of Robinson crafted from the original mold Monday at a park in Wichita, Kansas. The city was shocked when the statue was cut from its base in January, leaving only the statue’s feet behind. The league that primarily serves low-income youth is named after Robinson’s uniform number with the Brooklyn Dodgers, with whom he broke the major leagues’ color barrier in 1947.

Firefighters found burned remnants of the statue five days later while responding to a



Britain’s King Charles III, (left), meets well wishers during the Mey Highland Games at the John O’Groats Showground in Caithness, Scotland on Aug 3. (AP)

Africa

NDarfur famine continues

Nigeria leader calls for ‘end’ to protests

ABUJA, Nigeria, Aug 4, (AP): Nigeria’s leader on Sunday called for an end to mass protests over economic hardship, saying the rallies have turned violent and blaming “a few with a political agenda” for driving them.

The protests, which began Thursday, have been accompanied by reports of looting and vandalism, as well as accusations that security forces have used excessive force. Amnesty International has reported the deaths of nine protesters in clashes with police, while another four were killed by a bomb. The Nigerian police denied the Amnesty report.

“I have heard you loud and clear,” President **Bola Tinubu** said in his first public remarks on the demonstrations. “I understand the pain and frustration that drive these protests, and I want to assure you that our government is committed to listening and addressing the concerns of our citizens.”

But, he said, “a few with a clear political agenda to tear this nation apart” would be resisted by security forces.

The protests reflect frustration with the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation and accusations of misgovernment and corruption in Africa’s most populous country, a top oil producer where public officials’ huge earnings contrast with high poverty and hunger levels.

Tinubu’s aides have said the protests are politically motivated. His election last year was disputed by the opposition, after he won with 37% of the vote, the smallest margin of any Nigerian president ever. The election also recorded the lowest turnout since 1999, when the country returned to democracy.

Oppose

The protesters have also been inspired by other young people in Kenya who held rallies last month to oppose a planned tax hike.

The Nigerian leader said that his government “will not stand idly” and allow the looting reported in the past days to continue.

“Under the circumstances, I hereby enjoin protesters and the organizers to suspend any further protest and create room for dialogue,” he said.

The military has also threatened to intervene to quell violence.

Tinubu defended the audacious reforms that were supposed to save the government money and shore up dwindling foreign investment, but whose immediate impact has added to hardships.

“The economy is recovering; please, don’t shut out its oxygen,” Tinubu said.

In a region that has witnessed rampant military coups off the back of popular discontent with democratically elected governments, the Nigerian leader warned the protests could also threaten the country’s democracy.

Nigerian security forces on Saturday fired bullets and teargas at several journalists and protesters during demonstrations against the country’s economic crisis in the capital city, Abuja, according to journalists at the scene and videos reviewed by The Associated Press.

Fired

It was not immediately confirmed whether the projectiles fired at journalists were rubber or live rounds. But the AP witnessed the aftermath of the attack, including bullet holes in a car belonging to one of the journalists as well as live bullets at the scene of the protests.

At least 50 protesters were arrested on Saturday during the protests in Abuja, Amnesty International’s Nigeria office said. Nearly 700 protesters have so far been arrested across the country while nine officers have been injured during the protests;

The Nigerian secret service, or Department of State Service whose operatives are usually hooded, quickly dispersed the protesters and then fired gunshots at the journalists who were still at the venue, according to six journalists there who spoke to The AP on the record.

A video shot by one of the journalists showed the gun-wielding operatives chasing people in front of the stadium.

“It was shocking because they saw us as journalists and we were telling them we were journalists,” said Abdulkareem Mojeed, one of the journalists attacked. At least three bullet holes pierced his car.

The journalists said they were far away from the protesters. They were wearing vests identifying them as media and were next to vehicles with media branding when they were fired at, they said.

Journalist Abdulqudus Ogundapo said he was scared for his safety when caught in the gunfire.

Also:

CAIRO: Famine conditions have spread in Sudan in the North Darfur region and are likely to continue through October due to the ongoing conflict that has torn the country for over 15 months, a global authority on food security warned.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC’s report found that it is plausible that parts of North Darfur - especially the Zamzam camp - are experiencing “the worst form of hunger” known as IPC Phase 5.

The IPC Partnership comprises more than a dozen UN agencies, aid groups, and governments that use the IPC as a global reference for analysis of food and nutrition crises.

IPC Phase 5 is determined in areas where at least one in five people or households severely lack food and face starvation and destitution, which would ultimately lead to critical levels of acute malnutrition and death.

Sudan plunged into war when fighting began over a year ago between the military and a powerful paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces or RSF. As a result of fighting in the capital, Khartoum, the military leadership largely operates out of eastern Sudan near the Red Sea Coast.

The conflict has pushed people into starvation and created the world’s largest displacement crisis with more than 10 million people forced to flee their homes since April 2023, according to the U.N. migration agency. Over two million of whom fled to neighboring countries.

In May, the WFP said in a report that at least 1.7 million people were already experiencing emergency levels of hunger in Darfur, including in Al Fasher, the capital of North Darfur state that is besieged by RSF.

Famine conditions have prevailed as of June and July in Zamam camp, 12 km south of Al Fasher -the capital of North Darfur - where internally displaced people are living, according to the IPC report.



People participate in a rally against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government demanding justice for the victims killed in the recent countrywide deadly clashes, in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Aug 4. Inset: Men run past a shopping center which was set on fire by protesters. (AP)

Violence in Bangladesh leaves dozens dead, hundreds injured as protests continue

Dozens have been killed and hundreds injured as renewed protests swept across Bangladesh, with protesters calling for the government to resign as the prime minister accused them of “sabotage” and cut off mobile internet in a bid to quell the unrest.

The country’s leading Bengali-language daily, Prothom Alo, said at least 49 people died in Sunday’s violence. Channel 24 reported at least 50 deaths.

As the violence raged, Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina said those who were engaging in the “sabotage” and the destruction in the name of protests were no longer students, but criminals, and said the people should deal with them with iron hands.

The ruling Awami League party said the demand for Hasina’s resignation shows protests have been taken over by the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the now-banned Jamaat-e-Islami party.

Demonstrators are demanding Hasina’s resigna-

tion, after earlier protests in July that began with students calling for an end to a quota system for government jobs escalated into violence that left more than 200 dead.

Also Sunday, the government announced a holiday from Monday to Wednesday. Courts will remain closed for an indefinite period. Mobile internet service was off on Sunday, while Facebook and messaging apps including WhatsApp were inaccessible even on broadband internet. (AP)

Asia

Russia’s Putin offers disaster aid to North Korea

Philippines, Germany OK to finalize defense pact

MANILA, Philippines, Aug 4, (AP): Germany and the Philippines agreed Sunday to rapidly finalize a defense pact that would allow joint military training and possible sale of German weapons to address security threats, including China’s growing aggression in the South China Sea, which Manila’s defense chief said was “the sole cause of tensions” and conflicts in the disputed waters.

China has long claimed much of the entire seaway, a key global trade and security route, and vowed to defend its territorial interests at all costs.

Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said the proposed Arrangement on Defense Cooperation that he and German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius discussed in talks in the capital, Manila, could be concluded as early as this year given current security concerns. Both underscored the need for countries to press diplomatic efforts under the UN Charter to attain “just and lasting peace” from Ukraine to Asia’s flashpoints.

Without mentioning China by name, both defense chiefs expressed in a joint statement their strong opposition to “any unilateral attempt to advance expansive claims, especially through force or coercion.” They also “reaffirmed their staunch commitment to freedom of navigation, overflight and other peaceful uses of the seas consistent with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.”

Powerful

The Philippines and its longtime treaty ally, the United States, and other Western countries have frequently accused China of undermining those international principles with Beijing’s increasingly hostile actions, including the use of powerful water cannons, military-grade laser and blocking and other dangerous maneuvers against Philippine ships in the disputed South China Sea. Meanwhile, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos’ administration has moved to expand security alliances with friendly Asian and Western governments.

Beijing has accused Washington of instigating trouble and threatening the stability of the region by boosting the deployment of US forces, warships and jets and working with countries like the Philippines to try to contain China’s rise.

The proposed defense deal would allow joint training, possible weapons sale, security information sharing and closer collaboration between the German and Philippine armed forces, the defense chiefs said.

Responding to a question in a news conference with Pistorius, Teodoro said: “There is only one cause of conflict in the South China Sea. ... It is China’s illegal and unilateral attempt to appropriate most, if not all, of the South China Sea as their internal waters.”

“That is the sole cause of tensions,” he added.

“The Philippines is not provoking China. We do not seek war, yet we are mandated not only by our constitution but as an obligation to our countrymen to protect whatever areas whether be jurisdiction or rights that rightfully belong to the exclusive benefit of Filipinos,” Teodoro said.

Expansive

Pistorius underscored Germany’s support for a 2016 arbitration ruling that invalidated China’s expansive claims in the South China Sea on historic grounds. The decision was based on the U.N. Convention of the Law of the Sea, or UNCLOS.

“This ruling remains valid without any exemptions,” Pistorius said. “We need to do more than stand up for UNCLOS. We need to contribute to de-escalation. This is only possible if we keep all channels of communication open including those with China.”

After an alarmingly violent June 17 confrontation in the Philippine-occupied Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea between Chinese forces, who were armed with knives, axe, and improvised spears, and Fili-

pino navy personnel, China and the Philippines reached a temporary agreement last month to prevent further clashes that could spark a major armed conflict in the hotly disputed atoll.

A week after the deal was forged, Philippine government personnel transported food and other supplies to Manila’s territorial ship outpost at the shoal, which has been closely guarded by the Chinese coast guard and navy ships, and no confrontations were reported.

The longstanding territorial conflicts between the neighboring Asian countries, which also involve Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan, have continued, however, along with a scathing war of words.

Also:

SEOUL, South Korea: Russian President Vladimir Putin offered humanitarian assistance to help North Korea cope with damages from recent floods, both countries said, in another sign of expanding relations between the two nations.

In a message to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Saturday, Putin “extended deep sympathy and support” and conveyed his willingness to provide immediate disaster aid to help North Korea recover from the floods, the North’s official Korean Central News Agency reported Sunday.

Russia’s state news agency Tass carried a similar report, saying that Putin told Kim in the message: “You can always count on our assistance and support.”

Ties between North Korea and Russia have been improving significantly amid widespread outside beliefs that North Korea has supplied conventional weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine in return for military and economic assistance. During a meeting in Pyongyang in June, Kim and Putin signed a pact stipulating mutual military assistance if either country is attacked, in what was considered the two countries’ biggest defense deal since the end of the Cold War.

Machado was given a non-descript shirt and whisked away on the back of a motorcycle.

Carmen Elena Garcia, a 57-year-old street vendor was at the rally even though she feared a government crackdown. (AP)

Mexico soldiers killed by drones:

The Mexican army acknowledged for the first time Friday that some of its soldiers have been killed by bomb-dropping drones operated by drug cartels.

Defense Secretary Gen Luis Cresencio Sandoval did not provide exact figures on the number of casualties suffered in the attacks, almost all of which occurred in the western state of Michoacan.

“Our personnel have suffered wounds, and some of our troops have even died” in the attacks, Sandoval said. The army had previously acknowledged that soldiers had been wounded in Michoacan by improvised explosive devices, or IEDs.

Sandoval did not say when the attacks took place, but suggested they targeted patrol units. He said the army was acquiring anti-drone systems to combat the threat.

“What we are seeking with this anti-drone equipment is to have the security capability, which we lack, for our personnel performing reconnaissance and patrols,” Sandoval said.

Sandoval said the army continues to encounter far more road-side bombs than drone-dropped ones. (AP)



Opposition leader Maria Corina Machado cheers with supporters during a rally in Caracas, Venezuela on Aug 3. (AP)



Maduro



Gonzalez

Lat/Am

Brazil plane crash kills 3: Three people were killed after a small plane crashed in the municipality of Birigui in the southeastern Brazilian state of Sao Paulo on Saturday, the local fire department said.

The aircraft fell on a farm located at kilometer 5 of the Senador Teotonio Vilela highway, 521 kilometers from the city of Sao Paulo.

After hitting the ground, the aircraft caught fire and the three occupants were charred to death, according to the fire department.

Firefighters and police officers rushed to the site to put out the flames and an investigation has been opened. (Xinhua)

Venezuela oppn leader joins rally:

Thousands of people rallied in the streets of Venezuela’s capital Saturday, waving the national flag and singing the national anthem in support of an opposition candidate they believe won the presidential election by a landslide.

Authorities have declared President Nicolás Maduro the winner of last Sunday’s election but have yet to produce voting tallies to prove he won. Maduro also urged his backers to attend his own “mother of all marches” later Saturday in Caracas.

The government arrested hundreds of opposition supporters who took to the streets in the days after the disputed poll, and the president and his cadres have threatened to also lock up opposition leader, Maria Corina Machado, and her hand-picked presidential candidate, Edmundo González.

On Saturday, supporters chanted and sang as Machado arrived at the rally in Caracas. Ecstastic, they crushed around her as she climbed onto a raised platform on a truck to address the crowd.

“After six days of brutal repression, they thought they were going to silence us, intimidate or paralyze us,” she told them. “The presence of every one of you here today represents the best of Venezuela.”

Machado, who has been barred by Maduro’s government from running for office for 15 years, had been in hiding since Tuesday, saying her life and freedom are at risk. Masked assailants ransacked the opposition’s headquarters on Friday, taking documents and vandalizing the space.

On Saturday, she held aloft a Venezue-

lan flag and promised that the government whose policies forced millions of Venezuelans to leave was finally coming to an end.

“We have overcome all the barriers! We

have knocked them all down,” Machado said. “Never has the regime been so weak.”

González, who remains in hiding, was not seen at the event, and when the rally ended,



German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius, (left), meets with his Philippine counterpart Gilberto Teodoro, Jr in Manila, Philippines on Aug 4. Germany and the Philippines agreed Sunday to rapidly finalize a defense pact that would allow joint military training and possible sale of German weapons to address security threats, including China’s growing aggression in the South China Sea, which Manila’s defense chief said was ‘the sole cause of tensions’ and conflicts in the disputed waters. (AP)

S&P GCC composite index up 3.9% in July

Kuwait markets positive in July due to rebound in non-oil sector, reports Markaz

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz” released its Monthly Market Review report for July 2024. Kuwait markets ended positive for the month owing to a rebound in the non-oil sector activity, discovery of new oil reserves, and the news pertinent to the government planning to establish a secondary market for trading government bonds. GCC markets remained optimistic, supported by the positive start to the second quarter earnings season in 2024. U.S. equities were down for the month, weighed by technology stocks, even as inflation continued to ease.

Kuwait equity market index gained 4.4% for the month, extending the yearly gains to 6.2%. Kuwait’s non-oil GDP bounced back in Q1 2024, rising 4.7% y/y compared to a 2.3% y/y contraction in the previous quarter driven by strong growth in the manufacturing sector, according to Kuwait CSB. Kuwait’s inflation (CPI) eased to 2.8% y/y in June, the slowest pace since November 2020, down from 3.2% y/y in the previous month. The food and beverages component moderated compared to the previous month, but remained elevated at 5.6% y/y in June while growth in housing prices witnessed a notable slowdown to 0.9% y/y. The discovery of 3.2 billion barrels of oil reserves by KPC (Kuwait Petroleum Corporation), equivalent to Kuwait’s oil production over three years added to the positive investor sentiment as higher possible revenue from oil could help in easing budget deficits in the future. Kuwait government has undertaken preliminary steps to establish a market for trading government bonds, according to Arab times. This initiative is expected to support capital expenditure and create a strong ecosystem for debt issuance and trading in Kuwait.

