



soccer
Pages 14 & 16



KUNA photo
Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi gives instructions to one of the ministry's officials.

Minister opens new kidney dialysis unit

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, inaugurated the kidney dialysis unit at Sabah Al-Ahmad Health Center (Sector E), which has a capacity to serve 120 patients. In a press statement, Dr. Al-Awadhi highlighted that the opening of the unit underscores the ministry's dedication to maintaining the highest standards of professional quality and patient safety. The unit is equipped with 20 state-of-the-art dialysis machines and staffed by a team of highly specialized doctors and nurses in the field of kidney dialysis.

Dr. Al-Awadhi noted that approximately 25 patients from the Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City currently require dialysis. The new unit alleviates the burden of traveling to Al-Adan Hospital three times a week, thereby enhancing patient comfort and reducing hardship.

Additionally, Dr. Bassam Al-Hilal, Head of the Kidney Diseases Unit at the Mohammad Al-Khazam Center for Kidney Diseases and Dialysis at Al-Adan Hospital, emphasized that the opening of this unit is a significant step towards achieving comprehensive health coverage across Kuwait, in line with international standards. The new center aims to provide the highest level of service to patients.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health inaugurated a new medical warehouse at Al-Adan Hospital, dedicated to the strategic storage of medicines and medical supplies. This facility is a key component of the new Al-Adan Hospital project, overseen by the Engineering Affairs and Projects Sector of the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, the Minister of Health, emphasized that the establishment of these warehouses aligns with the strategic plan to enhance the country's drug stock and ensure drug security. He reiterated the Ministry's commitment to maintaining the highest standards in storage and safety to guarantee the quality of medicines, consumables, and medical services provided to citizens.

Al-Awadhi noted that the warehouses, covering the Ahmadi health area, bolster the country's strategic stock. They offer a storage capacity of 10,993 square meters, with 8,000 storage units, and stand 14 meters high.

Assistant Undersecretary for Medicines and Medical Equipment Affairs, Khaled Al-Yassin, highlighted the significance of this project, noting that the warehouses occupy an area of approximately 12,000 square meters.

Food, clothing dear

CPI inflation rises nearly 3 pc in June

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The recent data from the Central Administration of Statistics shows that Kuwait's consumer price index (CPI) inflation grew by 2.84% in June on an annual basis, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This figure highlights a persistent inflationary trend since the CPI base year was recalculated in 2017 to 2013, rather than the previous 2007 base year.

Over the 78-month period studied, inflation in Kuwait has risen by 18.4%, which is notably higher than in other Gulf countries, except where VAT impacts are considered, such as in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The inflation increase is primarily driven by substantial rises in specific categories -- food and beverages: 39.2 percent; clothing and apparel: 31.5 percent; entertainment and culture: 25.3 percent; communications: 23.4 percent and transportation: 21.1 percent.

Conversely, the "housing services" category saw a modest increase of 4.5 percent, which is considered low since it does not account for residential transactions or rents.

This discrepancy suggests that the actual inflation affecting consumers might be higher than reported.

Critics argue that the inflation data does not fully reflect real-world economic conditions due to outdated measurement methods and inadequate data collection practices.

The Household Income and Expenditure Survey, which is conducted every decade, fails to capture current trends in purchasing power and consumer behavior, making the inflation statistics less meaningful.

The report points to several factors contributing to high inflation in Kuwait, including -- administrative failures in service and trade policies, monopolistic practices by commercial agencies, high import costs due to limited local industry, poor quality of public services such as health and education and lack of effective monetary policies to manage market liquidity.

Continued on Page 5

KPC & Saudi Aramco set to float Durra gas field tender

Massive quantity of gas, oil for extraction

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The KPC and Saudi Aramco have completed studies and are preparing to float a tender for the giant engineering,

supply, construction, and installation in the Durra offshore gas field, according to the British "Oil Price" website.

Informed sources told Al-Seyassah that KPC and Saudi Aramco are working jointly to implement the project according to established timelines. Joint meetings are ongoing to ensure the project's timely execution.

The website, which specializes in global oil and gas news, estimated that once production begins, the Durra field will produce about one billion cubic feet per day of gas and 84,000 barrels per day of condensate.

The tendering process is expected to begin very soon.

Last April, Gulf Oil Company signed a contract for preliminary engineering works for the Durra field and project management consultations for the gas and condensate processing facilities project for Kuwait's share of the field.

This contract was signed between Gulf Oil and Technip Energies.

In other news, the recent decision by the CEO of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud Al-Sabah, regarding the unified promotion system for filling positions at grades 17 and above in the oil sector, has reported increasing the maximum number of candidates from 10 to 15 for the initial selection for each vacant position.

The system takes into account practical experience in the field for candidates within the oil sector, including those who have worked in Al-Khafji Joint Operations and international companies outside Kuwait in the oil and gas industry and comprehensive services.

Exceptions are made for individuals who have not been at work for over 90 days due to reasons such as accompanying a patient who is an immediate relative, sick leave resulting from injury or accident, or illnesses resulting from surgical operations.

The recent decision by Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud Al-Sabah, CEO of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), includes an amendment to the selection period for job candidates, extending it from 3 years to 4 years.

This decision, obtained by Al-Seyassah, confirms that the new unified promotion system for positions at grades 17 and above

Continued on Page 5

NewsWatch

Kuwait wraps up 'oil spill' cleanup

KUWAIT CITY, July 25, (KUNA): Cleanup efforts to remove any forms of pollution triggered by an oil spill off Kuwait's southern waters are now complete, state-run Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) said on Thursday, hailing the "timely" manner in which the procedure was carried out.

KOC teams were quick to respond to an oil spill that spread over two kilometers on Tuesday off the southern Al-Julaiah shoreline, employing effective equipment to clean up any lingering remains, the company's spokesman Ghanim Al-Otaibi said in a statement.

□ □ □

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah II issued a decree Thursday dissolving the Lower House of Parliament as of 25 July 2024 ahead of the upcoming elections.

On April 24, the independent electoral commission set September 10 a date for the coming parliamentary elections which would hold in line with a new electoral law.

The new law, passed by the parliament in January 2022, stipulates a gradual increase in political parties' seats in parliament, starting from a percentage ranging between 30 to 50 percent, until reaching 65 percent during the next 10 years. (KUNA)

□ □ □

WASHINGTON: US Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces successfully destroyed two Iranian-backed Houthi missiles on launchers in a Houthi-controlled area of Yemen.

In a statement late Wednesday, CENTCOM said it was determined these weapons presented an imminent threat to US, coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region. (KUNA)



KUNA photo
Chief of the Army General Staff, Lieutenant General Pilot Bandar Al-Muzain, during a field inspection visit to the Marine Naval Forces base.

Chief-of-Staff visits Marine Forces

Kuwait army ready to face security threats: Al-Muzain

KUWAIT CITY, July 25, (KUNA): Chief of Staff of Kuwait Army Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain affirmed the need to be alert and ready to defend Kuwait's security against threats.

Al-Muzain made the remarks in a press statement on Thursday, after concluding a visit to the marine force, where he hailed their efforts to protect the country's marine borders and waters.

During the visit, Al-Muzain learned of the duties and tasks executed by the marine force, its preparation to face threats and the future plans and training courses for its members.

Chief of the General Staff Al-Muzain emphasized the need to achieve the highest levels of vigilance, readiness, and preparedness to safeguard the security and safety of the homeland from any external threats. He stressed the importance of continuing this approach and enhancing capabilities through ongoing training and self-development.

This statement was made in a press release issued by the General Staff following a field inspection visit by Lieutenant General Al-Muzain to the Naval Forces and its various units. He praised their role in defending the country's maritime borders and territorial waters.

Lieutenant General Al-Muzain also noted that the wise leadership pays great attention to providing all necessary resources to ensure the superiority and permanent readiness of the armed forces.

Continued on Page 5

Continued on Page 5

Shocking data on unused gov't land

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: A recent report from the Committee for Inventorying Unutilized Lands, Buildings, and Leased Sites, affiliated with government agencies, has uncovered alarming figures, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to the initial findings, 30 out of 55 entities possess unutilized lands and buildings, while 35 entities own leased sites. The total value of building lease contracts with these entities amounts to approximately 31 million dinars.

According to the key findings the report indicates that 344 plots of land and 161 buildings inside Kuwait remain unused.

Additionally, there are 8 unused plots abroad and 2 buildings outside Kuwait owned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The top offenders, according to the report are the Ministry of Electricity which leads with 117 unused plots, followed by the Ministry of Interior with 54, and the Ministry of Public Works with 45.

In terms of buildings, the Ministry of Information tops the list with 147 unused structures.

Moreover, the daily added, 14 government entities did not provide the required data, including the Public Authority for Industry and the Ministry of Education.

Given this situation, the Kuwait Municipality has been advised to reclaim unutilized lands that have exceeded the municipal decision's time frame.

The report said unused buildings should be reallocated to other government agencies or transferred to the Kuwait Municipality if not needed.

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Mahmoud Jadeded

Engineer Ahmed Al Qallaf from the Department of Quality Adjustment at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) oversees the handover procedures. For the third consecutive day, the First Group for General Trading and Contracting Company continues the initial handover procedures for the East Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential Project in collaboration with PAHW. -- See Page 8

End violence: peace envoys

'Eliminate abused children's isolation'

WASHINGTON, July 25, (KUNA): Peace ambassadors for 2024, honored by UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg's office on an agreement reached between Yemen's government and Ansarullah group on de-escalation regarding the country's banking sector and airways.

This came during an honoring dinner held by the CAF late Tuesday, in the presence of Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah, and Chairman of CAF Dr. Hassan Al-Ebra-

heem, and his deputy Fawzi al-Sultan as well as a number of dignitaries, academics, reporters and children, totaling 54, chosen out of 77,000 participants across the globe.

During their speeches, the ambassadors, children, focused on the means of combating violence and dealing with this problem in a proper way to avoid its repercussions.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait condemns Israeli Knesset's calling UNRWA as 'terrorist' outfit

KUWAIT CITY, July 25, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned on Wednesday the Israeli occupation Knesset's designation of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as a "terrorist" organization.

In a statement, the Ministry said that the Israeli move is a clear encroachment on the UN and its agencies, and a dangerous challenge to a UN humanitarian agency tasked with alleviating the sufferings of the brotherly Palestinian people in the besieged Gaza Strip and across the region.