Kuwait banking stocks rose 5.4% during July supported by positive Q2 2024 earnings results. Among banking stocks, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) gained the most at 13.3% during the month following the earnings announcement. ABK registered net profits of KD 29.06 million (USD 95.8 million) in H1 2024, a growth of 22% y/y. NBK and KFH rose 5.7% and 4.5% respectively in July. KFH recorded a net profit of KD 341.2 million for H1 2024, an increase of 2.3% y/y. NBK posted a net profit of KD 145.8 million in Q2 2024, up 3.3% y/y due to higher operating income and lower provisions, that were partly offset by higher operating expenses and higher

taxes. Among Premier market stocks, Gulf Cables and Electrical Industries Group gained the most at 21.0% during the month.

The value of real estate transactions in Kuwait rose by 27% y/y to KD 853 million in Q2 2024 owing to sizable one-off deals across the main three segments. However, prices in the residential segment continued to moderate, with prices falling by 3.9% y/y in Q2 2024.

GCC markets were mostly positive during the month, with S&P GCC composite index registering a gain of 3.9% for the month. GCC equity indices, except Oman and Bahrain, registered monthly gains as strong corporate earnings coupled with rising expectation of U.S. Fed rate cut in September lent support to the markets. However, the total project awards in the GCC witnessed a decline of 19.7% y/y to USD 51.7 billion in Q2 2024 due to the unprecedented slump of project awards in Qatar coupled with steep fall in UAE contract deals, as reported by Zawya.

Dubai and Abu Dhabi equity indices gained 5.9% and 3.1% respectively during the month, primarily driven by the performance of banking and real estate stocks. The market is expecting strong loan growth and higher NIMs for banks in the region in the near term. The share price of FAB rose 4.7% during July as the bank posted a net profit of AED 4.26 billion in Q2 2024, beating analyst estimates. Emaar Development and Emaar Properties surged 6.1% and 5.2% respectively during the month supported by strong execution and healthy pipeline of projects in H1 2024. Aldar properties’ share price rose 18.1% driven by the appointment of the new CEO. The Saudi Tadawul index rose 3.7% during July despite IMF’s downward revision of Saudi Arabia’s GDP growth by nearly one percentage point to 1.7% for 2024 due to oil production cuts. Saudi Aramco share prices fell 1.1% owing to expectations of a fall in Q2 2024 profits due to lower production. Qatar equity index registered a gain of 1.9% despite the steep fall in natural gas prices.

Global and U.S. markets were mildly positive for the month, with S&P 500 index up by 1.1% as U.S. Fed Chair Powell flagged possible interest rate cuts in September citing lower inflation in the FOMC meeting held on July 31st. U.S. Personal Consumption Expenditure rose by 2.5% y/y in June, easing down slight-



ly from the 2.6% y/y rise in May 2024. The consumer price index also declined by 0.1% m/m in June, its first monthly decline in four years. The U.S. economy grew by 2.8% y/y in Q2 2024, exceeding consensus estimates of 2.0%. Tech-heavy Nasdaq was down by 1.6% for the month

amid somber earnings reports from Tesla and Alphabet, and sector rotation to relatively undervalued growth stocks. The MSCI EM index witnessed a marginal loss of 0.1% during the month, weighed by Chinese equities which declined by 1.0% for the month amid banking crisis and slowing economic recovery. China’s economic growth slowed to 4.7% y/y in Q2 2024, down from 5.3% y/y growth in Q1 2024, raising concerns over the country’s economic recovery. The country’s central bank lowered several key rates during the month, in a move to support the economy.

The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note declined by 27 bps during the month closing at 4.09%, as easing inflation and indications from U.S. Fed strengthened hopes of rate cut by the U.S. Fed. With the 2-year U.S. Treasury note declining by 42 bps to 4.29%, the spread between the 10-year and 2-year note narrowed to 20 bps in July, from 35 bps at the end of June 2024.

Oil price settled at USD 80.7 per barrel, down 6.6% during the month of July. Concerns over global demand amid weakness in China’s economic outlook pressured oil markets. Eas-

ing worries over geopolitical tensions also capped prices. Short term outlook on Oil prices remains mixed. Morgan Stanley expects oil prices in the mid-high USD 70 range in 2025 as current tightness in oil market eases into a surplus due to a possible growth in both OPEC and non-OPEC supply. EIA however has a positive outlook, estimating prices to average around USD 89 per barrel in H2 2024, up from an average USD 84 per barrel in H1 2024, based on the agency’s outlook on persistent withdrawals from global oil inventory.

KIPIC floats tender for services related to the Al-Zour Refinery

KPC seeks operator for oil complex cafeteria

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) has floated a tender for environmental monitoring and laboratory services related to the Al-Zour Refinery, the LNG project, and associated facilities.

The deadline for submitting bids is September 10.

Moreover, KIPIC has made amendments to a previous tender issued on July 28 concerning steam trap management. The new deadline for this tender is Aug 27.

In another related development, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation has floated a tender for a license to operate and manage the cafeteria at the oil complex to provide food services (snacks).

This tender, open to specialized companies, is not divisible and has a closing date of September 10, 2024.

Boursa economic report for July 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The weekly economic report for the Boursa Kuwait indicates a mixed performance for July compared to June, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The detailed summary of market performance shows the Premier Market Index rose by approximately 4.7 percent; the Main Market Index increased by about 2.6 percent; the General Market Index (combining both markets) grew by around 4.4 percent and the Main Market 50 Index saw an increase of about 3.1 percent.

In terms of absolute liquidity and trading values in July, the absolute liquidity reached approximately 910.9 million dinars, up from 838.5 million dinars in June, reflecting an 8.6 percent increase.

Meanwhile, the average daily trading value for July was around 41.4 million dinars, which is an 11.1 percent decrease compared to June’s average of 46.6 million dinars.

For the first seven months of the year, liquidity amounted to about 7,548 billion dinars over 141 business days. The average daily trading value for this period was about 53.5 million dinars, a 24.2 percent increase from the same period in 2023 and up 24.7 percent compared to the entire year

of 2023.

Speaking of liquidity distribution the Premier Market (34 companies) received approximately 707.5 million dinars, or 77.7 percent of the total market liquidity.

Within the Premier Market, about half of the companies received 82.2 percent of its liquidity; two major banks, KFH and Gulf Bank, accounted for 30.0 percent of its liquidity and 23.3 percent of the entire market’s liquidity.

The Main Market (111 companies) received about 202.9 million dinars, or 22.3 percent of the total market liquidity.

In the Main Market, 20 percent of companies received 83.0 percent of its liquidity, while 80 percent of companies received 17.0 percent of the liquidity.

There has been an increase in the share of liquidity for the Main Market up to July 2024 compared to the entire year of 2023, where the First Market received 79.1 percent of the liquidity and the Main Market received 20.9 percent. This shift represents a positive development if it continues.

BoE cuts key interest rate for first time in over four years

US consumer confidence rises to 100.3

By National Bank of Kuwait

United States

US Consumer Confidence

US Consumer Confidence Rises Slightly in July 2024. The Conference Board’s Consumer Confidence Index increased to 100.3 in July 2024, up from 97.8 in June. The Present Situation Index, reflecting consumers’ views on current business and labor market conditions, fell to 133.6 from 135.3. In contrast, the Expectations Index, which gauges consumers’ short-term outlook for income, business, and labor market conditions, improved to 78.2 from 72.8 in June. Despite this improvement, it remains below the threshold of 80, which often signals potential economic challenges ahead. This data highlights consumers’ mixed sentiments, with optimism about the future counterbalanced by concerns about current conditions and economic uncertainties.

JOLTS Job Openings

The number of job openings in the US remained steady at 8.2 million, with a job openings rate of 4.9%. Hires were little changed at 5.3 million, while total separations were also stable at 5.1 million. Within separations, quits were at 3.3 million, indicating a quits rate of 2.1%. The data shows stability in the labor market, with consistent job openings, hires, and separations across most industries. Notably, job openings increased in accommodation and food services by 120,000 and in state and local government by 94,000 but decreased in durable goods manufacturing by 88,000 and in federal government by 62,000.

Federal Funds Rate

The US Federal Reserve has decided to keep the Fed Funds rate unchanged at 5.50% in its latest meeting on Wednesday. The decision is considered in line with what the market was pricing. Fed Chair, Jerome Powell, delivered a statement where he stated that the economy has been improving in the second quarter, and that the Fed will adjust monetary policy if the upcoming data continues to show sustainable improvements in inflation. Markets took the statement to indicate that a September rate cut is not off the table, with 27.9 bps worth of cuts currently priced by markets. The decision comes following labor data which shows the ADP non-farm employment change at 122K, down from 155K the previous month.

ISM Manufacturing PMI

A key indicator of manufacturing activity, the US Institute for Supply Management’s PMI came in at its

Currencies	Previous Week Levels			This Week’s Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum
EUR	1.0788	1.0781	1.0926	1.0908	1.0800	1.0110
GBP	1.2747	1.2704	1.2839	1.2798	1.2800	1.3000
JPY	149.37	146.41	149.77	146.54	144.00	148.00
CHF	0.8732	0.8571	0.8736	0.8575	0.8500	0.8700

lowest point in eight months, coming in at 46.8 versus the expectations of 48.8. This decline was primarily attributed to a slump in new orders. However, experts caution that this downturn may overstate the industry’s overall health, as factory production surged during the preceding quarter. While the PMI has now contracted for four consecutive months, it remains above a level historically associated with broader economic expansion.

Non-Farm Employment Change

The latest employment data released by the Labor Department indicates a significant slowdown in job growth. In July, the economy added a mere 114,000 jobs, a pure contrast to the previous month’s revised figure of 179,000 and well below economists’ expectations. This marks the lowest job growth since January 2021. Moreover, the unemployment rate ticked up to 4.3%, signifying a loosening labor market. While sectors like healthcare, construction, and transportation and warehousing continued to expand, the information sector experienced job losses. Wage growth also moderated, with average hourly earnings increasing by 0.2% month-over-month, below estimates. It’s worth noting that these figures represent a downward revision from previous months, painting an even less optimistic picture of the labor market’s trajectory.

The Greenback closed the week, last trading at 103.95.

Europe

CPI Flash Estimate y/y

Inflation in the Eurozone ticked slightly higher in July, as seen in the latest CPI flash estimates data. Where the CPI figure was at 2.6% y/y, higher than the previous 2.5% figure. Core inflation estimates were at 2.9%, matching the previous month yet higher than forecasts. Meanwhile, the EUR/USD pair was seen trading at around 1.0828 following the news release.

The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week, last trading at 1.0908.

United Kingdom

BOE Monetary Policy Report

The Bank of England made a significant monetary policy shift on Thursday by reducing its key inter-

est rate for the first time in over four years, bringing it down to 5%. This decision, reached by a narrow 5-4 vote among policymakers, marked a departure from the prolonged period of elevated rates. The central bank had maintained the interest rate at a 16-year high of 5.25% since August of the previous year. Despite market expectations leaning towards a rate cut, the Bank’s decision was shrouded in uncertainty until the official announcement. Governor Andrew Bailey justified the rate reduction by citing a moderation in inflationary pressures but emphasized the need for a cautious approach to avoid prematurely stimulating the economy. He underscored the importance of maintaining low inflation as a cornerstone for sustained economic growth and prosperity.

The GBP/USD currency closed the week, last trading at 1.2798.

Asia-Pacific

Japan Monetary Policy Statement

The Bank of Japan (BoJ) has increased its benchmark interest rate to approximately 0.25%, up from the previous range of 0% to 0.1%. This move marks the second-rate hike since 2007. Despite this increase, the BoJ expects real interest rates to remain significantly negative, maintaining accommodative financial conditions to support economic activity. This decision comes amid ongoing efforts to balance economic recovery and manage inflation pressures. The USD/JPY pair was seen trading lower following the decision.

Tokyo Core CPI y/y

In July, core consumer prices in Japan rose by 2.2% y/y, matching markets forecasts and slightly accelerating from June’s 2.1% increase. This marks the third consecutive month of rising inflation in Japan’s capital. Excluding fresh food and fuel costs, inflation increased by 1.5% down from 1.8% in June. The figures come a week before the Bank of Japan’s policy meeting, where markets are pricing in a 70% chance of a rate hike.

The USD/JPY currency pair closed the week, last trading at 146.54.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30550.



Al-Majed and Al-Mejhem receiving the award from Mastercard officials.

New secure payment solutions introduced in Kuwait

Boubyan Bank wins Mastercard Award for ‘fastest-growing’ premium bank in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Mastercard, a global technology company in the payments industry, has presented Boubyan Bank with an award for the fastest-growing bank in the premium segment in Kuwait. The prestigious recognition adds to the bank’s track record of achievements that consolidates its leadership in providing innovative solutions with the highest standards of quality and performance.

Adel Al-Majed, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of Boubyan Bank, received the award in the presence of Abdullah Al-Mejhem, Chief Consumer & Private Banking Officer of Boubyan Bank, Ling Hai, President for Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East and Africa (APEMEA) at Mastercard, J.K. Khalil, Division President for East Arabia at Mastercard, and other Boubyan Bank and Mastercard officials.

On this occasion, Mr. Abdullah Al-Mejhem expressed his pride in Boubyan Bank receiving the award. He noted that the accolade represents an appreciation of the bank’s efforts to innovate distinctive solutions to provide an exceptional banking experience, complemented by the highest levels of service that suits its customers’ modern lifestyle.

Al-Mejhem added that the

award reaffirms Boubyan Bank’s leadership in offering diverse and value-added services to its premium customers. He also pointed out that the partnership with Mastercard has enabled the bank to mark a series of achievements in recent years by launching multiple secure digital payment solutions, powered by the company’s advanced technologies. Most of these innovations were introduced in the local market for the first time, helping position Kuwait as one of the most developed countries in the field of digital banking.

Al-Mejhem clarified that these innovative propositions have brought about a significant shift, fulfilling the aspirations of customers from all segments and exceeding their expectations. The collaboration with Mastercard aligns with Boubyan Bank’s proactive and systematic strategy to support digital transformation as the main driver of progress in the financial sector.

For his part, Ling Hai said, “We are pleased to honor Boubyan Bank for its continued efforts to elevate offerings for its customers. The bank’s introduction of a variety of innovations and payment solutions has allowed it to cater to the unique needs of each card-

holder. We congratulate the team on the exceptional performance in the premium segment thanks to the tailored benefits it offers its high-net-worth customers.”

Boubyan Bank’s Premium High-Net-Worth Account provides a full-service banking experience to customers with a minimum salary of KD 3,000 or with a total balance of KD 100,000 and above. The proposition is part of the Bank’s strategy to continuously strengthen its leadership in the banking sector through exceptional products and services that cater to the financial, banking and investment needs of the discerning HNW segment.

The Mastercard World Elite credit card provides customers with a variety of valuable benefits that meet their needs and enables them to conduct simple, convenient and secure transactions. The cardholders also get automatically enrolled into the Boubyan Rewards program to enjoy a world of rewards with every purchase they make using their credit card in Kuwait and abroad.

The card offers a wide range of services that cover many aspects of daily life, such as travel and insurance, as well as discounts at major retail stores and other merchants courtesy of Mastercard.



Sami Mahfouz

Sami Mahfouz

- Kuwait's economy is benefiting from the relative stability in oil prices at current levels, bolstered by ongoing government initiatives aimed at diversifying the economy and fostering sustainable growth.
- Gulf Bank continuously explore opportunities for growth, both organic and inorganic, to diversify its offerings, cater to a broader market segment, and enhance its competitive position.
- The anticipation of interest rate movements by the Federal Reserve is a key factor with implications on borrowing costs, investment decisions, and the global economic growth trajectories.



David Challinor

David Challinor

- The cost income ratio has come down from the first half of 2023, and it's now sitting at 45.7% versus last year at 46.5%.
- In Q2 we saw yet another very strong quarter for loan growth and this brings year to date loan growth for the first half to 5.8%.
- The local market continues to enjoy healthy liquidity levels and we may see a further fall in cost of funds in Q3.



Gulf Bank building

Gulf Bank holds its H1 2024 earnings webcast

Event organized by EFG Hermes

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Gulf Bank held its investors webcast on Wednesday, 31 July, 2024, to present and discuss the Bank's financial performance for H1 -2024. The webcast was organized by EFG Hermes and presented by Sami Mahfouz, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Bank, and David Challinor, Chief Financial Officer of Gulf Bank. The discussion was moderated by Youssef Dib, Investor Relations Team at Gulf Bank.

Operating Environment

Mr. Sami Mahfouz, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Bank, commenced the webcast with key updates regarding Gulf Bank's operating environment during the first half of 2024. Mr. Sami Mahfouz stated: "As we navigate through 2024, we are witnessing significant economic developments both globally and locally. On the global front, the

world economy is showing signs of resilience with increased stability in financial markets, improved consumer confidence, and a gradual rise in international trade activities. Additionally, the anticipation of interest rate movements by the Federal Reserve is a key factor with implications on borrowing costs, investment decisions, and the global economic growth trajectories. Locally in Kuwait, the economy is benefiting from the relative stability in oil prices at current levels, bolstered by ongoing government initiatives aimed at diversifying the economy and fostering sustainable growth."

Mr. Sami Mahfouz added "We continued to exhibit a robust operational performance, reinforced by strong top-line growth and sound financial position metrics. We continue to face headwinds with our credit costs which resulted in a drop of our net profit growth during the first half of the year compared to the same period of last year, however, we remain confident in the Bank's future potential. Having said that, we have seen our loan book expand during the first half of the year, reflecting the success of our strate-

gic initiatives in meeting our clients' evolving needs. This growth in loans displays our capacity to navigate and excel in dynamic market conditions, reinforcing our prominent position in the Kuwaiti banking sector."

He added: "I am pleased to announce the successful completion of Phase II of our core banking system, a significant milestone in our journey towards advancing customer centricity. This achievement strengthens our operational capabilities and reaffirms our focus to meet the evolving needs of our clients in a digitally driven era. We are ready to leverage these technological foundational changes to drive operational efficiencies and transform our branches into relationship and experience centers aiming to provide a personalized and seamless banking experiences to our clients."

Margins

Regarding margins and their sensitivity towards the benchmark rates Mr. David Challinor remarked: "We disclosed in the full year 2023 financials for every 25 basis points its 2.2 million KD assuming a parallel shift on both sides of the balance sheet. For Q2 the net interest margin was 215 basis points which was a 1-point increase sequentially from Q1. And for the first

half the margin was 214 basis points which is 3 points higher than last year." He added: "In terms of the outlook, the local market continues to enjoy healthy liquidity levels so we may see a further fall in cost of funds in Q3 although I'd still expect the overall margin to remain broadly around the current levels in the short term."

Operating Expenses

In terms of operating expense Mr. David Challinor mentioned: "For the first half we've managed to keep a tight lid on operating expense growth to just 3%, which is very low when compared to other banks in the system." He added: "When we look at the cost income ratio, this has come down from the first half of 2023, and it's now sitting at 45.7% versus last year at 46.5%."

Loan Growth

When questioned about the drivers for loan book growth during Q2 2024, Mr. David Challinor noted: "In Q2 we saw yet another very strong quarter for loan growth. Total Gross Loans and Advances grew KD 142m in the quarter which followed a very strong Q1 where we grew KD 177m. So, this brings year to date loan growth for the first half to 5.8%. And this compares very favorably to the full year 2023 loan growth which was 1.2%."

He added: "Looking forward, I would expect the second half loan growth to be slower than the first, but still dominated by corporate and with the focus being more on local resident lending."

Potential Merger with Boubyan Bank & Conversion to Sharia'a Compliant Bank

Regarding the latest disclosures made related to the potential merger with Boubyan Bank and to the potential conversion into a Shariaa compliant Bank, Mr. Sami Mahfouz stated: "As far as the conversion to Islamic, let me take you back to what we have announced on June 11th, 2024, that our Board of Directors requested for the engagement of an international consultant to undertake a feasibility study regarding the potential conversion of Gulf Bank to operate in accordance with Islamic Shariaa principles. The Central Bank of Kuwait has granted their no-objection for the commencement of this study. We as a Bank, we are continuously exploring opportunities for growth, both organic and inorganic, to diversify our offerings, cater to a broader market segment, and enhance our competitive position." He added: "More recently we had disclosed on 31st July, 2024 that

Gulf Bank and Boubyan Bank have presented a proposal for a strategic opportunity for growth and expansion through the merger of the two banks, whereby creating one entity compliant with the provisions of Islamic Sharia. This proposal was presented to Gulf Bank's Board of Directors at its meeting held on 30th July 2024 and was approved. Moreover, the Board issued its directives and recommendations to move forward to carry out the needful actions to commence the initial feasibility study and necessary due diligence for the merger, after obtaining the necessary approvals in this regard. Accordingly, Gulf Bank informed the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) on 30th July, 2024 with the above, and in return received from CBK the necessary guidelines to be followed for the merger process. Based on that, Gulf Bank will commence communications with Boubyan Bank to sign a Memorandum of Understanding and a Confidentiality Agreement in preparation for the initial Feasibility Study. I would like to reconfirm Gulf Bank's compliance with relevant laws and instructions of the Central Bank of Kuwait and the relevant regulatory authorities, and we will be disclosing any material developments in this respect in due course."

French economy benefits from the 'Olympic effect'

PARIS, Aug 4, (Xinhua): The Paris 2024 Olympics are expected to boost France's GDP in the third quarter (Q3) by 0.3 percentage points, raising the growth rate during the period up to 0.5 percent, according to France's National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE).

Ticket sales and revenues from audiovisual broadcasting have a direct positive effect on French economic activities in Q3, contributing 0.25 percentage points, it said, while tourists, an uncertain factor of the "Olympic effect," will also contribute to the GDP growth in the period.

French research organizations noted that the Paris Olympics are expected to boost the French economy in the short term, but long-term effects remain to be seen.

According to INSEE, the increase in tourist numbers will lead to a rise in the use of transport and boost the hotel and catering sector.

INSEE economist Dorian Roucher said the situation is comparable to the boost given to the British economy by the London 2012 Olympic Games.

The Centre for Law and Economics of Sport (CDES) at the University of Limoges estimates that between 2018, when preparations for the Paris Olympics began, and 2034, a decade after the event, the economic impact of the Olympics for the Ile-de-France region will be between 6.7 and 11.1 billion euros (6.1 and 10.2 billion U.S. dollars), with a median of around 9 billion euros (about 8.26 billion dollars).

Of this amount, 70 percent would come from construction and event organization, with 30 percent from tourism.

The CDES estimates that 84 percent of the "Olympics effect" will be released during the Games' preparation and staging phase, while the remainder will be felt 10 years after the Games, mainly in the tourism sector.

Didier Arino, managing director of travel consultancy and research firm Protourisme, also believes that the positive impact of the Olympic Games on the French tourism industry will continue to be felt for years to come, because the Games "gave France an exceptional image."

Paris usually welcomes around 12 million visitors between July and August, whereas the Paris tourism office expects to welcome 15.3 million tourists during the Olympic Games.

According to the office, Paris welcomed 650,000 tourists between July

24 and 27, an increase of 16 percent, with the number of French visitors rising by 17.3 percent and foreign visitors by 14.8 percent. On the eve of the opening ceremony, the number of tourists in Paris rose by 34.6 percent year on year.

Corinne Menegaux, director of the Paris tourism office, said August is traditionally a very quiet month in Paris, but it will be "very good" this year.

The office forecasts that the first weekend of August will see the occupancy rates in Parisian hotels come close to 90 percent, while throughout the Olympic period, the occupancy rates of Parisian hotels will be over 80 percent, up 20 percent on year.

In Centre-Val de Loire, Champagne and Normandy regions, which are closer to Paris, the "Olympics effect" is also evident. According to the country's official agency Atout France, this phenomenon is partly linked to the number of foreign tourists visiting the capital.

With the Olympic events spread across several French cities, there are over 1,000 Games preparation centers throughout the country, serving as training and rehabilitation bases for the 206 Olympic delegations. In fact, all cities that host Olympic events and provide training sites benefit from the "Olympics effect."

Marseille, home to Olympic football and sailing events, is expected to welcome 825,000 spectators during the Games, with economic spin-offs of 179 million euros (about 164 million dollars).

Clichy, in the Hauts-de-Seine region, was chosen by the British delegation in 2022. Over 1,000 people, including 327 athletes from the British delegation, their families and staff, will be staying in the small town during the Games.

A local high school, which was renovated thanks to an investment by the British delegation, has become a high performance center for the British delegation, which also represents a qualitative improvement in the local sports infrastructure.

In terms of employment, the International Olympic Committee predicts that the Paris Olympics will create a total of 181,000 jobs and train 30,000 people in professional skills.

Industry professionals believe that hosting the Games will undoubtedly boost the "soft power" of Paris and France at large. In the words of Menegaux, "the positive effect of the Olympics must be measured in the long term."

Development stokes recession fears

Hiring in the US fell sharply in July, an unexpected setback for the economy

WASHINGTON, Aug 4, (AP): The U.S. economy suffered an unexpected setback in July as hiring fell sharply and the unemployment rate rose for the fourth straight month with raised interest rates taking a toll on businesses and households.

Employers added just 114,000 jobs in July - 35% fewer than expected - and unemployment, now at 4.3%, is the highest since October 2021, the Labor Department reported Friday.

"Things are deteriorating quickly," said Julia Pollak, chief economist at ZipRecruiter.

The sharp downturn in U.S. hiring shook financial markets around the world. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 610 points, or 1.5%. The S&P 500 tumbled 1.8%.

The sturdy U.S. economy has been a key driver of global economic growth and the U.S. jobs market has been the fuel, giving Americans the confidence and financial wherewithal to keep spending.

The unemployment rate's jump to 4.3% in July crossed a tripwire that historically has signaled recession - though economists say the gauge probably is not reliable in the post-pandemic economy.

Hiring may have been disrupted by Hurricane Beryl, which slammed the Texas economy last month. And ZipRecruiter's Pollak noted employers have cut worker hours and made temporary layoffs - suggesting that they are optimistic a rate cut may turn things around.

"They are just slowing hiring and putting people on temporary layoff, furlough," Pollak said. "They want to get back to business. They see lots of opportunities to expand. They just need rates to be (lower)."

The Federal Reserve said this week that in needed to see more evidence inflation is moving toward its 2% target before it cuts rates. Chair Jerome Powell characterized the American job market as healthy despite calls for the central bank to begin lowering its benchmark rate, which stands at a 23-year high.

Hourly wages rose just 3.6% from July 2023, the smallest year-over-year gain since May 2021, and another sign that inflation could be heading closer to the Fed's target.

July job gains were concentrated in a few industries. Healthcare and social assistance firms added 64,000 jobs last month, accounting for 56% of hiring. Restaurants, hotels and bars added nearly 26,000 jobs.

Labor Department revisions, howev-



A construction worker carries scaffolding parts on March 14, 2024, in Boston. On Friday, August 2, 2024, the U.S. government issues its July jobs report. (AP)

Co. in bid to turn its business around

Intel to cut roughly 15,000 jobs

WASHINGTON, Aug 4, (AP): Chip-maker Intel Corp. is cutting 15% of its massive workforce - about 15,000 jobs - as it tries to turn its business around to compete with more successful rivals like Nvidia and AMD.

In a memo to staff, Intel CEO Pat Gelsinger said Thursday the company plans to save \$10 billion in 2025. "Simply put, we must align our cost structure with our new operating model and fundamentally change the way we operate," he wrote in the memo published to Intel's website. "Our revenues have not grown as expected - and we've yet to fully benefit from powerful trends, like AI. Our costs are too high, our margins are too low."

er, clipped 29,000 jobs from May-June payrolls. This year, the economy has generated nearly 203,000 jobs a month, solid but down from 251,000 last year, 377,000 in 2022 and a record 604,000 in 2021, when the job market roared back

The job cuts come in the heels of a disappointing quarter and forecast for the iconic chip maker founded in 1968 at the start of the PC revolution.

Next week, Gelsinger wrote, Intel will announce an "enhanced retirement offering" for eligible employees and offer an application program for voluntary departures. Intel had 124,800 employees as of the end of 2023 according to a regulatory filing.

"These decisions have challenged me to my core, and this is the hardest thing I've done in my career," he said. The bulk of the layoffs are expected to be completed this year.

The Santa Clara, California-based company is also suspending its stock divi-

from pandemic lockdowns.

The economy is weighing heavily on voters' minds ahead of the November presidential election. Many Americans have been unimpressed after three years of strong job gains, exasperated

dend as part of a broader plan to cut costs. Intel reported a loss for its second quarter along with a small revenue decline, and it forecast third-quarter revenues below Wall Street's expectations.

The company posted a loss of \$1.6 billion, or 38 cents per share, in the April-June period. That's down from a profit of \$1.5 billion, or 35 cents per share, a year earlier. Adjusted earnings excluding special items were 2 cents per share.

Revenue slid 1% to \$12.8 billion from \$12.9 billion.

Analysts, on average, were expecting earnings of 10 cents per share on revenue of \$12.9 billion, according to a poll by FactSet.

instead by high prices. Two years after inflation hit a four-decade high, price increases have eased but consumers are still paying 19% more for goods and services than they were in spring 2021.

Company hosted session for members of Integrated Media Academy

Zain showcases its leading expertise in media and PR

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Zain hosted a special session for participants of the Media Pathway program, organized by the Integrated Media Academy (IMA). The company shared its expertise in media, public relations, community service, corporate sustainability, and customer service, showcasing its success stories and strategies for effective communication through traditional and digital channels.

This initiative aligned with Zain's belief in the significant impact media has on community development and its support of the local media industry. By sharing its expertise, Zain aimed to introduce the program's participants to its experience as one of Kuwait's most socially active private sector organizations. The session provided participants with new insights, skill development opportunities, and enriched the program's overall outcomes.

The session took place at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC), where the company discussed the strategies it uses to effectively communicate with the community through both traditional and digital channels. Zain also highlighted its social responsibilities, including support



Zain officials with the program's participants.

for health, education, youth, sports, the environment, people with disabilities, women empowerment, employee engagement, and more.