The State of Kuwait urged again the international community to take decisive steps against these Israeli plots that aim to eliminate UNRWA and end its humanitarian and social support for Palestinian refugees and protect their right to return to their homes, it stressed.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed Wednesday the statement issued by UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg's office on an agreement reached between Yemen's government and Ansarullah group on de-escalation regarding the country's banking sector and airways.

Some 'bedoun' can go for studies, med care

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Ministry of Interior, through the General Department of Nationality and Travel Documents, has lifted the "ban and withdrawal" restrictions on bedoun passports under Article 17 for certain individuals whose cases are being thoroughly studied, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This decision follows a thorough verification process to ensure the accuracy of the cases and the completion of required paperwork.

According to responsible sources, the lifting of the restrictions is part of a review of medical cases requiring treatment abroad.

Continued on Page 5

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:33	Asr	15:30
Sunrise ..	05:04	Maghrib ..	18:45
Zohr	11:54	Isha	20:13

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

By Night: Hot to rather hot

with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	49	36

Kuwait Airport	49	36
Abdaly	49	34
Jahra	49	35
Salmiyah	46	36
Jal Aliyah	48	34
Nuwaisib	49	34
Wafra	49	32

British gov't announces £21mn support for UN agency amid Gaza crisis

UK envoy hails Kuwait's leadership in building int'l support for UNRWA

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: On Friday July 19, 2024, the United Kingdom announced it will resume funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), pledging £21 million in new funds to support its work in Gaza, the West Bank, and the wider region.

In a press statement, the British Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Belinda Lewis, said this announcement came one week after the UNRWA Pledging Conference 2024, the UK joined 117 fellow UN Member States – led by Kuwait, Jordan, and Slovenia – in signing a joint statement emphasizing their shared support for UNRWA.

UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy reiterated calls for an immediate ceasefire to end the suffering of civilians, and for aid to reach the people of Gaza without restrictions.

"I would like to acknowledge Kuwait's leadership in building support for UNRWA within the international

community, with the UK having joined 117 fellow UN Member States in signing the statement Kuwait led, alongside Jordan and Slovenia, at UNRWA's Pledging Conference in New York on July 12.

"The UK's funding for UNRWA is one element of a broader package of support we are delivering through several humanitarian organizations, including UNICEF, the UN World Food Program, the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, the British Red Cross and British charity UK-Med. The latter has established field hospitals in Al Mawasi and Deir El Balah as part of its biggest humanitarian operation in its 30-year history," added the British envoy.

"Working jointly with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and the David Nott Foundation, the UK funded and delivered specialist training for Kuwaiti doctors deploying to Gaza.

The UK Government is lobbying for greater, quicker access for aid into Gaza, supporting efforts to broker an immediate ceasefire and has pledged £15 million in financial and technical support to the Palestinian Authority," said the UK envoy.



Lewis

Kuwait economic expert eyes strategy to cut budget deficit

Need to streamline support programs: Dr Jader

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: Kuwait has faced a persistent budget deficit exceeding 33 billion dinars over the past decade, with projections indicating the deficit could reach 26 billion dinars over the next four years.

In light of this, Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Abdul Jader, an administrative advisor and economic expert, has proposed a comprehensive strategy to mitigate the fiscal shortfall and potentially achieve budget surpluses in the coming years.

Proposed solutions include improving government efficiency, rationalizing support, collaborating with the private sector, combating corruption and diversifying income sources.

Dr. Al-Abdul Jader advocates for enhancing the operational efficiency of government sectors. This includes activating performance and production while rationalizing waste without compromising service quality. A thorough review of ongoing government projects is essential to prioritize those that benefit the state treasury and citizens, while postponing or canceling non-essential projects.

Support

The expert emphasizes the need to streamline support programs to ensure they reach those who genuinely need them. This targeted approach can reduce unnecessary expenditure and optimize resource allocation.

Engaging with the private sector through economic programs and project implementation can alleviate financial pressure on the state budget. Dr. Al-Abdul Jader said while at the same time stressing the importance of pursuing feasible economic and service-oriented projects that can enhance state revenues.

This is in addition to addressing corruption within ministries is crucial to prevent the misappropriation of public funds. Dr. Al-Abdul Jader calls for strict measures to eliminate corruption, bribery, and favoritism to protect public resources.

To reduce dependency on fluctuating oil revenues, he said, Kuwait must diversify its income sources. This includes supporting small projects, revitalizing the industrial sector, stimulating trade, and investing in tourism.

Leveraging Kuwait's favorable geographical location, pleasant climate, and natural attractions can bolster the tourism sector and attract investment.

Dr. Al-Abdul Jader is optimistic that by implementing these measures, Kuwait can significantly reduce the anticipated budget deficit for the fiscal year 2024-2025 from 5.6 billion dinars to between 2.5 and 3 billion dinars.

This strategic approach aims not only to stabilize the budget but also to pave the way for future economic prosperity.

Dr. Al-Abdul Jader suggests that Kuwait's fiscal deficit could be mitigated significantly by integrating new offshore oil discoveries into the government's strategic plans.

According to the expert, the advancement of the oil industry, combined with effective implementation of proposed reforms, could lead to a budget surplus in the coming years.

Dr. Al-Abdul Jader highlighted a critical issue -- the government's failure to act on studies conducted by foreign consulting firms.

He noted that substantial amounts of money were spent on these studies, many of which were either incomplete or ignored. This not only wasted financial resources but also failed to address the underlying economic problems.

Al-Abdul Jader argued that Kuwait possesses a wealth of national experts capable of providing valuable studies and consultations.

By relying on local talent, the government could reduce costs significantly while benefiting from tailored solutions that are more aligned with Kuwait's specific needs.

He emphasized that national experts are well-versed in local conditions and could offer more practical and cost-effective recommendations compared to foreign consultants.

He pointed out that utilizing national expertise could lead to more effective and economical solutions to Kuwait's economic issues.

Other Voices

15 nations' judges issue historic advisory ruling

By Tareq Yousef Al-Shumaimry

The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It was established in June 1945 under the Charter of the United Nations and began its work in April 1946.

The headquarters of the Court are located in the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands) and among the six main organs of the United Nations, the Court is the only one that is not located in New York, which is the place where the headquarters of the United Nations are located.

The role of the Court is to settle legal disputes brought before it by states in accordance with international law, and to express advisory opinions on legal matters referred to it by accredited bodies of the United Nations and specialized agencies.

The court consists of 15 judges, who are elected for a nine-year term by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council.

The United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council have the right to request judgements and advisory opinions on "any legal matter." States may not request advisory opinions directly and United Nations organs and other specialized agencies authorized only to request an advisory opinion may also do so in relation to "legal questions arising within the scope of their activities".

This procedure is available to five United Nations organs, fifteen specialized agencies and five relevant organizations.

Specialized agencies include: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Fund for Food and Agricultural Development, International Labor Organization, International Monetary Fund, International Maritime Organization, International Telecommunication Union, UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, World Tourism Organization, Universal Postal Union, World Health Organization, WIPO: World Intellectual Property Organization, World Meteorological Organization, World Bank Group (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Finance Corporation, International Development Association).

The five relevant organizations are the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat.

Opinion

The opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Israeli-Palestinian issue was requested in December 2022 from the United Nations General Assembly.

Although there is no binding force to implement the rulings of judges or advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice, the advisory opinion of the Court has legal weight and moral authority and is often an instrument of preventive diplomacy and helps maintain peace. Advisory opinions contribute in their own way to clarifying and developing international law and thus strengthening Peaceful relations between countries.

The judges of the International Court of Justice, consisting of Lebanon, Uganda, Slovakia, France, Somalia, China, India, Japan, Germany, Australia, Brazil, Mexico, the United States of America, Romania and South Africa, voted in a historic advisory opinion on Friday, July 19, 2024, by a majority of 11 to 4, to oblige Israel to end its illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories (borders 1967) as quickly as possible.

The ICJ's comprehensive and detailed advisory opinion on the illegality of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and settlement construction represents a stark refutation of Israel's claims, and will have a profound impact for years to come.

In its consultation, the Court also considered that realizing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to an independent, sovereign state, living side by side in peace with the State of Israel within safe and recognized borders for both countries, and achieving regional stability and security for all states in the Middle East.

The International Court of Justice declared Israel's long-term occupation of the Palestinian territories "illegal" and said it amounted to actual annexation. It called on Israel to quickly withdraw from the occupied territories and ruled that the Palestinians deserve compensation for the damages they suffered during the war during 57 years of occupation that practices systematic discrimination against them.

In its many parts, the Advisory Opinion represents a devastating defeat for Israel on the merits of the opinion and may ultimately lead to demands for complete withdrawal from the occupied territories and the payment of compensation to all people who suffered harm resulting from the occupation, and others who were in favor of the Palestinian side.

While many UN reports and General Assembly resolutions make the same point, the ICJ's advisory opinion refers to international treaties and laws that are difficult for the international community to ignore.

Although the Court's advisory opinion is non-binding, it also represents a rebuke of Israel's argument that the ICJ does not have the authority to hear this issue on the grounds that UN resolutions, as well as

bilateral Israeli-Palestinian agreements, have established the correct status and framework for resolving the problem and that the conflict must be political, not legal.

The Court successfully rejected this argument, affirming that international law applies regardless of failed political efforts to reach a permanent peace agreement, especially as Israel continues to build settlements.

Ruling

The ruling took half an hour to read and brings together multiple branches of international law from the Geneva Conventions to the Hague Convention to present a case that has been clear to the Palestinians and to critics of Israeli policy in the international community for years.

In short, the International Court of Justice said that years of ambitions Israel's official and self-proclaimed construction and settlement in the occupied territories amounts to an intent to effectively annex the territory in contravention of international law and that these policies are designed to benefit the settlers and Israel, and not to benefit the Palestinians living under military administration.

Perhaps the most important thing stated in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice is that "Israel's transfer of settlers to the West Bank and Jerusalem and Israel's maintenance of their presence contravenes Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention," which stipulates "mass forcible transfer, as well as the deportation of protected persons from the occupied territories to the territory of the occupying state." Or to the territory of any other or non-occupying state, which is prohibited for any reason).

Although this consultation is not binding, it will provide sufficient ammunition for lawyers of other party's governments that are already seriously considering imposing future sanctions on officials and members of the Israeli government and military associated with Israeli settlements.