Additionally, the session shed light on some of Zain's top success stories, such as the annual Zain Alshuhoor Ramadan campaign, the biggest local football competition Dawri Zain, and the youth empowerment initiative Innovation Nation. The company emphasized how these successes were

achieved through partnerships with public and private sector organizations, including ministries, academic institutions, NGOs, and non-profits.

Zain also explained the roles and responsibilities of its Corporate Affairs and Relations Division, covering areas like building external and internal relations, effective media relations, social media engagement, corporate sustainability and social responsibility initiatives, and empowering innovation and entrepreneurship. After the session, participants toured Zain's 107 Contact Center to learn about the company's leading customer service practices.

The Media Pathway program is one of many training initiatives offered by the Integrated Media Academy for those passionate about a media career. The academy aims to develop professional media skills and help participants understand the essentials of the industry.

The programs include extensive theoretical and practical sessions, along with field visits to media institutions and private sector organizations to learn from their experiences and interact directly with media professionals.

Quarterly draw included for oil and gas sector employees

ABK launches salary campaign for oil & gas sector employees

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is pleased to announce the launch of its innovative salary campaign, specifically tailored to cater to employees in the oil and gas sector. This unique campaign promises a wide range of benefits and features for those who choose to transfer their salary to ABK.

The many benefits are available for both locals and residents in the sector where customers have the opportunity to receive up to KD 1,000 cash gift as well as enjoy a free ABK Visa Signature credit card for life. Additionally, they can benefit from a 1% cashback on loans as well as stand a chance to win a GMC Yukon car as part of a quarterly draw.

Commenting on this campaign, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said, "Empowering individuals is at the core of our efforts. As such, we are thrilled to introduce this special salary campaign for the hardworking employees in the oil and gas sector to show our appreciation and support for their dedication."

Marafi emphasized that this initiative not only recognizes the valuable contributions of these employees but also aims to provide them with unparalleled rewards and incentives for choosing ABK as their banking partner.

The Bank's commitment to tailoring offerings to diverse customer segments is showcased through its specialized solutions for corporate clients, personalized services for individuals, and industry-specific initiatives, like the oil



ABK oil & gas sector employees package.

and gas sector salary campaign. Marafi concluded, "By understanding the unique needs of each segment, ABK serves as a trusted partner in financial success for all segments of the Kuwait market."

Concluding her statement, Marafi invited everyone to follow ABK's official website and pages on social media platforms to learn more about all the offers, campaigns, and latest products launched throughout the year.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that offers a wide array of personal, corporate, and private banking

products and services. ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital.

Across the region, the Bank offers individuals and corporates the convenience of comprehensive banking and financial services in the Egyptian market through ABK-Egypt's network of 48 branches.

This is in addition to ABK's three branches located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) in the United Arab Emirates, servicing both Kuwaiti and Emirati individual and corporate clients.

Event includes works in surrealism, expressionism and cubism

'Martyrs of Invasion' exhibition sheds light on sacrifices of Kuwaiti women

By Medhat Alam
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Syndicate of Artists and Media Professionals, in collaboration with Al-Hamra Complex and the Martyrs' Office, hosted the "Martyrs of the Invasion" exhibition.

The event, attended by Syndicate President Dr. Nabil Al-Failakawi, artists, and other attendees, aimed to honor the martyrs of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Dr. Al-Failakawi emphasized the Syndicate's annual commitment to holding art exhibitions to educate and remind the public of the invasion.

This year's exhibition was unique, dedicated exclusively to the martyrs, featuring expressive artistic paintings. The Martyrs' Office provided support by offering photos and stories of the martyrs, which were distributed to participating artists. Each artist was tasked with creating an artistic representation of a martyr, informed by their personal story and sacrifice.

Al-Failakawi explained, "We have 28 martyrs and 4 children, along with elderly martyrs and resistance fighters. Our goal is to honor their memory and educate current generations about the sacrifices made by the Kuwaiti people during the invasion."

The exhibition at Al-Hamra Complex was designed to be accessible to the public, allowing everyone to view and understand the artworks and the stories behind them.

The artists used various styles, including Surrealism, Expressionism, and Cubism. Al-Failakawi highlighted that unlike traditional gallery exhibitions that attract a select audience, holding this event in a commercial complex ensured wider public engagement with its national and non-profit objectives. The exhibition, featuring works by 28 creative artists from the



Photos from the event.

Photos by Ihab Qurtal

union, remains open to the public, and Al-Failakawi expressed gratitude for their contributions.

Several participating artists shared their experiences. Shuaa Al-Rashidi painted the martyr Samira Marafi, inspired by Marafi's heroic declaration, "I am not just a girl; I am a Kuwaiti girl." Jumana Dashti created a piece on the martyr Hanan Al-Habash, who chose to return to Kuwait during the invasion despite being abroad, using acrylic and oil colors.

Artist Mona Hassan depicted Laila Behbehani, who tragically died from a missile strike on the day of liberation while expressing her joy. Fatima Al-Khabaz honored Wafa Al-Amer, incorporating symbols of Kuwait like the towers and Saif Palace, using oil colors and drawing inspiration from a song by the late artist Talal Maddah.



Al Najma account.

Al Najma account features diverse prizes

Al-Tijari announces winners of Al Najma account draws

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Commercial Bank of Kuwait conducted the weekly draw for Al Najma Account on Sunday August 4, 2024. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Mr. Mansour Al-Dhafiri.

The results of the draws were as follows:

1. Al Najma monthly draw – the prize of 20,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars went to the winner Mr. Salam Farag Mohamed Hussein
2. Al Najma weekly draw – the prize of 5,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars went to the winner Mr. Ahmad Khairallah Al Shemmeri

The Bank stated that Al Najma Account prizes are distinguished by the diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that the account offers week-

ly prize of KD 5,000/-, monthly prize of KD 20,000/- and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the mega annual prize of KD 1,500,000.

Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 200, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 200 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

The Bank revealed that Al Najma account is available to everyone, and anyone can open Al Najma account through CBK mobile application in simple steps from anywhere and at any time.

The Conversation

Excessive digital device use linked to higher anxiety

How parents can help kids deal with back-to-school anxiety

By Elizabeth Englander
Bridgewater State University

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

As a child, I had a great deal of anxiety. If you've ever seen me speak in public, that might surprise you. But anxiety among children is extremely common and affects almost all children, to varying degrees.

During pre-pandemic times, researchers noted that as many as 7% of children had a diagnosable anxiety disorder that disrupted their everyday functioning. In addition, 20% had a tendency to feel anxious that didn't rise to the level of a clinical disorder. And all children feel anxious at some time or another.

Most researchers have found that anxiety in children increased during and after the pandemic. Lockdowns that isolated children from their peers and interruptions to their routines may have accounted for the findings in these studies.

As a researcher who's studied children's mental health for decades, I know that predictability helps prevent anxiety in children. Predictability means things going along as they've always gone: sleep at night, up in the morning, cornflakes for breakfast, off to school, activities in the afternoon, dinner with the family. In Louise Fitzhugh's children's novel "Harriet the Spy," Harriet's mother can't believe that her daughter always takes a tomato sandwich to school. Always. Harriet has no interest in variety. She's perfectly happy with the same sandwich, year after year.

Anxiety will crop up for many children again this fall, and it can be intertwined with other feelings, such as excitement and shyness. Here are steps parents can take to help reduce their kids' back-to-school anxiety and encourage a better start to the fall term.

Ask your kids how they're feeling about going back to school, and keep an eye out for headaches, stomachaches, sleeping troubles, persistent "what if" questions, crankiness, excessive concern about very distant events, problems focusing on schoolwork and concerns that aren't alleviated by logical explanations. An example might be your children worrying



File photo shows a student at Lakewood Elementary School in Cecilia, Ky., uses her laptop to participate in an emotional check-in at the start of the school day on Aug. 11, 2022. (AP)

that they won't have friends in school, even though they do have friends from their class last year; or concerns that while they're at school, something extremely unlikely will happen, such as the house being hit by lightning.

What's tricky, of course, is that any of these behaviors can be an indication of many different problems, so probe further. Talking to your kids about their thoughts may help you unravel whether they're feeling anxious. Playing outside, playing with friends or even just "hanging out" can be powerful ways to reduce negative feelings. Outdoors, people often feel more relaxed. Playing in an unstructured way - that is, without someone else telling them what or how to play - allows kids to work through their feelings and reduce anxiety.

Researchers have found that, post-pandemic, more children are using different types of digital devices, along with more social media apps. The significant body of evidence finding a link between excessive digital device use and anxiety suggests that these

increases in device use may contribute to increased anxiety rates in children.

The emotional connection that children have with their families is their psychological anchor during difficult times. At a time of increased stress and uncertainty, spending time with family can be an antidote. Take a walk or a hike together, eat dinner together, or play board games.

Distraction isn't a cure for anxiety, but it can diminish its intensity and help sufferers think more clearly about the source of their worries. When children are feeling very anxious, it's fine to talk to them about how watching TV or reading a funny book can help them feel calmer.

If your child's anxiety is interfering with sleep, eating, socializing or school attendance, and it persists beyond a few days, it's a good idea to call your pediatrician or family doctor and report what's going on. Medical professionals who work with children have seen anxiety skyrocket among kids, and they know how to get your child the necessary help. (AP)

Television

TOKYO, Aug. 4, (AP): Amazon Prime Video’s “Like a Dragon: Yakuza,” which premieres in October, has all the glorious fare of a classic mobster story - bloody fistfights, beautiful women, expensive cars, muscle and flashy suits.

Based on a popular Sega video game that debuted in 2005, the story centers around Kazuma Kiryu, a gangster with a heart of gold. But the latest version has evolved to appeal to global audiences today, according to its stars and production team.

“We weren’t going for another copy of the original but wanted to create it anew, while paying respect to it, but exploring it at a deeper human level,” said Ryoma Takeuchi, who plays Kiryu.

“We’re taking the concept that’s the foundation of the hit game and making a modern human drama people can more easily identify with,” he said.

The role turned out to be the most challenging and time-consuming of his career, including losing weight, preparing for the fight scenes and developing the character, as well as the arduous filming itself.

Masayoshi Yokoyama, executive producer at Sega studios and the game’s screenwriter, hopes longtime fans will be pleasantly surprised at the new twists and turns of the series, while newcomers may gain an interest in his game.

“To look back, the original is like an old samurai movie, while this dramatizes a new kind of sensibility,” he said.

“Like a Dragon,” is the universal coming-of-age saga, except set in a fairytale world of a fictitious Japan. The narration spans two decades, skipping back and forth between 1995 and 2005.

The characters, including Kiryu’s buddy from their orphanage days, Akira Nishikiyama, are filled with a steadfast belief in honor, justice and loyalty, as well as courage in the face of danger.

Themes (cross head)

It’s not designed for the faint-hearted. Each of the six episodes goes from one superbly choreographed violent scene to another, with hardly a moment to take a gasp.

But the innocent love that the heroes, and the heroines, show to each other is the driving force of “Like a Dragon,” despite the yelling, kicks and gunshots.

“The story of ‘Like A Dragon’ contains eternal themes, like love, human relationships and betrayal that everyone can relate to. So rather than its being old or new, it’s really mainstream,” said Kento Kaku who plays Nishikiyama, known as Nishiki.

Retelling the story in an age where streaming entertainment connects audiences worldwide simply translates to perfect timing, said Kaku.

Erik Barmack, the executive producer, stressed the franchise offers something that’s made it enormously successful not only in Japan but elsewhere.

“Our belief is that it’s because the characters themselves have a lot of heart. It’s not some cold existential crime story,” he said.

“It’s about why relationships can go astray, even among people who love each other.”

Also:

LOS ANGELES: The dramatic world of “Dance Moms” returns with a new coach, dancers and, of course, invested moms. In “Dance Moms: A New Era,” mothers hover as eight girls are trained by instructor **Glo Hampton, a.k.a. Miss Glo**, to compete nationally. The original “Dance Moms” ran for eight seasons and featured breakout stars **Jojo Siwa** and **Maddie Ziegler**. It also introduced the world to coach **Abby Lee Miller**, who was often criticized for being too harsh on her students. Miller was sentenced to a year in prison in 2017 for bankruptcy fraud. “Dance Moms: A New Era” debuts Wednesday, Aug. 7.

Meanwhile, Netflix’s “The Umbrella Academy” premieres its final season on Thursday, Aug. 8. The show follows a family of adopted superheroes - who were stripped of their powers in season three - who must work together to stop the apocalypse. **Megan Mullally, Nick Offerman** and **David Cross** are new faces in season four alongside regulars that include **David Castañeda, Tom Hopper** and **Elliot Page**.

Variety



This image released by Apple TV shows Matt Damon, (left), and Casey Affleck in a scene from ‘The Instigators.’ (AP)

Film

Costner’s ‘American Saga’ to premiere at Venice Festival

Heist goes terrifically wrong in ‘Instigators’

By Jake Coyle

Though depression lurks around the edges of “The Instigators,” Doug Liman’s heist movie is a loosely amiable return to South Boston for Matt Damon and Casey Affleck, who also co-wrote the film.

In the film’s opening moments, Rory (Damon), a former Marine, tells his therapist, Dr. Rivera (Hong Chau), that after a lifetime of screw ups and disappointments, he’s not so much forlorn as simply ready to “cash in” his ticket. His phrase is a telling one for a film where midlife disappointments and a ramshackle heist-gone-wrong plot collide in farcical ways. As a last-ditch effort and to raise \$32,480 for his child support payments, Rory signs up with a criminal band of misfits to steal election-night payouts to a corrupt Boston mayor (Ron Perlman) running for reelection.

Therapists have made their ways into crime dramas like “The Sopranos,” but “The Instigators” (in theaters Thursday, on Apple TV+ Aug. 9) adds a novel wrinkle by bringing Dr. Rivera along for the ride. When Rory and Cobby (Affleck) go on the run, she tags along as a hostage by choice.

But it takes a little time for the buddy comedy to develop. First, “The Instigators” works in a large percentage of today’s top character actors - among them Michael Stuhlbarg, Alfred Molina, Ving Rhames, Toby Jones and Paul Walter Hauser - all of whom raise the bar in this rudderless but winningly shaggy action comedy.

Liman, the director of “Go,” “The Bourne Identity” and the recent “Road House,” has always had a knack for freewheeling ensembles and for getting the most out of his stars’ charisma. “The Instigators” may be a modern streaming movie but it’s a decidedly old-school kind of caper, stock full of local color and peopled with faces you’re happy to see. It’s a product of Damon and Ben Affleck’s Artists Equity, which produced the film from the script by

Casey Affleck and “City on the Hill” creator Chuck MacLean.

For them, the blue-collar Boston terrain of “The Instigators” is about as cozy as bleacher seat in Fenway Park. “The Instigators” doesn’t live up to other Damon-Afflecks Beantown-set movies (“Good Will Hunting,” “Gone Baby Gone,” “The Town”), and some of their Dunkin’ Donuts-adjacent schtick is at least approaching stale. You could call it a homecoming but it’s more like they never left.

So, yes, this is them very much in their element, but that goes especially true for Affleck, the main reason to see “The Instigators.” His Cobby is a drunk and convict who enlists in the heist out of a lack of other options. It’s an ill-considered scheme by a pair of small-time gangsters (Stuhlbarg, Molina), one of whom runs a bakery as a front.

Debacle

They dispatch a trigger-happy small-time crook (Jack Harlow) to lead the mission, a debacle from the get go. Nothing goes right, not even the expected election result, and out of the melee clatter Cobby and Rory, with a special police investigator (Rhames) in steadfast pursuit.

On the run, their double act - Damon’s earnest deadpan, Affleck’s smart-aleck flippancy - works as well as it ever has, even if the script could use a touch more wit.

Affleck makes up for it with his melancholic mo-tormouth routine, one that gets an even better foil once Chau, the talented co-star of “The Whale” and “Showing Up,” is roped into their escape. Though Liman knows how to mix action and comedy as well as anyone, “The Instigators” is better whenever there’s less going on.

“The Instigators,” an Apple release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for pervasive language and some violence. Running time: 101 minutes. In Finnish with English subtitles. Three stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: The second part of **Kevin Costner’s** “Horizon: An American Saga” will have its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival in September, organizers said Wednesday. “Chapter Two” was originally set for a mid-August theatrical debut but was pulled from the schedule after “Chapter One” underperformed.

The continuation of the Western epic will play out of competition on September 7, the last day of the festival, alongside a screening of part one. Costner, in a statement, said that his “dream” was always to show the film at **Venice**. The first installment had a glitzy premiere at the Cannes Film Festival earlier this year.

Alberto Barbera, the director of the Venice Film Festival, described it as the “visionary project of a great actor and director, who invested himself in the epic reconstruction of the years crucial to the founding of the country, digging beyond myth in search of authenticity capable of restoring a piece of history in its complex and contradictory reality.”

The back-to-back release for both films, one in June and one in August, was unconventional. Then the first chapter collected only \$23 million in its first two weeks in theaters. In announcing the change of plans, New Line Cinema said they hoped to give more audiences more time to discover Chapter One.

A passion project for more than 30 years, Costner put some of his own money into making the ambitious films, and has already begun shooting a third installment of what he envisions will ultimately be four movies.

“I’m indebted to **Alberto Barbera** for his courage and leadership in committing to this cinematic journey,” Costner said. “Long live the movies and those willing to stand for them.”

The 81st edition of the Venice Film Festival kicks off on Aug. 28. Among its most anticipated world premieres are “Joker: Folie à Deux,” “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice,” “The Room Next Door,” “Maria,” “Queer” and “Wolfs.” (AP)

to open in **San Francisco’s** Union Square next year.

Nintendo stocks dropped 2.3% in Tokyo trading, shortly before earnings were announced. The overall Nikkei benchmark plunged 5.8% on Friday.

Nintendo’s shares have recent fallen as the US dollar has weakened against the yen, trading at



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about 149 yen. It had earlier cost above 160 yen. A weak yen is a plus for exporters like Nintendo because it boosts the value of their overseas earnings.

Nintendo kept its profit forecast for the year through March at 300 billion yen (\$2 billion). (AP)

BEIJING: China’s box office revenue for this year’s summer movie season, which spans from June 1 to Aug. 31, had surpassed 8 billion yuan (about 1.12 billion US dollars) as of Saturday afternoon, with three domestic films dominating the box office chart.

According to film data platform Beacon, leading the pack is the

blockbuster comedy “Successor,” which stars the acclaimed comedic duo **Shen Teng** and **Ma Li**. Released on July 16, the film tells the story of a wealthy couple who fabricate a challenging environment for their son to spur his personal growth. By Saturday afternoon, it had raked in nearly 2.57 billion yuan, capturing 32 percent of the total box office sales. (Xinhua)

People & Places

Travel

A greener getaway?

Denmark rewards its eco-friendly tourists

COPENHAGEN, Denmark, Aug 4, (Agencies): Tourists visiting Copenhagen this summer are encouraged to participate in unusual kinds of vacation fun, including plucking floating trash from the Danish capital’s waterways, cycling to museums instead of going by car, or volunteering at an urban garden.

All these activities are part of a new, four-week pilot project called CopenPay that rewards tourists for “climate-friendly actions.”

“We must turn tourism from being an environmental burden into a force for positive change,” said Mikkel Aarø-Hansen, the CEO of tourist board Wonderful Copenhagen, which runs the scheme.

“We want visitors to make conscious, green choices and hopefully end up getting even better experiences while they visit,” Aarø-Hansen said in a statement earlier this month.

Among the over 20 attractions participating in the project is the environmental non-profit organization Green-Kayak which offers water tours for tourist volunteers. They can paddle through Copenhagen’s 17th-century waterways aboard green-colored kayaks, plucking floating trash from the water. The reward? A free two-hour litter-picking cruise. One main sailing lane heads out to the Baltic Sea.

“When you are in the ocean, you get invested in the ocean. So, I hope that that will keep inspiring people to not leave trash in the ocean,” Elisabeth Friis Larsen, a spokeswoman for GreenKayak, told The Associated Press.

Elsewhere, tourists can trim flower beds, harvest coriander or feed chickens at Oens Have urban garden, then stay for a complimentary lunch. Or get free ice cream if they cycle or take public transport to the country’s National Museum instead of going by taxi or rental car to reduce emissions.

Visitors to SMK, Denmark’s National Gallery, can attend workshops where they’re taught how to transform plastic waste into jellyfish sculptures.

“The whole idea was that people should bring their own plastic waste. And out of that, the children will build a jellyfish,” explained workshop leader, artist Susanne Brigitte Lund.

Destinations

Copenhagen’s climate-friendly vacationers’ project - which began on July 15 and is set to wrap up on August 11 - comes as the world’s top destinations are grappling with the burdens of mass tourism. Copenhagen also gets its fair share of tourists with more than 12 million overnight stays last year.

Amid demonstrations and protestors firing water pistols at visitors, Barcelona City Hall announced last month that it would not renew any tourist apartment licenses after they expire in 2028.

Italy’s Venice recently extended a pilot program charging day trippers a five-euro (\$5.45) entrance fee to the fragile lagoon city.

And the town of Fujukawaguchiko recently constructed a large black screen to block the view of Japan’s iconic Mount Fuji. The reason: misbehaving foreign tourists.

On a recent busy summer weekend, tourists thronged Copenhagen’s historic Nyhavn harbor area, as sightseeing ferries squeezed down its narrow waterway, packed with smartphone-snapping passengers.

Tourist Fiona Veira from northwest Spain said the CopenPay scheme is a “really good idea,” but only if visitors have the time.

“It depends how long you’re going to stay in the city. But if you’re here for more than two days then yeah,” she said. “It’s also a really nice way of seeing, interacting with the city.”

Veira was aware of the city’s climate-supporting programs, but did not participate in any of them because she was visiting Copenhagen for one day only and didn’t have enough time.

Many others, however, admit to leaving their green principles at home, once summer holidays come around.

“I think about it when I’m at home, but when I travel, I do think about convenience more,” said Caroline Kraneffuss from Boston.

University of Copenhagen researcher Berit Charlotte Kaae said the CopenPay scheme is interesting because it “puts some action to the concept of sustainability.”

“It’s interesting to give this hands-on experience,” she said. But in order to address the true environmental problems of mass tourism, tourism authorities must look to the source - transportation.

“We need to work more on aviation fuels, maybe better train service, to avoid the short distance flights,” she said.

Also:

BEIJING: From the bustling capital city of Beijing to the mountainous city of **Zhangjiajie, China** is now abuzz with an influx of foreign tourists.

As many foreign travelers share their experiences online, “China Travel” has become a buzzword on overseas social media. The first-hand stories offer fresh perspectives that debunk the bizarre claims perpetuated by some Western media outlets against China and allow foreigners to capture a more comprehensive and authentic China.

“Most of my knowledge of China is limited to what I’ve heard in the news cycles over the last few years,” Australian video blogger **Josie** said in a vlog about her first journey in China.

After visiting the eastern Chinese city of **Shanghai**, she said what she saw really surprised her.

“Most of the fears I had of China was simply not coming true. As I explored more of the city, constant smiles, curious kids and the general friendliness of everyone we met made me so comfortable and welcomed,” she said.

Josie’s experiences are echoed by millions of foreign tourists who are wowed by China’s advancements in modern technology and rich culture as they ride on the trend of China travel. Many highlighted keywords like “unexpected,” “never imagined,” or “unbelievable” on social media to describe their travels in China.

Hidetoshi Tashiro, chief economist of Japan’s Infinity LLC., who also recently traveled to Shanghai, said he did not see the so-called “desolate scenes” in Chinese cities mentioned in some news reports.

“What I saw were fuel-powered and electric vehicles driving alongside each other on the roads, as well as bustling new construction sites,” he said.

“From cashless payments to traffic guidance systems, almost every aspect of China’s society has been digitized. The streets are clean and the cityscape is beautiful,” he added.



Keith Kanga breakdances in a gymnasium at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Tuesday, July 30, 2024, in Paris, France. (AP)

Hip-hop

Paris breakers face fame with mixed feelings

Olympics give breaking a global stage

PARIS, Aug 4, (AP): In the basement of a sports complex in Paris, dozens of breakers, or break dancers, gathered almost every weeknight in July to freestyle, practicing classic moves like the windmill, freezes and headspins to the soundtrack of steady breakbeats from a playlist called “100% Flow.” They warmed up with footwork - “toprocking” - and catching the beat before diving into floor moves. Samy Vongphrachanh, 19, was cheered on by a peer when he took risks and encouraged when he couldn’t quite land a power move.

They are part of Paris’ local breaking and hip-hop community, and while international buzz is centered on breaking debuting as an Olympic sport in the Paris Games, for these b-boys and b-girls, it’s about preserving a lifestyle.

“We come, we chill, we cypher - it’s like the main essence of breaking,” said Vongphrachanh, referring to the informal circle formed by breakers in which they enter one by one to dance and battle. “It’s sharing peace, unity, love and having fun.”

The breakers in this gymnasium are just one small section of a much larger community across France. The country is regarded as the second-largest hip-hop market in the world after the US, and Olympic organizers are playing up the popularity of the street dance in France. Breaking is debuting as a sporting event in the Paris Olympics after its success at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires as part of an effort to attract younger viewers.

But outside the Olympic arena, some in Paris’ local breaking scene feel skeptical of the subculture being co-opted by officials, commercialized and put through a rigid judging structure, when the spirit of breaking has been rooted in local communities, centered around street battles, cyphers and block parties. For some, the fear is that the essence of breaking, as an improvisational art form born and rooted in communities of color who came together under the context of racial and economic inequality, will be diluted through mass appeal on the global stage.

“It’s a huge step for hip-hop and the breaking community,” said Rémi Chean-Len Heng, or “b-boy Fly Lin,” a breaker based in Paris who uses the

dance as a form of therapy for new migrants arriving in France. “But for some, this is really a threat to the essence of the culture. We see all the politics and money behind it - it’s all about making the youth watch the Olympics more. But some in the community are scared that the culture won’t be well represented.”

Vongphrachanh is hopeful that the attention from the Olympics will inspire a new generation to get involved in the culture. He gives breaking lessons to children and younger teens. But while he appreciates the recognition, “we are asking ourselves questions about the fact that we are distorting our discipline a bit. It’s becoming too much of a competition,” he said.

It’s a tension that has long existed in the broader hip-hop community, according to historian Samir Meghelli, who is writing a book called “Hip Hop between New York and Paris: A Transatlantic History.”

Mainstream

“Hip-hop from its very beginning has had a fraught relationship with mainstream institutions and with pop culture,” said Meghelli.

What began as an outlet and form of reprieve from the daily socio-economic struggles of Black and brown youth in the Bronx in the 1970s and ‘80s has since expanded to a multi-billion dollar global industry.

“Hip-hop was not initially welcomed in mainstream television, radio and film, and yet it’s been incorporated into those spaces over time. But there have always been a lot of tensions,” said Meghelli. “Breaking becoming a part of the Olympics is just the culmination of the most recent chapter in that longer history of tensions.”

On this side of the Atlantic, it all started in Seine-Saint-Denis. Before the glitz and glamor of corporate-sponsored dance competitions catching the eyes of curious kids scouring YouTube, there was the novelty and fame factor of an iconic hip-hop group from New York - Rock Steady Crew - performing in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis in 1982. By then, the music had already made its way over from its birthplace in the Bronx, playing in nightclubs in and around Paris. But it was in communities of color in the

housing projects of Saint-Denis that the culture of breaking first took hold in the country, and is still considered to be the heart of France’s hip-hop scene. Hip-hop resonated with young people of color in Saint-Denis in a way that parts of broader French culture did not.

“I saw some break dancers and all of a sudden, something clicked in my head,” said Hugo Malanda-Malaki, 19, who was introduced to the dance as a child at a block party in his neighborhood in Saint-Denis. “I saw their movement, I saw the way they danced and I wanted to replicate that.”

The mixed feelings among Paris’ local hip-hop community over breaking’s Olympic debut are intertwined with concerns over a French law that seeks to regulate the teaching of hip-hop dances - including breaking, popping and locking - through an amendment to a 1989 law that requires a state diploma for those teaching classical dance and jazz. The existing law imposes a 15,000-euro (\$16,100) fine on instructors who teach those dances without the required diploma and includes provisions for the administrative closure of non-compliant establishments.

This is not the first attempt to include hip-hop in the law. Similar proposals were made in 2013 and 2015, but were rejected due to strong opposition from professionals within the hip-hop community. This time, the law passed in March 2024.

“It’s a good thing if it brings stability to some people, but in the end, you don’t need a diploma to be a teacher of breakdance. I’m pretty sure the breakers that I saw when I was a kid never had a diploma. They still brought me to the dance,” said Malanda-Malaki.

Organizers of the breaking competition at the Olympics are adamant that they are paying homage to the roots of breaking. The official website details the history of the movement and the art from originating in the Bronx. Flyers in the media press center document the introduction of hip-hop and breaking in France, describing Seine-Saint-Denis as “the birthplace of breaking in France” with battles still regularly organized in the suburb. Some breakers from Paris’ larger hip-hop scene have also been brought into the fold, with many benefiting from opportunities to show off their skills.



Matt Damon, (from left), Jack Harlow, and Casey Affleck attend the Apple Original Films premiere of ‘The Instigators’ at Jazz at Lincoln Center on Wednesday, July 31, in New York. (AP) — Details Page 11



Lazarus



Billings

Variety

NEW YORK: A week into the Paris Olympics, NBC Universal executives are climbing atop the medal stand.

The event has been a significant success for the company broadcasting and streaming it in the **United States**. NBC already has set a record for advertising revenue, viewership is up significantly and its biggest fear - that people would tune out NBC’s prime-time telecast because they could watch events live during the day - hasn’t materialized.

“Clearly, the Olympics are back,” **Mark Lazarus**, chairman of the NBC Universal Media Group, said Thursday. A strong performance by the US team has helped, he said.

It’s a relief to NBC, after the Beijing Winter Games in 2022 and COVID-19-delayed Tokyo Summer Games in 2021 were comparative duds. Through five days beginning with Friday’s opening ceremony, the company averaged 34 million people a day watching on NBC, cable networks and Peacock, up from 19 million over the same period in Tokyo.

The company said it has taken in more than \$1.25 billion in advertising revenue, its best-ever for an Olympics, and still has more time to sell.

“It’s hard to paint it as anything but rosy,” said **Andy Billings**, a University of Alabama journalism professor and author of “Olympic Television: Inside the Biggest Show on Earth.”