One of the important matters in the advisory opinion is that the court invalidated the legitimacy of the Israeli presence in Palestine and the occupation, and that this does not acquire prior or subsequent rights and may affect many of the decisions and votes of the rest of the countries regarding Palestine in the future. Israel is now facing a new force, which is the international courts, with their diverse rulings and recent advisory opinions against Israel. With Israel's isolation due to its behavior in the Gaza war and its being investigated by the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court on charges of committing war crimes, the stark assessment of the illegitimacy of the Israeli occupation in the long term will not only lead to the strengthening of this isolation, and in return, the number of countries supporting the Palestinian side increases after the recent events in Gaza.

War

The bottom line is that what is currently happening in Palestine in terms of war, violations, massacres, and violations of human rights, the recently issued rulings, decisions, advisory opinions, and arrest warrants, and the joining of a larger number of countries to South Africa's lawsuit against Israel, recognizing it, and Palestine obtaining more recognition from countries, is progress..

It is clear that the legal and political situation of the occupying entity after consultation will become more dangerous, fragile and weak. It is sufficient to mention in this context that a number of advisory opinions previously issued by the International Court of Justice regarding South Africa in the last century effectively contributed to the dismantling of that racist entity because it became clear that it is an entity that lacks legitimacy in international law.

It seems that the occupying entity is on its way to facing the same fate and is getting closer and closer to the moment facing the apartheid regime in South Africa. There is no doubt that the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice will provide the tools and legal foundations supporting its dismantling as a colonial and racist entity.

In accordance with the procedures expected after the issuance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, Farhan Haq, Deputy Official Spokesman for the Secretary-General of the United Nations, stated that Secretary-General António Guterres will immediately transmit the advisory opinion to the International Court of Justice regarding procedures related to the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, to the United Nations General Assembly, which consists of 193 members. It is up to the General Assembly to decide how to move forward.

Recently, international organizations and courts have moved in their favor, and despite the lack of binding force, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice has great legal weight and moral authority and is often a tool for preventive diplomacy and helps maintain peace.

□ □ □

Tariq Yousef Al-Shamimari, Advisor and Chairman of the Finance Committee, and Chairman of the General Budget Committee at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague (PCA), Observer at the Administrative Council and the International Court of Justice, and Counselor at the Embassy of the State of Kuwait to the Netherlands during this period from 2013 to 2020.

e-mail: Tareq@alshumaimry.com



KUNA photo

Ambassador Chmiel during the presentation of his credentials.

Chmiel wished success in his duties

FM receives credentials of new Czech ambassador to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, July 25, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Yahya on Wednesday received the credentials of the new Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Kuwait Juraj Chmiel, during a meeting on Wednesday at the

ministry's headquarters.

Al-Yahya wished the new ambassador success in his duties and expressed hope for further progress in the strong bilateral relations between the two countries.

Vietnamese Embassy

Embassy mourns death of Sec-Gen of the Communist Party of Vietnam

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Vietnamese Embassy on Wednesday opened a register of condolences on the death of Secretary General of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nguyen Phu Trong for two days.

Many heads of diplomatic missions, members of the community and citizens offered condolences. The embassy lowered its flags at half-mast to mourn the death of Phu Trong.

In its official statement, the embassy revealed that Phu Trong, during his nearly 60 years of Party life, made many significant and distinguished contributions to the glorious cause of the Party and the nation.

It revealed that the party and the State awarded him the 'Gold Star' medal, the badge of 55 years of party membership, and several other high decorations and medals for Vietnam and the world.

It added that the passing of Phu Trong is a great loss to the Party, the State and the Vietnamese people.

Meanwhile, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Kuwait Zhang Jianwei are among those who offered condolences. He said the deceased did a lot to develop his country and improve the lives of his people, citing the great strategic relations between China and Vietnam.

Cambodian Ambassador to Kuwait Saman Manan stressed that



Photos by Samer Shaqir
Top and above: Ambassadors signing the Condolence Book at the Vietnamese Embassy.

Phu Trong exerted tremendous efforts to develop his country.

It is worth mentioning that in recognition of his many exceptionally significant and distinguished contributions to the revolutionary process of the Party and the nation; Phu Trong was awarded several medals, including the Order of the Gold Star from the Party and the State, the Badge of Party Membership for 55 Years and the 'Lenin Prize' -- the highest award given by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Russia.

‘Need to wake up from the dream of rewriting history’

“FOR more than a century and a quarter, the Arab and Islamic world has harbored a long-standing dream. I, personally, have been living this dream for fifty years, since I was fifteen, when I began delving into the pages of history, literature, and science,” columnist **Dr Mohammed Al-Maqati** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

“This dream has taken us, Arabs and Muslims, through various places, countries, and paths, believing it to be our rightful journey towards knowledge, civilization, justice, and humanity. However, we have deviated from the true path and continue to tread a route filled with disheartening and degrading realities.

“We lost touch with our essence, identity, religion, and the right path when we forsook our originality, roots, constants, religion, and socio-cultural heritage. We imitated and glorified the West, following its lead willingly, out of ignorance, or by force. Events unfolded around us, yet most of us remained ensnared in that illusory dream, adopting the West’s deceptive slogans and doctrines such as democracy, human rights, international constitutions, and conventions, and the ideals of international security and peace.

“We neglected or were compelled to follow their ways, even though they were marauders, human traffickers, murderers, and destroyers of civilizations. Their societies were built on the plunder of countries, civilizations, and the exploitation of people from Africa, Asia, South America, and beyond. They have no true values, morals, or ideals; democracy, freedoms, and laws serve only their interests. For us, justice and equality remain mere theories, existing only in books and not in reality. They consider us as those who lost their possessions.

“Today, the events in Gaza highlight a series of happenings over the past century, starting with the Balfour Declaration and the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which perpetuated wars and border disputes. The West propagated a new form of Islam under the guise of fighting extremism and political Islam, terms they crafted for us.

“We became shallow and subservient to them, losing our identity in the process. They falsified facts and history, divided our Arab and Islamic world as bandits divide their spoils, overthrew the Caliphate, partitioned its states, instilled nationalism, and established the Arab League to ensure our disputes, estrangements, and conflicts with Islamic countries.

“They supported or encouraged those who promoted these divisive slogans until hostility among us grew severe. Now, we see ourselves fragmented into isolated entities, sinking to the depths of humanity, our divisions increasing along sectarian, tribal, and factional lines. This pattern, pushed and funded by the West, has led us to chase after illusions of democracy, human rights, and constitutions, while we erode from within, worsening with each passing day.

“The events in Gaza have unmasked the West’s false principles and slogans about democracy and freedom, revealing their hidden conspiracies and objectives to erase us from existence.

“The pretense of nationalism, Islamism, and unity has been exposed, revealing the traitors and accomplices who betrayed our identity under false pretenses. It is time for us to awaken from this dream, to resist all efforts to control our minds and falsify history, and to truly rewrite our history.

“We must reprogram ourselves to reclaim our identity and constants. The West, along with the Zionists, is weaker and uglier than we imagined, and Gaza has laid bare their malice and deceit.”

Also:

“I hope with all my heart that the senior state officials and those concerned read every line in the letter I received from young Kuwaiti men and women, business owners, so that they may understand their suffering,” columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

“The message says, ‘As Kuwaiti citizens, we are proud of all the job opportunities and support our country offers us. Over the years, we have had the opportunity to manage various projects in various fields.’ Most of us started our journey as entrepreneurs out of our love and appreciation for our country, Kuwait, and its people. A large percentage of our

clients are Kuwaitis, and our success is a testament to their trust and loyalty.

“We are very grateful to our team, who are from many nationalities, including India, the Philippines, Syria, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Serbia, and others, in addition to Kuwaitis. Together we have overcome challenges and celebrated successes, each in his own way and style, but the road to success has not always been easy in Kuwait, as anywhere else in the world.

“The entrepreneurial journey is full of challenges. The challenges we face in Kuwait are unique, especially when it comes first and foremost to the lack of clarity in the business environment, which is borne directly or indirectly by the state or the responsible party, in addition to the high rental and storage costs.

“These obstacles make it difficult for SMEs to grow naturally, unless they grow significantly, which requires significant financial burdens.

“Our intention in this message is not to criticize, complain, or grumble, but rather to highlight the need for serious, effective, and rapid change in the work environment in Kuwait to save what can be saved.

“Laws change from time to time, sometimes even daily, which forces us to start from scratch, even though scratch was difficult?

“Our love for Kuwait is unwavering, and our commitment to keeping our businesses and money in the country is steadfast.

“Our expenses, from rent to salaries and raw materials, benefit Kuwait by less than 20%, compared to our imported resources from outside the country.

“Our appeal is primarily for an improved work environment, clarity, coherence and fluidity of laws, so that we can then continue our projects without fear of financial pressure, storage and commercial spaces at reasonable prices, because these things are absolutely necessary and important for our continued growth.

“While some businesses are thriving, the majority of Kuwaiti entrepreneurs are suffering in silence, unable to express their challenges and unable to find an understanding party, who would then decide to listen to all points of view and try to find appropriate and comfortable solutions.

“A team moves to the project site and performs its role to the fullest. We are happy that the project is finished and ready to start working on it, only to be surprised by the same team giving additional comments on a later visit.

“We, the Kuwaiti youth, owners of businesses and private projects, need a solution that balances safety and realism. In other words, the recent campaigns on the safety of warehouses and kitchens deserve praise and thanks as well, but they must be accompanied by practical and quick alternatives that do not leave gaps in the labor market that would limit its capabilities and growth, while it has no power or strength.

“Those who come to Kuwait legally, come to Kuwait with big dreams, with better job opportunities, they deserve stability, but the termination of their work without providing alternatives for us, leaves us, the business owners, suddenly, without skilled and regular workers as well, which directly affects the course of our business.

“We are not against enforcing the law and correcting the situation, and this in itself deserves praise and applause, but our work is greatly disturbed by the element of surprise, which can empty the work environment of the elements of continuity.

“Production, without giving a deadline to prepare for the new working conditions, which will be accompanied by difficulties, but preparing for them and thinking of available alternatives can reduce the repercussions of such measures.

“We strongly believe in Kuwait’s potential, and we do not wish to move our business to other markets with an easier business environment, because we love our country and do not wish to work anywhere else.

“This message comes from our love for Kuwait, and our desire to see it flourish.

“Let’s work together to create an environment where entrepreneurs can succeed, businesses can grow, and economies can thrive.

“We say it with all honesty and sincerity, that this message is nothing but a sincere appeal to the community and the concerned authorities, to find practical solutions to support businesses, and to preserve the spirit of entrepreneurship among the youth in Kuwait, which was once a pioneer in business, excellence and creativity ... and will continue, God willing.”

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Mol Undersecretary Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Nawaf follows up on the registration process from the time students submit their applications until the completion of the registration and acceptance procedures.