The time difference - Paris is six hours ahead of the Eastern time zone - is ideal for people who want to watch events live during the day in the United States. NBC Sports President **Rick Cordella** said the network is heartened by the number of people watching during what is generally the workday back home; NBC is even happily taking credit for dwindled workplace productivity.

Live daytime coverage of the women’s gymnastics team final reached 12.7 million people on NBC and Peacock, the network said. Even though it started on a Sunday morning, the U.S. men’s basketball team had 11 million people watching its opening game against **Serbia**, more than the number of people who saw the gold-medal game from **Tokyo**.

Before this year, NBC had generally resisted showing events live unless they took place in the evening hours in the U.S. It was a particular issue in **London** in 2012, when NBC restricted live events to

streaming; Lazarus declined the chance to second-guess those decisions.

“Times have changed and I think we are showing forward-thinking and being progressive in our case in how to produce

and exhibit the Games,” he said. (AP)

AL-JADIDA, Morocco: Al-Jadid, also known as Mazagan, is an Atlantic Ocean



Brazilian sibling singers Caetano Veloso, (right), and Maria Bethania perform on stage during their ‘Caetano & Bethania’ tour in Rio de Janeiro, Saturday, Aug. 3. (AP)

coastal city in **Morocco** steeped in history and mesmerizing beauty.

Governed by many in the past, including Moroccan Sultans, Portuguese, and the French, Al-Jadida spews history and reverence, making it one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Located around 90 kilometers south of the city of **Casablanca**, Al-Jadida is home for the Portuguese fort and neighborhood, which was built in the 16th century with its sprawling alleyways and ancient churches. (KUNA)

OSLO: A humpback whale entangled in fishing gear off **Norway’s Lofoten Islands** was euthanized due to severe injuries, the country’s Directorate of Fisheries said on Thursday.

The tragic incident began on Tuesday when the whale got stuck in fishing equipment at **Nappstraumen** in Lofoten. Efforts to rescue the whale were coordinated by the directorate and the Coast Guard on Wednesday.

The whale, an adult humpback measuring up to 19 meters in length and weighing 25-30 metric tons, was freed on Wednesday afternoon.

Despite the successful release, the whale was observed to have little mobility. Following a thorough assessment, a veterinarian determined that the whale’s injuries were too severe for it to survive and recommended euthanasia. (Xinhua)

Mindfulness exercises help children manage stress, emotions

Meditation breaks in schools help students' mental health

REX, Ga., Aug 4, (AP): The third-grade students at Roberta T. Smith Elementary School had only a few days until summer vacation, and an hour until lunch, but there was no struggle to focus as they filed into the classroom. They were ready for one of their favorite parts of the day.

The children closed their eyes and traced their thumbs from their foreheads to their hearts as a pre-recorded voice led them through an exercise called the shark fin, part of the classroom's regular meditation routine.

"Listen to the chimes," said the teacher, Kim Franklin. "Remember to breathe."

Schools across the US have been introducing yoga, meditation and mindfulness exercises to help students manage stress and emotions. As the depths of student struggles with mental health became clear in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention last year endorsed schools' use of the practices.

Research has found school-based mindfulness programs can help, especially in low-income communities where students face high levels of stress or trauma.

The mindfulness program reached Smith Elementary through a contract with the school system, Clayton County Public Schools, where two-thirds of the students are Black.

GreenLight Fund Atlanta, a network that matches communities with local non-profits, helps Georgia school systems pay for the mindfulness program provided by Inner Explorer, an audio platform.

Joli Cooper, GreenLight Fund Atlanta's executive director, said it was important to the group to support an organization that is accessible and relevant for communities of color in the Greater Atlanta area.

Children nationwide struggled with the effects of isolation and remote learning as they returned from the pandemic school closures. The CDC in 2023 reported more than a third of students were affected by feelings of persistent sadness and hopelessness. The agency recommended schools use mindfulness practices to help students manage emotions.

"We know that our teenagers and adolescents have really strained in their mental health," CDC Director Dr. Mandy Cohen told The Associated Press. "There are real skills that we can give our teens to make sure that they are coping with some big emotions."

Learning

Approaches to mindfulness represent a form of social-emotional learning, which has become a political flashpoint with many conservatives who say schools use it to promote progressive ideas about race, gender and sexuality.

But advocates say the programming brings much-needed attention to students' well-being.

"When you look at the numbers, unfortunately, in Georgia, the number of children of color with suicidal thoughts and success is quite high," Cooper said. "When you look at the number of psychologists available for these children, there are not enough psychologists of color."

Black youth have the fastest-growing suicide rate among racial groups, according to CDC statistics. Between 2007 and 2020, the suicide rate among Black children and teens ages 10 to 17 increased by 144%.

"It's a stigma with being able to say you're not OK and needing help, and hav-

ing the ability to ask for help," said Tolana Griggs, Smith Elementary's assistant principal. "With our diverse school community and wanting to be more aware of our students, how different cultures feel and how different cultures react to things, it's important to be all-inclusive with everything we do."

Nationwide, children in schools that serve mostly students of color have less access to psychologists and counselors than those in schools serving mostly white students.

The Inner Explorer program guides students and teachers through five-to-10-minute sessions of breathing, meditating and reflecting several times a day. The program also is used at Atlanta Public Schools and over 100 other districts across the country.

Teachers and administrators say they have noticed a difference in their students since they've incorporated mindfulness into their routine. For Aniyah Woods, 9, the program has helped her "calm down" and "not stress anymore."

"I love myself how I am, but Inner Explorer just helps me feel more like myself," Aniyah said.

Malachi Smith, 9, has used his exercises at home, with his father helping to guide him through meditation.

"You can relax yourself with the shark fin, and when I calm myself down, I realize I am an excellent scholar," Malachi said.

After Franklin's class finished their meditation, they shared how they were feeling. "Relaxed," one student said.

Aniyah raised her hand.

"It made me feel peaceful," she said.

One-time injection effective

Abu Dhabi offers gene therapy for DMD, first outside the US

ABU DHABI, UAE, Aug 4, (AP): The Department of Health - Abu Dhabi (DoH), the regulator of the healthcare sector, has provided revolutionary gene therapy for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) for the first time in Abu Dhabi and outside the United States.

While previously the therapy was accessible only in the United States, this groundbreaking treatment will now also be offered at Sheikh Khalifa Medical City (SKMC), part of SEHA, a subsidiary of PureHealth, further cementing Abu Dhabi's position as a leading healthcare destination and life sciences hub globally. The treatment was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in June 2023, and it was administered to an Emirati DMD patient by a specialist team led by a consultant paediatric neurologist from SKMC, in collaboration with the Department's Research and Innovation Centre on March 19th 2024.

DMD is a hereditary neuromuscular disorder that causes the muscles to gradually weaken over time. Through this treatment, DoH and the SKMC medical team used Delandistrogene moxeparvovec; a one-time injection that has proven to be effective in addressing the underlying cause of DMD. The treatment can potentially transform the disease trajectory by delivering functional dystrophin genes into patient cells which help the body produce biologically active dystrophin protein for muscle function, improving muscle strength and the patient's quality of life. Following the FDA's announcement of expanding the De-

landistrogene moxeparvovec treatment to children four and above, DoH remains committed to providing comprehensive care and support to affected patients and their families.

H.E. Dr. Noura Khamis Al Ghaithi, Undersecretary of Department of Health - Abu Dhabi (DoH), said: "This medical milestone underscores Abu Dhabi's continuous dedication to adopting world-class healthcare innovations that create a distinguished and holistic healthcare experience to all members of the community and beyond. We are committed to continuing to bring advanced preventative, diagnostics and therapeutic capabilities to the region, reinforcing Abu Dhabi's position as a leading healthcare and medical tourism destination".

Dr. Omar Ismayl, Head of Paediatric Neurology and Consultant at SKMC, said: "We at the Paediatric Neurology Department at SKMC are thrilled to use the gene therapy delandistrogene moxeparvovec for the first-time in Abu Dhabi. At SKMC, we are always committed to providing our patients with the most advanced, evidence-based management and treatment. This gene therapy underscores SEHA's commitment to providing access to the world's most advanced treatments and technologies, aligning with PureHealth's mission to unlock the science of longevity. It has the potential to change the unpleasant natural history and progression of this condition. This achievement would not have happened without the immense hard work and support from all the staff at SKMC and DoH."

Gut health linked to mental well-being

Younger adults going public with their digestive problems: experts

NEW YORK, Aug 4, (AP): Lauren Bell was stressed out and just starting her first job post-college in New York City when she realized a bout of food poisoning wasn't going away after weeks.

A doctor's appointment revealed she had irritable bowel syndrome, a surprising diagnosis - until she learned more about the connection between mental health and gut health, as well as the prevalence of digestive problems among women.

"Working in a pretty intense environment, living in the city and being an adult for the first time was doing a number on my body," the 27-year-old said of her diagnosis five years ago.

Every few months, a new TikTok about digestive problems goes viral - the taboo topic often being brought up by women who suggest tips to reduce bloot or ease pain. Experts say it's not clear whether there is an uptick in the number of people having digestive problems or if the online conversation is leading to more appointments and diagnoses.



Lauren Bell stands for a portrait at Crescent Park in New Orleans, Wednesday, May 1, 2024. (AP)

Watch out for misinformation

Experts provide tips on IBS amid buzz on social media

NEW YORK, Aug 4, (AP): Are you spending more time in the bathroom than you'd like? Loads of TikTok posts show you're not alone.

Young people, especially women, are increasingly talking on social media about gastrointestinal distress, such as irritable bowel syndrome or chronic bloating. Some experts say that's mostly a good thing, because it may help others seek help for a topic that has been taboo.

But they stress it's important to realize that many people are being paid to promote sometimes unproven products and there is rampant misinformation. Here's what else medical professionals suggest you do if you're experiencing digestive discomfort.

It's not clear whether there's a rise in digestive troubles overall. Some

experts attribute the trend to an uptick in anxiety after the pandemic in an already-anxious generation.

Ample research and science shows that our brain and gut are connected through nervous systems. That means when your brain is anxious or you're feeling depressed, it can relay those signals to your gut, which can make it harder for your gastrointestinal tract to function properly.

The causes of irritable bowel syndrome are unknown, but experts say the nervous system has a big effect on the condition and stress can make symptoms worse.

Dr. Nina Gupta, a gastroenterologist based in Chicago, said managing her patients' conditions often includes managing their mental health.

experts say the anxiety is likely a result of two things: increased isolation during a formative time and a reliance on social media to feel connected.

While changes in diet can improve IBS symptoms, Gupta said a big part of managing her patients' conditions is for them to "recognize that there's a connection between their stress or their mental health or their anxiety and their symptoms."

Nadya Okamoto hadn't pooped in four days.

"I'm very bloated," she said as she joined a Zoom interview from her home in New York City.

Okamoto, who has more than 4 million followers on TikTok, has built her platform around publicly addressing sensitive subjects. The 26-year-old is the founder of August, a period-product company, and frequently posts about her own menstrual cycle.

Some of her most popular posts over the last three years, though, are about her experiences with irritable bowel syndrome, or IBS. Okamoto seems to share her experiences with everything - collecting fecal samples for colon cancer, constipation and bloating.

"It wasn't until I started dating and being in close relationships and talking about it with my family that I realized ... it was not normal pooping three times a month," Okamoto told The Associated Press.

Diagnosis

Seeing the hashtag "IBS" on TikTok led her to the doctor and to a diagnosis. She's been on three different medications to treat her IBS. None worked.

"From a young age, potty talk is not something that is appropriate, especially for girls," she said. "We're not incentivized to be open about it, which means that we know less about our bodies."

The downside of more people talking about gut health online is an uptick in misinformation. Some of the most popular TikTok posts on IBS are from people who claim they've cured it or found a home remedy that miraculously stopped some symptoms. Others recommend unproven supplements.

A quick scroll of these influencers' accounts reveal a litany of sponsorships from probiotic or other health food companies. Gupta said viewers should be skeptical when people who aren't professionals start offering medical advice.

Advance cell therapy

Stemcell launches new system for efficient cell engineering

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Aug 4, (AP): Stemcell Technologies has commercially launched the CellPore Transfection System, providing a groundbreaking new technology with the potential to advance cell engineering research and the development of novel cell therapies to cure diseases.

The CellPore Transfection System represents a substantial leap forward for cell engineering researchers, offering a novel method-known as mechanoporation-for cargo delivery into mammalian cells. Unlike traditional electroporation techniques, the CellPore Transfection System squeezes

cells to create temporary pores in the cell membrane through which the cargo is introduced.

"The launch of the CellPore Transfection System, together with our various cell isolation and culture product portfolios, will equip the research community with the technology to advance the field of cell engineering," said Dr. Allen Eaves, President and CEO, Stemcell. "This product offering has solidified Stemcell's leadership in cell delivery using mechanoporation technology, with promising implications for both research and clinical applications."

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No. 1 seed, top Puerto Rico in group finale

US roll into Olympic quarterfinals as top seeds

VILLENEUVE-D’ASCQ, France, Aug 4, (AP): Halfway to its goal of gold, the U.S. has the No. 1 seed going into the medal round at the Paris Olympics.

And now the real games start.

Anthony Edwards scored 26 points, six players reached double figures for the U.S. and the Americans wrapped up the top spot coming out of group play by rolling past Puerto Rico 104-83.

The Americans - 3-0 in these

Olympics, 8-0 so far this summer - will see Brazil in the win-or-go-home quarterfinals in Paris on Tuesday.

Joel Embiid scored 15 points for the U.S. Kevin Durant scored 11 points for the U.S. to get within five of matching Lisa Leslie for the all-time Olympic scoring record for the

OLYMPICS

U.S.; he’s at 483, and Leslie finished her career with 488 in Olympic play.

LeBron James finished with 10 points, eight assists and six rebounds in 18 minutes. Jayson Tatum and Anthony Davis each added 10 for the U.S., which played without Jrue Holiday because of an ankle that he rolled in the Americans’ win over South Sudan on Wednesday.

Jose Alvarado led Puerto Rico (0-3) with 18 points.

It was the first Olympic matchup

between the nations since the Athens Games in 2004, when Puerto Rico ran away in the second quarter and went on to embarrass the U.S. 92-73 in what was James’ debut in the tournament.

Little different story this time.

That day in Athens, Puerto Rico won the second quarter 28-7. This time, the U.S. won the second quarter 39-16. Give Puerto Rico credit; a team that came into Saturday knowing it was eliminated from conten-

tion took an eight-point lead late in the first quarter and still led 37-36 with 5:45 left in the half.

The rest of the half: U.S. 28, Puerto Rico 8. The run was quick and decisive.

James had all six of his first-half assists during that burst and the Americans took a 64-45 lead into the break. He finished the flurry with a dunk in the final seconds, ran by his 2004 Athens teammate Dwyane Wade - now commentating for NBC,

sitting courtside - while yelling something with a big smile and from there the countdown to wrapping up the No. 1 seed was official on.

As would be expected, really.

It’s been three games, three easy wins for the Americans so far in France: a 26-point opening victory over Serbia, a 17-point win over South Sudan to clinch the top spot in Group C, and then Saturday’s game against Puerto Rico that once it got one-sided it stayed that way.

Nigerian women first African team to make Oly quarters in basketball



Ezinne Kalu (23), of Nigeria, shoots over Sami Hill (4), of Canada, in a women's basketball game at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France. (AP)

Belgium advance

VILLENEUVE-D’ASCQ, France, Aug 4, (AP): Ezinna Kalu scored 21 points as Nigeria made Olympic history by becoming the first African team, male or female, to reach the Olympic quarterfinals in basketball when it beat Canada 79-70 on Sunday.

The Nigerians (2-1) now wait to learn their opponent. They already have doubled the number of wins in pool play for a country that came to France looking for its first Olympic victory since the 2004 Athens Games.

They went to midcourt to start celebrating, with an assistant coach using her phone to record the moment. The Nigerians stopped to high-five the Canadians, then returned to celebrating with a midcourt huddle.

BASKETBALL

An assistant coach grabbed a flag from a fan for photos on the court, and the Nigerians took their time hugging and posing for more photos as they savored the moment.

Canada, ranked fifth in the world, leaves winless in three games, eliminated on the final day of group play for women’s basketball by a team ranked 12th.

Five countries came in already having clinched berths, led by the U.S. trying to win an unprecedented eighth straight Olympic gold. The others are Spain, Serbia, France and Germany. The draw setting the quarterfinals follows the final game between Australia and host nation

First media coordinators workshop kicks off

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The first workshop for media coordinators will take place at 6 pm today, organized by the Sports Media Coordinators Association in collaboration with the Kuwait Football Association at Jaber Stadium.

The workshop will be led by Asian lecturer Ali Al-Raisi from the Sultanate of Oman and will be held ahead of the Zain League Championship.

Bandar Al-Mutairi, the Secretary of the Sports Media Coordinators Association, stated that the workshop aims to highlight the critical role of media coordinators at both club and national team levels. Media coordinators serve as the essential



Bandar Al-Mutairi

France.

Nigeria failed to qualify for the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games and went winless in Tokyo. This women’s team was denied access to Nigeria’s boat for the opening ceremony on July 26, and now it will play Wednesday in Bercy Arena on the banks of the Seine River.

Nigeria scored the first six points of the game. Captain Amy Okonkwo hurt her right shoulder early in the second quarter, colliding with Canada forward Aaliyah Edwards diving for a loose ball, and Canada took a 41-37 lead into halftime.

Okonkwo returned for the third quarter, when Nigeria opened with a 13-1 run. The Nigerians outscored Canada 23-5 in the third and took a 60-46 lead into the fourth.

Elizabeth Balogun added 14 points for Nigeria, and Promise Amukamara had 12.

Shay Colley led Canada with 17 points, Bridget Carleton had 13 and

Kayla Alexander 12.

Emma Meeseman scored 30 points and grabbed 11 rebounds as Belgium routed Japan to clinch the first of three remaining quarterfinal berths. The Cats came together, hugging and dancing at midcourt, with some wiping tears from their eyes in celebration after the final buzzer.

Japan (0-3) was eliminated after winning silver three years ago at the Tokyo Games. The Japanese wiped away tears as they left the court.

This is the second straight Olympics that the silver medalist failed to medal in the next Olympics. Spain won silver in 2016 at the Rio de Janeiro Games, then lost to France in the quarterfinals in Tokyo.

Belgium (1-2) needed to beat Japan by 27 points to finish with a better point differential than China to keep playing. The Cats had a packed house trying to help, with Belgium a mere 20 miles (32 kilometers) away

link between sports entities and various media outlets, and this workshop is expected to significantly benefit them.

He emphasized, “No sports system can achieve its strategic goals without fruitful and continuous cooperation with the media. These workshops and courses are designed to enhance the scientific and professional levels of coordinators, featuring Asian and international lecturers.”

Al-Mutairi also mentioned that the association plans to exchange workshops and courses with Gulf and Arab countries, with the intention of sending sports media coordinators to attend these international sessions.

and China (1-2) watching the scoreboard through the final three games to learn its fate.

Japan led 4-2 in the opening minutes on a jumper by Rui Machada.

Antonia Delaere’s 3-pointed put the Cats ahead to stay, and they led 19-7 at the end of the first with the final margin the biggest concern. Japan didn’t make it easy as Belgium had a 20-16 edge in the second for a 39-23 lead at halftime.

The Cats outscored Japan 22-16 in the third for a 61-39 lead. Fans roared for each Belgium bucket, knowing the need to not only win but by the point margin. Elise Ramette’s 3 with 4:52 pushed the lead to the 27 points needed at 71-44, and Becky Massey hugged her to start a Japan timeout.

Ramette finished with 16 points, and Delaere and Maxuella Mbaka Lisowa each had 12.

Saki Hayashi led Japan with 13, and Evelyn Mawuli added 12.

Scheffler gets Oly gold medal in a thriller with a 62

SAINT-QUENTIN-EN-YVELINES, France, Aug 4, (AP): Scottie Scheffler delivered the best performance of his greatest year by rallying from four shots behind on Sunday with a 9-under 62 to win the Olympic gold medal in men’s golf in a thriller at Le Golf National.

Already a six-time winner on the PGA Tour this year, including his second Masters title, Scheffler added Olympic gold to an astonishing season with a round that kept some 30,000 fans on edge for a wild final two hours.

The world’s No. 1 player had plenty of help. Jon Rahm of Spain had a four-shot lead over Tommy Fleetwood when he stepped on the 11th tee. Fleetwood caught him in two holes as the Spaniard had a stunning collapse.



Gold medalist Scottie Scheffler, of the United States, poses with his medal following the medal ceremony for men’s golf during the medal ceremony at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Sunday, Aug 4, 2024, at Le Golf National in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, France. (AP)

That opened the door for six players - including Victor Perez of France, who came within one shot of the podium.

But it was Scheffler who charged to the front with four straight birdies down the stretch, none bigger than gouging a shot out of deep rough on the 17th hole and making the 18-foot birdie putt to take the lead for the first time all day.

He set an Olympic record for 72 holes at 19-under 265. Fleetwood, who fell out of the lead with a bogey from the rough on the 17th, got up-and-down for par on the final hole for a 66 to win the silver medal.

The bronze went to Hideki Matsuyama, in the mix on the back nine until closing with six straight pars for a 65.

Crovetto wins women’s skeet shooting

Chile get first gold in 20 years

CHATEAUROUX, France, Aug 4, (AP): Chile won its first Olympic gold medal in 20 years when Francisca Crovetto took victory in the women’s skeet, while Britain’s Amber Rutter took silver just over three months after becoming a mother.

Crovetto won the gold in a shoot-off, hitting her last two targets for the win after a disputed call to give Rutter a miss for a shot which, TV replays showed, had seemed to clip the target.

Crovetto and Rutter had finished equal on 55 out of 60 to force the shoot-off.

Crovetto is the first Chilean gold medalist since the 2004 Athens Olympics, when Nicolás Massú won men’s tennis gold in singles and in doubles with Fernando González.

Chile had not won an Olympic medal of any kind since 2008 and its only shooting medal was a skeet silver in 1988 for Alfonso de Iruarizaga, when skeet was a mixed-gender event.

Rutter reached the Olympic final in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 at the age of 18 and was a favorite for a medal in the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics in 2021 until a positive test for COVID-19 two days before the opening ceremony. Rutter had to abandon her plans to fly to Japan and has spoken of struggling with depression after missing the Olympics.

She gave birth in April to a son,



Chile’s Francisca Crovetto Chadid celebrates after winning the gold medal in the Skeet women’s final at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Chateauroux, France. (AP)

Tommy, and celebrated with him after winning the silver medal.

Austen Smith won the bronze for the United States a day after her coach, Vincent Hancock, won his fourth gold medal in men’s skeet.

Smith and Hancock will team up Monday for the United States in the mixed team skeet event. Another of Hancock’s students, Conner Prince, won the men’s silver and will take part in the mixed event with Dania Vizzi, who placed 12th Sunday in women’s skeet.

Kuwait kicks off preps for Gulf Championship

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Kuwait basketball team has begun preparations for the Gulf Championship, set to take place in the Bahraini capital from September 2-7.

The first training session was held two days ago at the Basketball Association Hall in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex. Led by national team coach Khaled Al-Qallaf, the

BASKETBALL

session saw the attendance of 12 players, while six players were absent due to special circumstances.

During the initial phase of preparation, the technical staff focused on enhancing the players’ physical fitness. The second phase will involve an external training camp in Serbia from August 17-31.

Before the start of the first local



Kuwaiti players practicing.

Le Normand joins Atletico

MADRID, Aug 4, (Xinhua): Atletico Madrid on Saturday confirmed the signing of French-born Spain international defender Robin le Normand on a five-year contract.

The 27-year-old, who formed part of the Spain side that won this summer’s European Championships, has cost Atletico just under 35 million euros (38 million U.S. dollars) and will stay with the club until the end of June 2029.

He joins a side that needs to strengthen its defense after losing Stefan Savic

and Mario Hermoso at the end of last season and which struggled in defense in the 2023-24 campaign, conceded 68 goals in 54 matches - the worst since Diego Simeone took over as coach in 2012.

Le Normand joined Real Sociedad when he was 16 years old from Brest and after a spell with their B-team, made his first team debut in the 2018-19 season, going on to make 221 first team appearances and forming part of a team that has qualified for Europe for the last four years.

Yu-ting of Taiwan clinches first Oly medal

Boxer Lin Yu-ting of Taiwan clinched her first Olympic medal Sunday in front of a crowd that chanted her name, one day after fellow boxer Imane Khelif of Algeria secured one as well following days of online abuse and intense scrutiny about their participation at the Paris Games.

Lin defeated Svetlana Kamenova Staneva of Bulgaria 5:0 in a women's 57-kilogram quarterfinal, advancing to the semifinals and ensuring she will win at least a bronze medal.

Lin and Khelif have been at the center of a clash over gender identity and regulations in sports, as critics have brought up their dis-

qualification from the world championships last year after the banned International Boxing Association claimed they failed unspecified eligibility tests for women's competition.

Lin, who will face Esra Yildiz Kahraman of Turkey at Roland-Garros on Wednesday, said her goal is to keep going and become to be a gold medalist. She did not mention any of the online scrutiny of the past few days and said that she shut down her social media before her first Olympic fight.

"I want to thank all the supporters from Taiwan," she said. (AP)



Liu Yang, of China, competes during the men's artistic gymnastics individual uneven bars finals at Bercy Arena at the 2024 Summer Olympics, in Paris, France. (AP)

Marin is shattered after knee injury in semifinals

Chen/Jia win all-Chinese badminton women's doubles final

Ledecky swims into history with 800 freestyle 'victory'



Hungary's Kristof Milak competes in the men's 100-meter butterfly final at the Summer Olympics in Nanterre, France. (AP)

US set world record in 4x100 mixed medley relay

NANTERRE, France, Aug 4, (AP): Every year on Aug. 3, Katie Ledecky is reminded of her first Olympic gold medal.

She was just 15 years old, a reserved high schooler who had surprisingly made the U.S. swim team for the London Games. Then she went out and shocked the world, beating everyone in the 800-meter freestyle.

Twelve years to the day, Ledecky did it again.

Not a stunner, but one for the ages. Gold medal No. 9.

Ledecky capped another stellar Olympics by becoming only the second swimmer to win an event at four straight Summer Games, holding off Ariarne Titmus, the "Terminator," to win the 800 free Saturday night.

It was Ledecky's second gold medal in Paris and the ninth of her remarkable career, which marked another milestone.

She became only the sixth Olympian to reach that figure, joining swimmer Mark Spitz, track star Carl Lewis, Soviet gymnast Larisa Latynina and Finnish runner Paavo Nurmi in a tie for second place.

Titmus, who beat Ledecky in the 400 freestyle, settled for silver at 8:12.29. The bronze went to another American, Paige Madden at 8:13.00.

Phelps had been the only swimmer to win the same event at four straight Olympics, taking gold in the 200 individual medley at Athens, Beijing, London and Rio de Janeiro.

Now he's got company.

Titmus added some perspective to Ledecky's consistency over the last dozen years, noting where she was when the American won that first gold in London.

Their friendly rivalry has driven both to greater heights. They each won two golds and four medals at these games, which pushed Ledecky to 14 overall and left the 23-year-old Aussie with four golds and eight medals in her career.

Ledecky has dominated the distance freestyle events over the last dozen years - and isn't done yet. She's made it clear she plans to keep swimming at least through the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

Summer McIntosh stamped herself as one of the swimming stars of the

Al-Roumi criticizes conditions at Paris Oly

PARIS, Aug 4: Kuwaiti runner Amal Al-Roumi has voiced concerns about the poor quality of food and the high temperatures, which reached 35 de-

Paris Olympics with her third individual gold medal, winning the 200 individual medley.

The 17-year-old Canadian chased down American Alex Walsh and held off another U.S. swimmer, Kate Douglass, to finish in an Olympic record of 2:06.56.

Douglass grabbed the silver in the star-studded final at 2:06.92, but the Americans lost the bronze when Walsh, the silver medalist in this event at Tokyo who recorded a time of 2:07.06, was disqualified because she did not finish the backstroke segment on her back.

Kaylee McKeown, who touched fourth, was bumped up to the bronze at 2:08.08.

It was a bitter blow for Walsh, whose younger sister, Gretchen, has won a gold medal and two silvers in Paris.

McIntosh set several world records ahead of the Paris Olympics, and she backed up the enormous expectations by claiming a starring role at La Defense Arena along with Léon Marchand and Ledecky.

McIntosh also won gold medals in the 200 butterfly and 400 IM, plus a silver in the 400 freestyle. She fell just 0.88 seconds - the margin of her loss to Titmus - shy of matching Marchand's four individual golds.

The United States made up for a disappointing showing in Tokyo by setting a world record in the 4x100 mixed

grees Celsius, at the Olympic Village during the Paris 2024 Games.

Al-Roumi highlighted organizational issues in the Paris Olympics, noting



Amal Al-Roumi

medley relay.

Ryan Murphy, Nic Fink, Gretchen Walsh and Torri Huske held off China for a winning time of 3:37.43, breaking the mark of 3:37.58 set by Britain when it won gold in the wild and woolly event's Olympic debut three years ago.

With each team picking two men and two women, the U.S. and China both went with their male swimmers in the first two legs.

Murphy put the U.S. in front on the backstroke, China's Qin Haiyang slipped past Nic Fink on the breaststroke, but Walsh stormed back in front for the Americans on the butter-

fly before Huske held off Yang Junxun to secure the gold.

For Huske, it was her second gold to go with two silvers in Paris.

The Chinese team, which also included Xu Jiayu and Zhang Yufei, took silver in 3:37.55. The bronze went to Australia in 3:38.76.

Marchand swam the breaststroke leg for France but couldn't add to his already impressive haul. The French finished fourth, more than two seconds behind the Aussies.

When the British won gold in 2021, the Americans finished fifth. Britain was seventh this time.

The U.S. bumped its total to six golds, one behind leading Australia with four events remaining Sunday. The Americans are assured of winning the overall medal count with 25.

Kristóf Milák of Hungary won the men's 100 butterfly, chasing down three swimmers on the return lap.

Milák was only fourth at the turn, but he rallied to touch in 49.90. Canada grabbed the silver and bronze, with Josh Liendo finishing in 49.99 and Ilya Kharun next at 50.45.

Milák had failed to defend his Olympic title in the 200 butterfly, settling for a silver behind French star Marchand.