Mol undersecretary inspects registration process at the Saad Al-Abdullah Academy

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, conducted an inspection tour at the Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences to review the registration process for applicants to the recently announced courses, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The visit, detailed in a press statement from the Security Relations and Media Department, was part of Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf’s ongoing efforts to oversee various security sectors. During the tour, he monitored

the registration process from initial application through to the completion of acceptance procedures.

Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf engaged with officials from the Registration and Admissions Department, providing feedback on ways to streamline the process for greater efficiency and ease. He commended the department’s efforts and expressed his support for their continued success.

The Undersecretary also highlighted the interest of Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and

Minister of Interior, in ensuring that the registration process is accessible to all applicants while adhering to established regulations.

Additionally, Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf visited the Academy Hospital and other affiliated facilities, praising the high-quality medical services and state-of-the-art equipment available. He emphasized the security leadership’s commitment to prioritizing the health and well-being of security personnel, ensuring they receive exceptional medical care to support their duties effectively.

KUNA photo

Meet over traffic safety held: MEW

By **Mohammed Ghanem**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: Representatives of the Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Interior, Public Authority for Roads and Transportation and Kuwait Municipality held a meeting on traffic safety.

According to the official spokesman for the Ministry of Public Works Eng. Ahmed Al-Saleh, during the meeting, they discussed many topics, including the sites’ commitment to safety procedures and special requirements, and the mechanism for removing all debris from the sides of the roads in coordination with the Kuwait Municipality.

Eng. Al-Saleh affirmed the keenness of the Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan to follow the highest standards of road safety and ensure that the sites adhere to these standards in projects currently under implementation or in future contracts.

Meanwhile, informed sources in the Ministry of Public Works revealed that the tender for the study and design of the Juvenile Court building has been brought back to the forefront again.

The sources said the ministry recently requested the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to issue the tender, indicating that the ministry’s request is considered an important step towards the implementation of the project for the Ministry of Justice, following the completion of the design phase in Sulaibiya.

Citizen loses KD5,800 in Rolex scam; brother accused of stealing KD 10K

Woman dies at Kuwait airport; expat receives ‘kill threat’

By **Munif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: A citizen, born in 1988, and working at the Defense Ministry, waited for nine months to receive the 2023 Rolex Daytona watch he ordered only to discover that he was scammed, losing KD5,800 in the bogus transaction, reports Al-Anba daily.

In his complaint, the citizen stated: “Although the agreement was to deliver the watch within two weeks, I waited for nine months only to discover that I got scammed. I filed a case to claim my rights as per the law.”

While confirming that he knows the suspect’s name and telephone number, the citizen revealed the suspect convinced him to buy the 2023 Rolex Daytona watch and promised to deliver it to him within two weeks. He transferred KD5,800 through a national bank on Sept 3, 2023 and then he waited for the watch; but he did not receive it even if nine months have passed since he made the payment.

He provided police with a copy of the bank transfer and his WhatsApp conversation with the suspect.

A fraud case was registered and investigations are ongoing to arrest the suspect.

□ □ □

Brother steals KD10,000, car: A citizen, born in 1993, accused his brother of stealing KD10,000 and his car, reports Al-Anba daily.

The citizen told police that his brother, born in 1981, broke his safety deposit box in his bedroom and stole KD10,000; in addition to his saloon vehicle that was parked in front of the house. He said his other brother, born in 1977, saw the suspect standing near the vehicle a few minutes before it disappeared. He disclosed that the theft happened at around 7:00 pm recently.

The Public Prosecution ordered registration of the theft case and forensic officers were dispatched to the citizen’s home to lift fingerprints in order to identify the culprit.

□ □ □

Arab woman dies at airport: An Arab woman died at Kuwait International Airport due to unknown reasons.

According to security sources, the woman collapsed after arriving at the Kuwait International Airport, Tuesday dawn. First Aid and other such attempts to resuscitate her failed and she was pronounced dead. Her body was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department for autopsy, and a case has been filed.

□ □ □

Assault and threat to kill issued: An expatriate, born in 1996, has filed a report under the title “Assault and Threat to Kill,” alleging that two of his fellow citizens attacked him. According to his statement, one of them physically assaulted him, while the other brandished a knife hidden in his clothing and threatened to kill him, reports Al-Anba daily. The expatriate did not disclose the reasons behind the attack. Authorities are summoning the two accused individuals for further investigation.

□ □ □

Stolen vehicle found: Securitymen found a stolen vehicle of American-make parked in an illegal manner in Salwa.

According to security sources, when police officers spotted the vehicle parked illegally, they checked its details and found that it was reported as stolen. It was immediately referred to Salwa Police Station for necessary measures.

□ □ □

Three cars stolen: A citizen, born in 1987, submitted a report to Qairawan Police Station; stating that three cars belonging to his mother were stolen, reports Al-Anba daily.

The citizen revealed he was surprised to find that the three cars were stolen when he returned from his trip. He said the total value of the stolen cars exceeds KD20,000; indicating these cars are 2002, 2015 and 2018 models.

The investigator at the police station issued a directive to distribute the detailed description of the three stolen vehicles to all security patrols.

A theft case was registered and investigations are ongoing to arrest the thief.

On the other hand, a citizen born, in 1995, submitted a report to Naseem Police Station stating that his 2011 Japan-made vehicle was stolen while it was parked in front of his house.

He discovered that the car was missing on July 9 and searched for it at the municipal garage but he did not find it.

Case No. 320/2024 was filed and investigations are underway to arrest the culprit.

Ex-MP cleared of Amiri entity charges

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Criminal Court acquitted former MP Hussein Al-Qallaf of the charge of insulting the Amiri entity and challenging the rights of His Highness the Amir.

The ruling issued by the Criminal Court in case No. 40/2024, State Security Confinement 38/2024, State Security Felonies, against former MP Hussein Al-Qallaf included the following grounds:

What the accused stated was merely criticism of the government regarding the Ministry of Interior’s regulations on organizing Hussainiyas during the month of Muharram. This criticism, whether right or wrong, did not exceed the bounds of protection guaranteed to him by the Constitution and the law. Therefore, the court found no offense or criticism directed at His Highness the Amir. The evidence presented was limited to the incident officer’s investigations and testimony, where he inferred that the statements referred to His Highness the Amir of the country.

The conclusion reached by the incident officer in his testimony was merely speculative, lacking supporting evidence or conclusive documents. This does not constitute definitive proof of the accused’s intentions behind his statements, especially considering differences in people’s interpretations, inclinations, and cultural backgrounds.

The court stated that since the investigations conducted by the detectives and the

Public Prosecution yielded no substantial findings, there is no conclusive evidence regarding the defendant’s intent in this matter. It was determined that the findings of the detectives amount to mere opinions of their conductors, which may be accurate or inaccurate.

Therefore, the court found the conclusions of those investigations unreliable, indicating insufficient evidence to firmly establish the accusations against the defendant. The court leaned towards the defendant’s defense, which argued that the statements in the audio recording were not directed at His Highness the Amir of the country but rather at the government.

Furthermore, the court reviewed and listened to the recording provided by the defendant’s defense, which is a video clip of the defendant speaking during a meeting two months prior. In that recording, he explicitly referred to His Highness as a man of the stage and praised his actions and decisions, demonstrating deep reverence and respect for His Highness.

The court explained that since the offense mentioned in this context is categorized as an intentional crime, it necessitates the presence of a general criminal intent in the perpetrator. Therefore, the perpetrator must possess both knowledge and will regarding their actions.

Specifically, the perpetrator must be aware that they have committed one of the criminal acts that involve challenging the rights of the Amir and his authority, defaming his person, or encroaching on the authority of the emir-

WEDDINGS, UPTO 140

AUDITORIUM

BUFFET

ANNIVERSARY

BIRTHDAY

KIDS CELEBRATION

WE ARE BUDGET-FRIENDLY

MUGHAL MAHAL

FAHAHEEL

Weddings | Seminars | Conferences | Celebrations

Sea view | Ample car parking

For more enquires Call: 23911174 / 23911175

Mr. Jack: 97644421

Email: fahaheel@mughalmahal.com

info@mughalmahal.com

Private sector funding confirmed

Municipal Council’s Jahra Waterfront dev’t project under scrutiny

MPW extends 4 road maintenance contracts at cost of 3.15mn dinars

Second Ring Road entrance temporarily closed

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Ministry of Public Works has secured approval from the Central Agency for Public Tenders to extend four general maintenance contracts for

roads and public squares, totaling 3.151 million dinars. These contracts are essential for addressing urgent and emergency road repairs amid the deteriorating condition of Kuwait’s road network. The extensions are necessary as the ministry proceeds with the procurement and implementation of 12 new projects aimed at a comprehensive road repair across the six governorates, with two contracts designated for each governorate.

According to sources, the cost breakdown of the extended contracts is as follows -- Northern Agricultural Areas: 447,750 dinars for a 180-day period; General Maintenance for Roads in Hawalli Governorate (Hawalli and Hawalli Square): 1.198 million dinars; General Maintenance for Main Roads and Squares in Farwaniya Governorate: 1.056 million dinars and Agricultural Areas in the Agricultural Region: 449,250 dinars for a 180-day period.

These four contracts, which total 14.98 million dinars, span two to three years. They are designed to address critical repairs needed for roads affected by potholes and loose gravel, with issues reported through the ministry’s hotline and its site monitoring teams.

Additionally, the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport (PART), has announced the temporary closure of the entrance to the Second Ring Road from Cairo Street, near the Mansouriya area, for 24 hours starting at dawn on Friday.

Furthermore, the exit from the Second Ring Road to Cairo Street, near the Qadisiyah area, will also be closed for 24 hours beginning next Saturday morning. These closures are part of coordinated efforts with the General Traffic Department. Second Ring Road alternative routes



Hawalli Governor Ali Al-Asfar during his meeting with the Hawalli Governorate Security Directorate.

Hawalli Governor commends security efforts

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: Hawalli Governor Ali Al-Asfar emphasized the importance of implementing the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fa-

had Al-Yousef, aimed at ensuring the security of citizens and residents, reports Al-Seyassah daily. This statement was made during his meeting with the Director General of Hawalli Governorate

Security Directorate, Brigadier Ziad Al-Khatib, Assistant Director General Brigadier Khaled Al-Humaidi, and Director of Operations and Patrols in Hawalli Governorate, Brigadier Hamad Al-Zuwair.