Milák claimed silver in the 100 fly three years ago, but he didn't have to worry about the guy who beat him in that race. American Caeleb Dressel stunningly failed to qualify for the final.

Kharun added another bronze to the one he garnered in the 200 butterfly.

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The only athlete to win more golds: swimmer Michael Phelps with 23.

Ledecky was very aware of the significance of the date.

That she did, going faster than her winning time in Tokyo to finish in 8 minutes, 11.04 seconds. Titmus was right on her shoulder nearly the entire race, but Ledecky pulled away in the final 100.

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Gold medalists China's Chen Qingchen, (left), and Jia Yifan celebrate on the podium during the medal ceremony for women's doubles badminton at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

2:07.06, was disqualified because she did not finish the backstroke segment on her back.

Kaylee McKeown, who touched fourth, was bumped up to the bronze at 2:08.08.

It was a bitter blow for Walsh, whose younger sister, Gretchen, has won a gold medal and two silvers in Paris.

McIntosh set several world records ahead of the Paris Olympics, and she backed up the enormous expectations by claiming a starring role at La Defense Arena along with Léon Marchand and Ledecky.

McIntosh also won gold medals in the 200 butterfly and 400 IM, plus a silver in the 400 freestyle. She fell just 0.88 seconds - the margin of her loss to Titmus - shy of matching Marchand's four individual golds.

The United States made up for a disappointing showing in Tokyo by setting a world record in the 4x100 mixed medley relay.

Ryan Murphy, Nic Fink, Gretchen Walsh and Torri Huske held off China for a winning time of 3:37.43, breaking the mark of 3:37.58 set by Britain when it won gold in the wild and woolly event's Olympic debut three years ago.

With each team picking two men and two women, the U.S. and China both went with their male swimmers in the first two legs.

Murphy put the U.S. in front on the backstroke, China's Qin Haiyang slipped past Nic Fink on the breaststroke, but Walsh stormed back in front for the Americans on the butterfly before Huske held off Yang Junxun to secure the gold.

For Huske, it was her second gold to go with two silvers in Paris.

The Chinese team, which also included Xu Jiayu and Zhang Yufei, took silver in 3:37.55. The bronze went to Australia in 3:38.76.

Marchand swam the breaststroke leg for France but couldn't add to his already impressive haul. The French finished fourth, more than two seconds behind the Aussies.

Sheikh Khaled 'praises' Al-Musallam's leadership in swimming competitions

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The president of the Kuwaiti and Asian Aquatic Sports Federations, Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr, commended the outstanding role of the International Aquatic Sports Federation, led by Kuwaiti Hussein Al-Musallam, in the exceptional organization of swimming competitions at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr stated that the International Aquatic Sports Federation, under Al-Musallam's leadership, serves as a model of dedication, effort, and success, contributing significantly to the development and advancement of water sports on a global scale. He noted that Al-Musallam's influence was evident during the Olympics, earning the approval of participating continental federations.

He further added that there is a consensus that Al-Musallam, as the President of the International Aquatic Sports Federation, is a "national competence" who has firmly placed Kuwait on the world sports map. Al-Musallam has achieved this by successfully steer-



Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr

ing water sports in the right direction, expanding participation worldwide, and providing support and assistance to countries facing various challenges. This integrated and clear plan has had a profound and positive impact on all involved.

Afghan judoka fails doping test

PARIS, Aug 4, (Xinhua): Judoka Mohammad Samim Faizad of Afghanistan has been provisionally suspended following a positive test for a banned substance during the Paris Olympics.

The International Testing Agency (ITA) announced Friday that a sample collected from Faizad during the round of 32 in men's 81 kg event on July 30 has returned an adverse analytical finding for the non-specified substance stanozolol metabolites, which under the Prohibited List of the World Anti-

Doping Agency (WADA).

The sample was analyzed by the WADA-accredited laboratory in Paris, which reported the adverse finding on Thursday. As a result, Faizad is temporarily barred from all Olympic activities, including competing, training, and coaching, until the resolution of the matter in line with the World Anti-Doping Code and the IOC Anti-Doping Rules applicable to Paris 2024.

It is the third doping case announced at the Paris Games.



United States' Katie Ledecky celebrates with the gold medal during the awards ceremony for the women's 800-meter freestyle at the Summer Olympics in Nanterre, France. (AP)



Yaqoub Al-Youha fails to finish the 110m hurdles after suffering an injury at the Paris Olympics.

Sports

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Yulo continues historic run for Philippines in Paris Algeria's Nemour wins uneven bars gold

Liu Yang defends title

PARIS, Aug 4, (AP): Kaylia Nemour of Algeria delivered the country's first gold medal in gymnastics, putting together a thrilling routine in the uneven bars final on Sunday to edge Qiu Qiyuan of China.

Sunisa Lee of the U.S. picked up her third medal in Paris and sixth of her Olympic career by grabbing bronze, exactly where she finished in Tokyo three years ago.

Nemour is French and still trains in France but switched to compete for Algeria following a dispute with the French gymnastics federation and Nemour's club of Avoine Beaumont, which has led the gymnast to embrace her father's Algerian nationality.

The 17-year-old is a wonder on bars, swooping from one to the other with a series of releases and intricate hand maneuvers that are both athletically and technically demanding.

Nemour needed to rely on all those skills to edge Qiu, who put on a clinic during her set. Her legs were practically magnetized together during her routine and she was so straight on her handstand she looked like a ruler. Qiu earned her coaches after her dismount and the crowd erupted when her 15.5 was posted.

Nemour scored 15.7, tied for the highest score of the meet in any event.

While Nemour competes under a different flag - she draped the Algerian banner behind her after clinching her victory - she was very much on home soil. A raucous ovation followed after she won the first-ever gymnastics medal for Algeria.

Lee has spent much of the last 15 months dealing with multiple kidney diseases that have limited her training. She didn't really get serious about Paris until December. And seven months later she's already picked up three medals after helping the Simone Biles-led U.S. women claim team gold last Tuesday. Lee followed it up two days

later with a bronze in the all-around behind Biles and Rebeca Andrade of Brazil.

Lee's six medals leave her one behind Shannon Miller for the second most by an American gymnast. Lee could match Miller in the balance beam final on Sunday.

The Philippines had just one gold medal in the history of the Olympics on Saturday morning.

By Sunday afternoon, Carlos Yulo had pushed that total to three.

Yulo gave the Philippines its second gold in 24 hours by delivering another spectacular performance in the men's floor final. Yulo's two-vault average of 15.116 was good enough to top Artur Davtyan of Armenia and Harry Hepworth of Britain.

GYMNASTICS

Liu Yang of China defended his Olympic gymnastics title on still rings, posting a score of 15.300 to edge teammate Zou Jingyuan in the finals.

The 29-year-old Liu is the third man to win multiple Olympic titles in an event that requires strength and impeccable body control, joining Albert Azaryan of Russia and Akinori Nakayama of Japan.

Eleftherios Petrounias of Greece earned the bronze. Petrounias has won a medal on rings in three straight Games. He was the champion in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro and a bronze medalist in Tokyo three years ago.

The difference between Liu's 15.300 and Zou's 15.233 came on the dismount. Zou hopped a couple of times after hitting the mat while Liu's bounce was considerably smaller.

Samir Ait Said of France finished fourth, eight years after memorably breaking his left leg on vault in Rio. Said, who already has committed to trying to make it to Los Angeles 2028, roared after his dismount in front of a highly partisan crowd inside Bercy Arena. The crowd met Said's score of 15.000 with whistles of displeasure.

The men's vault finals are later Sunday.

Sheikh Fahad commends athletes

Kuwait's Al-Youha's Olympic 'journey' ends due to injury



Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser with Yaqoub Al-Youha and other officials.

PARIS, Aug 4: Yaqoub Al-Youha concluded his participation in the "Paris 2024" Olympic Games, which run until the 11th of this month, after sustaining an injury at the second hurdle during the start of the 110m hurdles race. This injury prevented him from completing the race and competing for a spot in the semi-finals.

Athletics team coach, Badr Abbas, reported that Al-Youha suffered an adductor muscle injury, as confirmed by the medical report. Consequently, he will be unable to continue in the tournament's second chance qualifiers scheduled for today in the 110m hurdles race.

Abbas explained that Al-Youha had a strong start, but the injury while crossing the second hurdle led to his withdrawal from the competition. The adductor muscle injury requires rest and a specialized rehabilitation program for recovery, according to the final medical report.

Previously, Al-Youha sustained an ankle injury last May, which sidelined him from major tournaments, including the Asian Indoor Games Championship and the West Asian Championship.

Today, national sailing team member Amina Shah will conclude her competitions in the (Alka 6) category race at the Marina of Marseille. After participating in eight races, she has two

races remaining to complete her series of 10 races, which will determine her overall ranking in the competition.

Shah is the first Kuwaiti Gulf player to participate in the sailing race. She prepared for this historic event through external training camps and international tournaments in various countries over the past months to achieve the technical readiness needed for high-level competition.

Shah's accomplishments include winning gold medals at the Alexandria Championships in Egypt, the Eastern Fleet in Saudi Arabia, and the Al-Bareh International in Bahrain.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser, expressed his pride and honor in the participation of Kuwaiti athletes in this international event, emphasizing that competing alongside these champions is an "achievement."

Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser made this statement after visiting the residence of the national athletics team, where he met with athlete Yaqoub Al-Youha.

He highlighted his pride in Kuwait's participation in the 33rd Olympic Games, commending the champions for their professional dedication and determination in representing their country admirably, even if some exited the competitions early.



Kaylia Nemour, of Algeria, celebrates after winning the gold medal during the women's artistic gymnastics individual uneven bars finals. (Inset): Carlos Yulo, of the Philippines, celebrates after winning the men's artistic gymnastics individual vault finals. (AP)

Alcaraz beaten in the men's tennis final

Djokovic completes glittering resume with Oly gold

Shocks galore

St Lucia, Dutch win unexpected golds

PARIS, Aug 4, (Xinhua): Julien Alfred scored St Lucia's first ever Olympic medal with gold in the women's 100m, while the Netherlands took victory in the mixed 4x400m on a rainy full of surprises in the Paris 2024 athletics competitions.

Heading into the women's 100m, much discussion had centered on a high-profile showdown between the United States' Sha'carri Richardson and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce of Jamaica.

However, Fraser-Pryce withdrew

from the event just before the semifinals, ruining her chance of becoming the first athlete in Olympic history to win five consecutive medals in the same event.

Fraser-Pryce's withdrawal meant Richardson was the favorite going into the final, but the American was beaten out of the blocks by Alfred, who led from start to finish with a national record time of 10.72s.

Richardson had to settle for silver in 10.87s, with her compatriot Melissa Jefferson taking the bronze medal with a time of 10.92s.

In the 4x400m mixed relay, the Netherlands scored a major shock by taking gold ahead of the U.S., who had been expected to win after having set a new world record of 3:07.41 in Friday's semifinal, and the Americans asserted their authority by leading after the second and third laps.

However, as the rain lashed down in the Stade de France, the U.S. reckoned without a supreme effort from Dutch anchor Femke Bol, who ran 47.93s - just 0.33s shy of the women's 400m world record - to overhaul U.S. anchor Kaylyn Brown in the final 50 meters to secure the Netherlands' win in a European record time of 3:07.43s.

ATHLETICS

Behind the second-placed U.S. team, Britain took the bronze medal.

In the women's triple jump, another Caribbean nation scored its first ever Olympic medal, with Thea Lafond jumping a national record of 15.02m to win gold for Dominica.

Shaneika Ricketts took silver for Jamaica, with bronze going to the U.S.'s Jasmine Moore. Tokyo 2020 gold medalist and current world record holder Yulimar Rojas of Venezuela did not compete after having torn her Achilles tendon earlier in 2024.

The men's shot put was dominated by world record holder Ryan Crouser of the U.S., who led the field from his first throw, and ultimately sealed his third Olympic gold in succession with a season's best of 22.90m.

Despite the rainy conditions, which made the throwing circle increasingly treacherous, Crouser's compatriot Joe Kovacs did well to improve to 22.15m on his final throw, ultimately sealing the silver medal ahead of Jamaica's Rajindra Campbell in third place.

In the men's decathlon, Markus Rooth took the gold medal with 8,796 points. The Norwegian had not come top in any of the event's ten disciplines, but was consistent enough throughout to take the overall win, 48 points ahead of Germany's Leo Neugebauer, with Lindon Victor of Grenada third on 8,711 points.

TENNIS

In Paris, wearing a gray sleeve over the right knee that required surgery for a torn meniscus two months ago, Djokovic faced Nadal in the second round and eliminated his longtime rival in straight sets. Now Djokovic is the oldest man to win the singles gold in his sport since 1908 - and prevented Spain's Alcaraz, who is 21, from becoming the youngest.

When the victory was his, when the gold was his, thanks to one last forehand winner, Djokovic turned toward his team in the stands - sitting in front of his wife and their two children - and dropped his racket as he knelt on the clay. As emotional as ever, he cried and covered his face, then rose and grabbed a red-white-and-blue Serbian flag. After hugs in the stands, Djokovic waved that flag. Alcaraz wept afterward, too.

The final, which lasted 2 hours, 50 minutes despite being decided in only two sets, was a rematch of the Wimbledon title match three weeks ago that Alcaraz won to follow up his French Open title in June.

Alcaraz also defeated Djokovic in last year's final at the All England Club, but Djokovic won when they met in the semifinals of the 2023 French Open, the annual clay-court tournament held at Roland Garros, the site used for tennis during these Olympics.

Sunday's contest was an enthralling matchup, featuring one of the best to ever do it in Djokovic, and the best at the moment in Alcaraz. Indeed, could have been frustrating for Djokovic to find himself once again across the net from a younger, speedier version of himself. Maybe that's why Djokovic frequently looked up and gesticulated and muttered toward his guest box.

Still, he came out on top.

It required long exchanges filled with superb ball-striking at the baseline, deft drop shots - Alcaraz's tended to be more successful, sometimes so good Djokovic declined to even give



Julien Alfred, of Saint Lucia, celebrates after winning the gold medal in the women's 100 meters final at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Saint-Denis, France. (AP)

chase - and tremendous sprinting, sliding, stretching defense at both ends. They served so well that neither got broken even once: Djokovic saved eight break points, Alcaraz six.

Most remarkable, perhaps, was how cleanly both men played, despite the talent of the opposition and pressure of the occasion. Unforced errors were rare.

The only shame, perhaps, for the fans - and, naturally, the loser - was that the Olympics uses a best-of-three-set format, instead of the best-of-five at Grand Slam tournaments. Make no mistake, this encounter between the No. 1-seeded Djokovic and No.

2-seeded Alcaraz was worthy of a major final, and no one fortunate enough to hold a ticket could complain about not getting their money's worth.

Those in the stands became part of the show, repeatedly breaking out into choruses of "No-le! No-le!" or "Carlos! Car-los!" that often overlapped, creating an operatic fugue. In the second set, as Alcaraz attempted to mount a comeback, his supporters began chanting, "Si, se puede!" (essentially, "Yes, you can!") while shaking their red-and-yellow flags. Chair umpire Damien Dumusois occasionally reminded folks to remain silent during the action.



Serbia's Novak Djokovic shows his gold medal after defeating Spain's Carlos Alcaraz in the men's singles tennis final at the Roland Garros stadium during the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)