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: Head of the Technical Committee of the Municipal Council Eng. Munira Al-Ameer said the project titled “Development of the Jahra Waterfront” (Jahra Corniche) is still with the technical committee for completing the study of all its aspects, in preparation for submitting it for discussions during the main session of the Municipal Council so that the members can review the recommendations of the Technical Committee and then vote on it.

She stressed that the statements of some members of the Municipal Council that were published in the newspapers are nothing more than viewpoints with information added about the project, adding that it does not represent the final position of the project so far.

In a press statement, Eng. Al-Ameer explained that the total cost as reported in newspapers will not be covered by the state but will instead be financed by the private sector. This is the fundamental development in the project,

as it will be partnered with the private sector and fully implemented, which adds a new dimension and a new vision to Kuwait in terms of encouraging investment and adding the private sector’s point of view in large development projects.

She highlighted the importance of the project, which was associated with improving its proposal more than once until it reached the current stage, adding that such projects represent a qualitative shift in Kuwait’s development processes and implementation of its vital projects.

Eng. Al-Ameer concluded by affirming the necessity of not being hasty in declaring and disclosing the stages of this type of project without completing all stages of its study carefully.

She pointed out that decision-making regarding it is not limited only to the Municipal council and its affiliated committees, but rather it is a matter for all state agencies, especially those concerned with it, which are responsible for verifying information about it.

Ministry approves additional 284 students for foreign scholarships

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education Lamia Al-Malhem announced that the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani approved the acceptance of 284 male and female students in the vacancy plan for foreign missions of the Ministry of Higher Education, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This brings the total number of those accepted in the annual mission plan and the vacancy plan for foreign missions for the next academic year to 3609 students.

Al-Malhem has called on students to adhere to the dates that will be set for them by the Ministry, and to commit to attending at the specified time, to ensure the speedy completion of their procedures to join the scholar-



Lamia Al-Malhem – Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education

ship locations, stressing the necessity and importance of following the Ministry’s official social media accounts.

Dr. Al-Wasmi recognizes key contributors

Minister lauds Hajj delegation’s success

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Muhammad Al-Wasmi yesterday honored the members of this year’s Hajj delegation and its affiliated committees, and representatives of the expeditions.

In a speech he delivered during the ceremony, Dr. Al-Wasmi said, “We exemplify a noble virtue, one of the lofty virtues of Islam and a fundamental principle of rational management, which is to reward the benefactor with the best reward and celebrate their contributions, in accordance with the approach of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (PBUH).

“If the significance of deeds in Islam corresponds to their standing with Al-mighty Allah, then consider the ritual of Hajj. It stands as one of the most significant rituals, the greatest deeds, and the most honorable obligations, uniting the sanctity of time and place.

“Our ceremony is aimed to honor the Hajj campaigns and their committees for this year as well as to send a message of thanks to the members of the Kuwait Hajj delegation to the Holy Lands in recognition of the success in the wonderful organization and advance preparation, good selection, division of labor, quality of service, facilitating matters, and representing Kuwait in foreign work with an honorable face, distinguished performance, and work in the spirit of one team.”

Dr. Al-Wasmi expressed his aspiration in the coming years for more development, creativity and innovation, and for preserving the gains achieved by the Ku-

wait Hajj delegation and the bright image that everyone bears witness to, and which is in the interest of developing campaigns.

He said, “I will support every thoughtful proposal and promising project that contributes to the renaissance of our ministry, works to improve Islamic work, and is in the best interests of Kuwait and its desired civilizational renaissance, based on the directives of His Highness the Amir of the country Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad and his faithful Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled.”

In this regard, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Bader Al-Mutairi expressed his happiness at meeting with the members of the Kuwait Hajj delegation and its committees for the year 1445 AH, corresponding to the year 2024 AD.

He stressed that the Kuwait Hajj delegation and its expeditions are considered among the best organized official missions.

During the ceremony, Al-Mutairi praised the effective coordination that “took place between all concerned parties and the organization, with care that exceeded all expectations. This was noted in precise detail in the mission’s report issued by it.

“This meeting of ours is aimed to reveal to you our praise on our tongues, our love in our hearts, and our action and conduct, so that we can be in our ministry, under the auspices of Minister Dr. Muhammad Al-Wasmi, in the spirit of one family surrounded by the spirit of brotherhood.”



Minister Dr. Al-Wasmi honoring the members of this year's Hajj delegation.

Wafra Real Estate to develop site

CITRA begins Jaber Al-Ahmad Tech City

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: Acting Chairman of the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Abdullah Al-Ajmi has confirmed the beginning of the first stage of the Technology City project in Jaber Al-Ahmad City, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Ajmi disclosed that CITRA signed a consulting contract with Wafra Real Estate Company to develop the land allocated for the Technology City project; measuring 140,000 square meters. He said this is an important step toward the sustainable development of

this area to make it an advanced center for innovation and investment in information technology.

He stressed that developing this area contributes to enhancing CITRA’s capabilities to provide advanced technological services, and create an environment conducive for technology companies and service providers.

He added the Technology City will be an oasis of knowledge; the headquarters of international technology companies, data centers, technology training centers; and a way to motivate young people working in this field.

JULY

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 60.984 net	BHD 136.198 net
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 76.230 net	BHD 170.247 net

Promo period from 23rd June to 31st July 2024

Terms & conditions apply*



KUNA photo
Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya during the meeting with the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jassem Al-Budaiwi

Kuwait’s FM meets GCC Secretary General

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met with GCC Secretary General Jasem Al-Budaiwi on Thursday, with the presence of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The two sides discussed joint Gulf work, in the light of Kuwait’s chairing and hosting of the next GCC summit. (KUNA)

Visa-free access to 99 nations

Kuwaiti passport ranks 3rd in Arab World

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Kuwaiti passport ranked third on the list of the most powerful passports among Arab countries and 49th in the world for the year 2024, as it entitles its holder to enter 99 countries without a visa, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to data from Henley & Partners that specializes in immigration and residency affairs; the United Arab Emirates (UAE) passport topped the list of the most powerful Arab passports and ranked ninth in the world, as it allows entry to 185 countries without a visa.

The Qatari passport ranked second in the Arab world and 46th globally, allowing entry to 107 countries without a visa; the Saudi passport ranked fourth in the Arab world and 56th globally, allowing entry to 88 countries without a visa; the Bahraini passport ranked fifth in the Arab world and 57th globally, allowing entry to 87 countries without a visa; the Sultanate of Oman passport ranked sixth in the Arab world and 58th internationally, allowing entry to 86 countries.

Over 1.3mn passengers used Kuwait airport in June: DGCA

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has announced that the Kuwait International Airport saw a total passenger traffic of 1,350,973 in June, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This marks a one percent increase in passenger numbers compared to the same period last year.

Abdullah Al-Rajhi, Acting Deputy Director General for Aviation Safety, Air Transport, and Civil Aviation Security, reported that while pas-

senger traffic rose, aircraft traffic saw a decrease of 3 percent.

However, air cargo traffic increased by 2 percent during the same period.

The data reveals that in June, the airport handled 580,718 arriving passengers and 770,255 departing passengers. The total number of flights operated to and from the airport in June was 10,998, down from 11,362 flights in June 2023.

Based on these rankings, the Gulf passports are the strongest in the Arab world; while those in the last places among Arab passports are Somalia, Yemen, Iraq and Syria.

At the global level, the Singaporean passport topped the list, as it allows its holder to enter 195 countries without a visa. Four European countries -- France, Germany, Italy and Spain along with Japan are in second place.

Ministry of Education urged to comply

CSC enforces employment nomination rule

By Abdul-Rahman Al-Shammari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) urged the Ministry of Education to not reject any candidate from the Central Employment System, in compliance with the circular issued in this regard, unless the candidate does not visit the ministry within 30 days from the date of his nomination.

CSC Chairman Issam Al-Rubaian has instructed the ministries, government departments and agencies to not reject nominated job applicants registered in the system in compliance with the circular that is based on the sovereign decision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah dated Feb 18 and published in Issue No. 1676 of Kuwait Al-Youm Article Two thereof, unless he does not visit the agency where he is nominated within 30 days of his nomination.

The decision obliges all State agencies to submit their manpower needs to the CSC for approval in accordance with the regulations.

In a memorandum on the recent nominations, the CSC called on all other government agencies covered by the system to adhere to the decision.

Al-Rubaian added: “Since the candidates for your agency were nominated in accordance with the decision that the CSC took in its meeting No. 1/2024, during which it approved the manpower needs plan received from your agency, and after verifying the number of vacancies in the financial grades allocated in your agency’s budget, as well as your agency’s need for various jobs and specializations entered by your agency through the integrated civil service systems; please adhere to the decision in this regard.”

Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs and Administrative Development at the Ministry of Education instructed the assistant undersecretary for Public Education to adhere to the central employment regulations in line with the sovereign decision of His Highness the Amir and the CSC’s letter dated July 8, 2024 about CSC Circular No. 4/2024 on the approval of the manpower needs of all government agencies covered by the system.

KPC &

Continued from Page 1

will be implemented immediately, overriding any conflicting regulations. Until a new evaluation mechanism is developed by the Human Resources and Comprehensive Services Sector, the “360 degree” evaluation method will be used on a temporary basis.

In addition, KPC has retained its position among the top 10 brands in the Middle East and remains the most valuable brand in the local market. According to the BrandDirectory’s annual report on the most valuable and powerful brands in the Middle East, KPC ranked tenth with a brand value of \$4.4 billion.

CPI inflation

Continued from Page 1

To address these issues, the report suggests several solutions, including -- improving measurement and analysis tools, updating the Household Income and Expenditure Survey more frequently, implementing effective monetary policies to manage inflation and enhancing the quality of public services and reducing import costs.

Ignoring these inflationary pressures could lead to further economic and social challenges, including decreased consumer purchasing power and increased pressure on the national currency.

‘Eliminate abused

Continued from Page 1

Some children highlighted victims of violence and bullying, and called on schools to pay much attention to treat such issues.

Oral and emotional abuse is an integrated part of violence that has painful

Kuwait army

Continued from Page 1

He prayed to Allah to preserve the homeland and maintain the blessings of security and safety under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and his loyal Crown Prince.

He expressed pride in the efforts of the Naval Forces members, praising their high efficiency and dedication,

which reflect the spirit of commitment and belonging that characterizes our armed forces.

During the visit, he received a comprehensive briefing on the tasks and duties performed by the naval personnel, including the degree of readiness, future plans, and training and qualification programs for its members.

Some ‘bedoun’

Continued from Page 1

The sources emphasized that key conditions for removing the ban for students residing illegally include Certificate of Continuity of Study (a document confirming that the student is actively enrolled in their educational program); Cultural Office Certificate (a certification from the cultural office proving the student’s registration); Educational Certificate (proof of the student’s academic standing) and Copy of Residence (documentation of the student’s residence in the country where they are studying).

This move aims to facilitate the academic progress of bedoun students and address their educational needs, while ensuring compliance with the newly established conditions.

Shocking data

Continued from Page 1

A centralized GIS system is recommended to manage detailed data on all government-owned lands and buildings.

This is in addition to new regulations to control rental practices from the private sector and set maximum rental periods.

Procedures should also be established for disposing of unused lands and buildings outside Kuwait.

PAHW awards ‘tender’ for South Sabah Al-Ahmad City roadworks

AVIC Int’l Holding wins \$90mn deal

By Mohammed Al Musleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare has awarded the tender for the construction and completion of roadworks and infrastructure networks for 6,568 housing units across four residential suburbs in the South Sabah Al-Ahmad City project. The project encompasses suburbs N1, N2, N3, and N11.

Amina Al-Awadhi, Deputy Director General for Control and Information Systems Affairs at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, announced that the awarded tender includes the implementation of multiple infrastructure components.

These include the installation of the first, second, and third asphalt layers for secondary and main roads within the suburbs.

Additionally, the project will cover the development of rainwater, sewage, irrigation, treated water, and fresh water networks, along with necessary traffic-related works.

The scope of the tender also includes civil works for telephone networks, road lighting, electrical cable culverts, irrigation tank buildings, and electrical substations.

The successful bidder, AVIC International Holding Corporation, was awarded the contract based on offering the lowest prices among eight companies that submitted bids.

The total value of the tender amounts to 90,011,955 dinars, and the implementation period is set at 900 days.

The winning company met all required conditions, including the lowest bid price, accounting and technical specifications, legal requirements, and financial credit for the fiscal year 2024-2025.

الطرق السيارة بالمغرب Autoroutes du Maroc

NATIONAL COMPANY OF THE HIGHWAYS OF MOROCCO (ADM)

Redevelopment works on the highway section between the Mohammedia west interchange and the Ain Harrouda junction

OPEN INVITATION TO TENDER N°61 / 24 / S

In accordance with ADM’s provisional purchasing program for the year 2024 which was published in the newspaper “Al Bayane” on March 12, on **September 12th, 2024 at 11:00 am**, it will be proceeded in the offices of the National Company of Motorways of Morocco, with the opening of the envelopes relating to the call for tenders opened for redevelopment works on the highway section between the Mohammedia west interchange and the Ain Hadduda junction

The opening sessions will be held in public session.

ADM makes its market portal available to competitors available at: <https://achats.adm.co.ma>. The terms of use of the ADM Markets Portal are accessible from said portal.

Competitors can consult and download free of charge, and only from the ADM portal, the files of calls for tenders and competitions, as well as the documents and additional information relating thereto.

The provisional guarantee is set at: Six million dirhams (6.000.000,00).

The content as well as the presentation of the bidding documents should be in conformity with the provisions of ADM Contract Regulations.

The electronic submission of envelopes is the only way to participate in the invitation to tender. Receipt of paper submissions is not authorized. Competitors are required to submit their submissions only electronically through the ADM Marketplace Portal. Only envelopes submitted through ADM’s dematerialized purchasing platform will be taken into consideration.

The procedures for submitting envelopes are defined in the consultation files.

The supporting documents to provide are those stipulated under Article 23 of ADM Contract Regulations and specified in the Consultation Regulations.

Moroccan candidates shall submit the certificate of qualification and classification delivered by the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport, Logistics and water.

This certificate completes the technical file for Moroccan competitors.

The qualification and classification required according to the system of qualification and classification of the construction and public works are given in the Table below :

Sector	Qualification	Rank
B- Road works	B2 - special road earthworks B3 - Road sanitation works and environmental treatment B5 - Untreated seats and surface coatings B6 - Hot treated and coated seats	S
D-construction of structures	D2 - Exceptional reinforced concrete structures D3 - Standard prestressed concrete structures D4 - Exceptional structures in prestressed concrete	1

View our notices of calls for tenders and competitions at: www.adm.co.ma.
ADM market regulations can be downloaded from the same address.



Manal Al-Baghdadi, Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs during her presentation.

Information Ministry organizes ‘Child Protection Law’ program

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Administrative Development and Training Department, in cooperation with the Legal Affairs Sector of the Ministry of Information, held a training program titled ‘Child Protection Law’ from July 23 to July 25, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The program took place in the radio hall and featured a presentation by the Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs, Manal Al-Baghdadi.

This course was part of the “media” strategy aimed at raising awareness and focusing on the human element.

It aimed to educate legal and program staff about the importance of children’s rights, the regulations governing the rights of working women and children, the procedures for reporting births and deaths, and the legal timelines for such reporting, in accordance with Law No. 21 of 2015.

KU announces registration, withdrawal schedule for 1st semester of 2024-2025

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Kuwait University has announced the time plan for registration, withdrawal, and addition operations for the first semester of the 2024-2025 academic year, reports Al-Jarida daily.

□ The registration period for courses will run from August 6 to 16, with a maximum of 14 academic units allowed, except for those expected to graduate, who will follow prior appointments.

□ The period for withdrawal and addition is scheduled from August 26 to 31, with a maximum of 17 units, again excluding those expected to graduate in the second and summer semesters, according to prior appointments. The waiting lists will be canceled on the first Sunday of September.

□ The withdrawal and addition period will take place from September 2 to 4, for students registered in fewer than 12 units, allowing them to register up to 14 units without prior appointments.

For students expected to graduate, the period for submitting forms to complete the academic schedule will be from September 4 to 10.

These forms are to be filled out electronically and remotely. For non-graduating students registered in fewer than 12 academic units, the period for submitting forms will be from September 4 to 11.

□ The final withdrawal and addition period will be from September 15 to 21, according to the registration system. The first semester of the 2024-2025 academic year will commence on Sunday, September 15.

World News Roundup

Europe

Macron regains prestige with Paris Olympics: Emmanuel Macron has pledged to make France shine during the Olympics. Weaker than ever at home after recent elections, the French president hopes the Paris Games also will help his own star glitter again.

The Olympics are the best way to convince the world to “choose France,” Macron said this week, trotting out a motto geared toward boosting foreign investment in the country. “It will promote our landscapes, our facilities, our savoir-faire as well, our gastronomy.”

Macron’s decision last month to call early legislative elections plunged France into a political turmoil. The vote left the National Assembly, the influential lower house of parliament, with no dominant political bloc for the first time in modern France.

The French president said ministers from his centrist alliance would keep handling the government’s work in a caretaker role at least until the end of the Olympics to avoid creating “disorder” when the world has its eyes on France.

The Elysee Palace said Macron will express “the ambition of showcasing the entire France, its natural and cultural heritage, its art de vivre and its top-class athletes, to an audience of over 4 billion television viewers, including over 1 billion for the opening ceremony alone.”

In addition, Macron and International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach have championed a summit meant to encourage world leaders and international organizations to support sports-related initiatives in areas like education, health, equality, inclusion and sustainable development. (AP)

Italy’s PM to visit China: At the invitation of Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni will pay an official visit to China from July 27 to 31, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning announced on Thursday. (Xinhua)

UK police officer suspended: A British police officer was suspended from all duties Thursday after a video was posted on social media that appeared to show an officer kicking and stamping on the head of a man lying on the floor of a terminal at Manchester Airport.

Greater Manchester Police said the incident occurred while police were trying to break up a fight at the airport’s Terminal Two on Wednesday. Three officers were assaulted, with one suffering a broken nose and another requiring hospital treatment, the force said.

“We understand the deep concerns that have been widely raised with us, and will continue to meet and discuss these feelings with Greater Manchester residents and elected representatives, whilst this independent investigation takes place,” Greater Manchester Police said in a statement.

The incident comes amid rising distrust of police in Britain following allegations of excessive force used against ethnic minorities and scandals involving two serving police officers who were arrested for rape and murder. An independent investigation commissioned by the government recently found that London’s Metropolitan Police Service was institutionally racist, homophobic and misogynistic.

The Manchester officer was suspended after crowds gathered outside a police station to protest police violence. Police said the demonstration concluded “without incident.” (AP)

More than 100 flights cancelled in Germany: Germany’s busiest airport canceled more than 100 flights Thursday as environmental activists launched a coordinated effort to disrupt air travel across Europe at the height of the summer holiday season to highlight the threat posed by climate change.

Frankfurt Airport said flights were halted for safety reasons after climate activists breached security fences, triggering a response from police, firefighters and airport security officers. All runways were back in operation by 7:50 am local time, it said. About 140 flights have been cancelled so far, but further disruptions are expected throughout the day, the airport said.

Environmental groups said they planned to target airports around Europe this summer to remind people about the link between fossil fuels, such as those used by airliners, and climate change. The groups are calling for governments around the world to end the extraction and burning of fossil fuels by 2030.

Climate data showed that Monday was the hottest day ever recorded as human-caused climate change continues to drive unprecedented heat and growing weather extremes. Global investments in planet-warming oil and gas are expected to increase by 7% this year, according to the International Energy Agency. (AP)

Germany and UK ink deal: Germany and the United Kingdom hammered out Wednesday a defense declaration, the first of its kind between the two NATO allies, to buttress cooperation and coordination in defense development and procurement.

The deal, signed by German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius and UK Defense Secretary John Healey in Berlin, includes calls to bolster the defense industries in both countries, cooperate more closely on the development and procurement of weapons, and coordinate “even better” on support for Ukraine, Pistorius said.

The pact would “strengthen the European pillar within NATO and thus NATO as a whole,” Pistorius told a joint press conference.

For his part, Healey said the deeper cooperation in the defense sector would boost both nations’ security as well as “national economies.”

“Our new defense declaration between the UK and Germany will kickstart a deep, new defense relationship, built on our nations’ shared values,” Healey said.

He stressed that the UK new government is getting on with the job and resetting relationships with European Allies to make Britain secure at home and strong abroad.

Britain’s Defense Ministry said the two nations would also work together to tackle security challenges such as in the cyber domain. (KUNA)

Spain SC challenges constitutionality of law: Spain’s Supreme Court on Wednesday challenged the constitutionality of an amnesty law pushed through by the government earlier this year to help hundreds, potentially thousands, of Catalan separatists.

The Supreme Court cannot strike down the amnesty, but it has asked the nation’s Constitutional Court to weigh in.

Spain passed the amnesty law in March to help the separatists in legal trouble for their roles in a failed 2017 secession attempt by elected officials of the northeastern region.

The Supreme Court said it believes that the amnesty violates the principle of equality before the law guaranteed in Spain’s constitution. It said, for example, the amnesty pardons violent acts committed for the cause of Catalan independence, such as stone-throwing at protests, while the same acts committed for other ends, political or not, are punishable.

The court also argued that the amnesty violates the constitutional principle of legal certainty by creating an expectation that other political activists could break the law without punishment.

The Madrid-based court also took issue with preamble of the amnesty law that the amnesty would mend relations between separatists and non-separatists, pointing to the lack of remorse shown by the leaders of the separatist movement. (AP)

EU exec slams rule of law developments: The European Union’s executive commission Wednesday criticized rule of law developments in Hungary, Italy and Slovakia, but welcomed reforms in Poland and Spain in its latest democracy health check across the 27-nation bloc.

Across the board, EU countries had fully or partly addressed about two thirds of recommendations made by the commission in 2023, the EU executive said in its latest annual report on the state of the judiciary, anti-corruption efforts, press freedom and civil society.

“Protecting the rule of law is a continuous work,” European Commission Vice President Vera Jourová told journalists in Brussels. “We see that further action is still needed, especially where systemic issues and backsliding occur in some countries.”

Hungary had made no progress implementing any of the seven reform recommendations set out by the commission last year. They covered issues such as the prosecution of high-level corruption, the independence of public media and the health of civil society. (AP)



US Republican presidential candidate former president Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally in Charlotte, NC, on July 24. (AP)

Politics

Biden delivers solemn call to defend democracy

Trump turns his full focus on Harris

CHARLOTTE, N.C., July 25, (AP): Donald Trump unleashed a barrage of attack lines Wednesday against his likely new opponent, US Vice President Kamala Harris, whom he called his “new victim to defeat” and accused of deceiving the public about President Joe Biden’s ability to run for a second term.

The rally in Charlotte, North Carolina marked his first public campaign event since Biden dropped out of the 2024 matchup and Harris became the Democrats’ likely nominee. The rally concluded minutes before Biden addressed the nation to explain he dropped his reelection bid to “pass the torch” to Harris, who is 22 years younger than him.

“So now we have a new victim to defeat: Lyin’ Kamala Harris,” Trump said, labeling her “the most incompetent and far-left vice president in American history.”

Trump called her a “radical left lunatic” and said she was “crazy” for her positions on abortion and on immigration. He also mispronounced her first name repeatedly, a denigrating approach to the first Black woman and person of South Asian descent likely to lead a major party’s presidential ticket.

Trump’s speech signaled the next stage for the campaign may be especially brutal and personal, even as some GOP leaders warned Republican allies not to use overtly racist and sexist attacks against Harris.

Trump ramped up his criticism of the vice president since Biden’s abrupt departure, calling Harris “the same as Biden but much more radical.”

Blamed

He blamed her for what he portrays as the Biden administration’s failures, particularly security along the US-Mexico border. On Wednesday, the speakers who appeared on stage before the Republican nominee attacked Harris’ record on the border, highlighting she was tasked with leading a White House effort to tackle migration issues. Harris’ name was met with boos several times during the speeches.

“She was assigned that, she was given that task, and she failed,” said Brandon Judd, former president of the

National Border Patrol Council, the union that represents agents.

Trump also accused Harris of being just as responsible for Biden’s policies at the US-Mexico border, which saw illegal crossing arrests reach record highs at the end of 2023 and repeated his pledge to conduct mass deportations with the help of local police.

“Kamala’s deadly destruction of America’s borders is completely and totally disqualifying. She shouldn’t be allowed to run for president with what she’s done,” Trump told supporters.

Trump has hedged on plans for an expected debate with Harris, first saying that he wanted Fox News, not ABC, to host the matchup he had originally scheduled for September with Biden. On Tuesday, Trump appeared to tweak that message again, saying on a call with reporters that he’d like to debate Harris “more than once” but not committing to appearing at the debate currently on the books and saying he’d only agreed to debate Biden twice, not Harris.

Also:

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden on Wednesday delivered a solemn call to voters to defend the country’s democracy as he laid out in an Oval Office address his decision to drop his bid for reelection and throw his support behind Vice President Kamala Harris.

Insisting that “the defense of democracy is more important than any title,” Biden used his first public address since his announcement Sunday that he was stepping aside to deliver an implicit repudiation of former president Donald Trump. He did not directly call out Trump, whom he has called an existential threat to democracy. The 10-minute address also gave Biden a chance to try to shape how history will remember his one and only term in office.

“Nothing, nothing can come in the way of saving our democracy,” Biden said, in a somber coda to his 50 years spent in public office. “And that includes personal ambition.”

It was a moment for the history books - a US president reflecting before the nation on why he was taking the rare step of voluntarily handing off

power. It hasn’t been done since 1968, when Lyndon Johnson announced he would not seek reelection in the heat of the Vietnam War.

“I revere this office,” Biden said.

“But I love my country more.”

Trump, just an hour earlier at a campaign rally, revived his baseless claims of voter fraud in the 2020 presidential election, which he lost to Biden. His refusal to concede inspired the Capitol insurrection of Jan 6, 2021, which Biden called “the worst attack on our democracy since the Civil War.”

Biden skirted the political reality that brought him to that point: His abysmal performance in a debate against Trump nearly a month ago, where he spoke haltingly, appeared ashen and failed to rebut his predecessor’s attacks, sparked a crisis of confidence from Democrats.

INDIANAPOLIS: US Vice President Kamala Harris told members of the historically Black sorority Zeta Phi Beta on Wednesday that “we are not playing around” and asked for their help in electing her president in November.

“In this moment, I believe we face a choice between two different visions for our nation, one focused on the future, the other focused on the past,” she said in a speech three days after launching her bid for the White House. “And with your support, I am fighting for our nation’s future.”

Voters in Indiana haven’t backed a Democratic presidential candidate in nearly 16 years. But Harris, a woman of Black and South Asian descent, was speaking to a group already excited by her historic status as the likely Democratic nominee and one that her campaign hopes can expand its coalition.

On Wednesday, she thanked the room full of women for their work electing her vice president, and Joe Biden president. “And now, in this moment, our nation needs your leadership once again,” she said.

In a memo released Wednesday, campaign chair Jen O’Malley Dillon pointed to support among female, non-white and younger voters as critical to success.

court-authorized law enforcement activity in Manhasset.”

Sun and her husband, Chris Hu, share the \$3.5 million home in a gated community on Long Island called Stone Hill. The search was first reported by The New York Times. Neither Sun or Hu returned voicemails seeking comment from the Associated Press on Wednesday. The couple purchased the home in 2021. Earlier this year, they placed the home in a trust, records show. (AP)

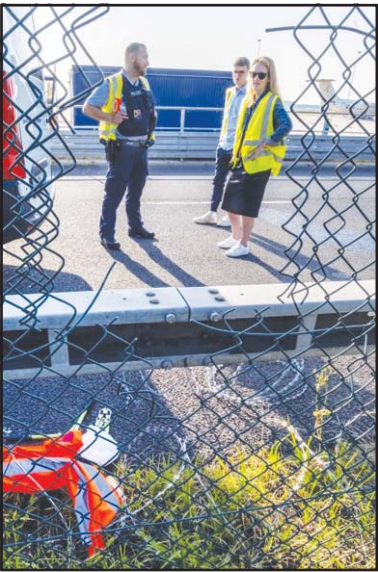
Hiker falls to death: A bucket-list climb to the top of Yosemite National Park’s Half Dome turned to tragedy for a young Arizona woman who fell to her death during a descent forced by a sudden storm that pounded the iconic granite monolith this month.

Grace Rohloff, 20, an experienced hiker and Arizona State University student, died on July 13, the news organization SFGATE reported Tuesday.

Rohloff was hiking with her father, Jonathan Rohloff, after securing one of the limited daily permits required to climb Half Dome and making the drive from Phoenix to Yosemite.

Half Dome rises to 8,800 feet (2,682 meters) above sea level. The hike is a 16-mile (26-kilometer) round trip with an elevation gain of 4,800 feet (1,463 meters).

The last 400 feet (122 meters) of the climb is done with the help of cables supported by metal posts that essentially act as handrails. (AP)



Police officers take a look at a hole in a fence near a runway at the airport in Frankfurt, Germany, on July 25. Climate activists left their equipment back after cutting the hole and glued themselves to the ground blocking air traffic for several hours. (AP)



Hochul



Trudeau

North America

Jasper wildfire burns structures: One of two raging wildfires menacing the town of Jasper in the Canadian Rockies’ largest national park roared into town Wednesday and began burning buildings.

Jasper National Park officials said the fire entered the southern edge of the community Wednesday evening and crews were battling multiple structural fires and working to protect key infrastructure. There were significant losses in some areas, they said.

Forest firefighters and others without self-contained breathing apparatuses were told to evacuate to the nearby town of Hinton, with structural firefighters staying behind.

Parks Canada spokesperson James Eastham told reporters outside Jasper that the town is filled with smoke and there “has been structural loss.”

“At this point I can’t confirm how many, locations or specific structures. The fire continues to burn,” he said.

Parks Canada said firefighters are working to save “as many structures as possible and to protect critical infrastructure, including the wastewater treatment plant, communications facilities, the Trans Mountain Pipeline and others.”

Jasper is being menaced by fires from the north and south, and the town’s 5,000 residents -- along with 20,000 more park visitors -- fled on short notice late Monday night when the fires flared up.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said they are “mobilizing every necessary resource available.” Alberta Premier Danielle Smith said she was “heartbroken.” (AP)

US military intercepts planes: The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) announced Wednesday intercepting two Russian and Chinese aircraft near Alaska.

The fighter jets intercepted Chinese and Russian bombers off the coast of Alaska coming from China and Russia, NORAD said in a statement.

“Detected, tracked, and intercepted two Russian TU-95 and two Chinese H-6 bombers military aircraft operating in the Alaska Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ),” the statement added.

The aircraft did not enter the sovereign airspace of the US and Canada as they remained in international airspaces, noted the statement. (KUNA)

Home of gov’s ex-aidé searched: The FBI searched the Long Island home of a former aide to New York Gov Kathy Hochul on Tuesday.

The former staffer, Linda Sun, has not been accused of wrongdoing, and an FBI spokesman declined to release details beyond confirming that agents “conducted



Security personnel gather near the scene of a car explosion in Moscow, Russia on July 24. Two people were injured in a car explosion in Moscow, local media reported on Wednesday. The explosion was caused by the detonation of an unidentified object in a car parked in the courtyard of a residential building in northern Moscow, Russia’s TASS News Agency quoted spokesperson of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs Irina Volk as saying. (Xinhua)

Special Report

Icon of perseverance defying odds

From fear to fortitude ... Ghafari tells tale of survival

By Chaitali B. Roy
Special to the Arab Times

In June, as the Afghan cricket team stormed into the World Cup Cricket T20 semi-finals, hundreds and thousands of Afghan men rushed out into the streets in Afghanistan in celebration. But as one-half of Afghanistan celebrated, its other half remained ensconced in darkness. Since August 2021, after the US and NATO forces left Afghanistan and the Taliban swept into Kabul, a reign of terror descended on Afghan women. Forced and early marriage, domestic violence, suicide, drug addiction, and an eradication of Afghan women from all aspects of public life followed.

Afghanistan's story as a nation, its people, and its women is compelling. In 1919, Afghan women were granted the right to vote, just after a year when British women got their suffrage. The first school for girls in Afghanistan opened in 1920. In 1953, the Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Mohammed Daoud Khan, introduced social reforms that allowed women a more public presence. By 1957, Afghan women were allowed to attend university and join the workforce. In the 1970s, the Afghan government raised the marriage age for women from 18 to 21, abolished polygamy and introduced compulsory education. But in 1995, the Taliban emerged from the shadows of darkness and rose to power on false promises of peace. The effect was devastating on Afghan women. By the end of the Taliban's first rule in 2001, less than one million Afghan children were in school, and none of them were girls. The total absence of freedom for Afghan women and their complete invisibility from public life continues after 2021.

It is in this context of the total invisibility of Afghan women and their resistance to the Taliban's total misogyny, that 'In Her Hands' a documentary centred on Zarifa Ghafari, the former female mayor of Maidan Shahr, a district in Afghanistan, becomes more poignant. Broadcast on Netflix and produced by Hillary and Chelsea Clinton, and directed by Tamana Ayazi and Marcel Mettelsiefen, the film centres on Ghafari, a firebrand who has long waged a war for women's education and women's rights in Afghanistan and is now living in exile in Germany.

'In Her Hands' is a close portrait of the youngest female mayor in Afghanistan. In this film, Ghafari shares her challenging journey in a patriarchal society where women are hardly heard, her campaign for mayor of Maidan Shahr, its repercussions, including character assassination and stiff opposition, her inability to take office despite winning, and the support she received from her then fiancé, partner, and now husband.

In an exclusive interview with Arab Times, Zarifa Ghafari shares her life journey, the trials and tribulations, and her personal experience of living under the Taliban regime. She highlights the constant fear and insecurity faced due to attacks and threats. She emphasizes the importance of perseverance and re-

silience in the face of adversity and articulates the need for international support and recognition of Afghan women's achievements in the face of political instability.

Arab Times: I would like to start with your childhood. What are your strongest memories of your childhood?

Zarifa: I was a Kabul girl. You know the Kabul girls or boys are different. They feel they are very different from other children living around the country, especially in the countryside.

AT: Why do you say that children in Kabul are different?

Zarifa: The country's centre differed from the countryside. Despite living in the country's centre, having different opportunities than other students living in the countryside, having an educated mom and dad, and having a middle-class life, life for me as a child was always challenging.

As the eldest child of my family, I had to struggle as a girl. As a six-year-old, I had to take care of the rest of my siblings; I had to cook, wash, bake bread, and do everything, including the financial stuff of the family. Despite that, I needed to be first in my class, and I needed to be smart in my studies. If not, my colonel and military officer dad would be tough on me. He was always too tough with me than my siblings. And now, looking back, I feel that he knew that one day, he wouldn't be there, and he wanted someone to be tough enough to handle everything.

AT: So, in a way, he was training you?

Zarifa: And for that, I am thankful to him.

AT: I'm sure you were not thankful then, right? I think, as adults, we see things differently.

Zarifa: At that time, I wondered why my dad was doing this to me. Why is he treating me differently? Why is he taking my brothers everywhere with him but not me? Why am I being told to mind my walk, smile, words, and clothes? Go here. Don't go there. But my brothers were free to walk into a room full of men, sit with them, discuss and laugh, and make fun and jokes. For me, it was always, why is it so different? That's how I started my activism. But after losing my dad, I realized I was enough. I was strong enough to be there, to keep pushing my family forward, and to give them the support and the backup they needed.

AT: Is it true that you studied in secret as a child?

Zarifa: As a child? Definitely. As a four-year-old girl, I studied in a hidden classroom.

AT: What was the reason for that?

Zarifa: It was during the Taliban. My mom told me that I held a notebook on my head to avoid the sun coming into my face, and I would proudly walk to my school. Later, we moved to another area of Kabul, and after a year, the Taliban was gone. By then, I was six years old and began attending school openly.

AT: So suddenly, you were free to attend school?

Zarifa: No one went to school or university, and suddenly, everything changed 360 degrees. It was



Zarifa Ghafari

the same thing on the 15th of August 2021, when the Taliban took over Afghanistan again. No one was prepared for what happened. That morning, I was going to my office. My family told me not to go. But I was like, no worries. Nothing will happen.

AT: It was a big betrayal.

Zarifa: It does seem like that now.

AT: Why do you say you were unprepared for what happened?

Zarifa: It's not that we never thought it would happen, but we didn't see it coming so fast. From the day the agreement was signed between the Taliban and the UN in Doha, from that same day, we knew it was coming. Because we were people at the core of things, we knew that something was about to happen, that they were selling us out. We lost everything we achieved in the past 20 years. The US seemed to make this deal to wash their hands off us.

In July 2021, Blinken was secretly in Kabul. Five of us from different walks of life met him at the US Embassy. I told him face to face, don't do this. But the response was don't worry, we are fine. We are making sure that everything is under control. And then the opposite happened. On August 14 that midnight, a huge section of the US military left. No one knew. They just left in the middle of the night. We knew it would happen, but the suddenness of it was unexpected. We were not prepared. It is not that we were dependent. It was our soldiers fighting at the front lines. We had fought for everything we achieved over twenty years. It was like we were sold out.

AT: I want to go back to your life; I have read that you got a scholarship to study at a university in India. Did your parents support you, a young Afghan girl who decided to leave her home and go abroad to study?

Zarifa: I always had to struggle. My mother was a working mother, and my father wanted a properly run home. He didn't stop my mother

because they needed the money. At that time, she worked as a teacher in a government school. At times, my dad told me not to go to school. You can do it later. You are too young; you can do it later. Sometimes, my siblings who were at home played and made the house dirty. When my dad returned home and saw the mess, he would get upset. When I returned home from school, he would be tough on me.

AT: What got you interested in public service?

Zarifa: Normally, in my country, people believe mayorship is a male thing. That was something I wanted to prove wrong. I always tried to prove that we are more capable of doing things as girls or women. And then my husband, who was then my friend, told me that the mayor's position was announced and that I should go for it. I didn't want to go for a government position; I was good with my NGOs and other work. But he got upset and stopped speaking to me. After a few days, I decided to give it a try. But for me, it was just a try. And then, when my name came out on the list, there was a big movement against me. It was just a try; I was not too eager to have it. I could not understand the negative competition. I remember them calling me a characterless woman. They said I am not Muslim. I studied in India. I had many affairs there. I am evil. I wanted to compete in the mayoral race professionally, and then I got all the backlashes. That time, I felt that those guys were doing that because they knew if they did it to a woman, she would put up her hands in defeat and stand away. But I was not going to do that, no matter what.

AT: It made you more determined.

Zarifa: I said, let's fight this. I decided to prove the ability of a woman. It did not matter that I was a 24-year-old girl.

AT: Did you think you would win?

Zarifa: I believed in my knowl-

edge. I believed in my planning. I believed that I was capable.

AT: What was the biggest hurdle in your race for mayor?

Zarifa: I think it was my mindset. I needed to believe in myself, trust myself, and compete with myself more than anyone else. The earlier you accept and believe in yourself, you will be out there facing it. I remember all the attacks from the Taliban, the mafia, the government on one side and myself and then my fiancée all alone on the other side.

AT: I saw in the documentary that you took up office after nine months.

Zarifa: People didn't want me there because they knew their illegal businesses would cease. They refused to recognise me as their mayor. Everyone told me to give up, but I refused. I said, no matter how long it takes, I will fight.

AT: How tough was the job and that too in a place like Maidan Shahr?

Zarifa: It wasn't tough. I enjoyed my role. I was the only lady walking in a male dominated city. From passengers in a car to shopkeepers - everyone was a man. You rarely saw a woman walk in that city. But I, as a young woman, walked that city and ordered people in and out. I did my job ordering all those men who never listened to even their mothers, but they had to listen to me as I enforced the law. Another reason I enjoyed it was to see how women were happy to see me there. They were very happy to know that the mayor was a woman. They first came to me with their problems. Their belief and their trust were what I enjoyed.

AT: You were the mayor of Maidan Shahr, the capital of Maidan Wardok, a Taliban stronghold. You must have felt fear going about your work.

Zarifa: It was always tough. Every time I drove to my office and back, I felt worried. I thought that if there were an attack or an explosion, I would lose my leg. Sometimes, when I saw someone crossing my

car in a traffic jam, I would worry about them putting a gun to my head. After I got a bulletproof car, I worried about my leg.

AT: The Taliban have said women are not adhering to the headscarf rule, they are banned from working for the government, for domestic and foreign NGOs and girls above sixth grade have not been allowed in schools since 2021. How bad is it now? Has there been any change in the Taliban stance since they took over?

Zarifa: The Taliban never changed; they cannot change. Anyone who believes that the Taliban will change is fooling themselves.

AT: Is there any light at the end of the tunnel for Afghan women?

Zarifa: It is not just about women in Afghanistan. It is a very big regional political game that is being played.

AT: Is the Taliban scared of women? How can they totally negate their existence?

Zarifa: There are two important things. Number one, if a woman is educated and independent if a woman can at least decide for themselves that they will not let their children become terrorists, then the cycle of terrorism will take a hit. Secondly, if women come out of their homes, their schools and universities and run things, it will change everything for everyone, including the Taliban. Anyone who is the bigger player at the core of this entire thing will lose, so it serves them better to keep women out of the picture.

AT: I saw in the documentary that you returned to Afghanistan a few times. Why did you do that? You could have been killed.

Zarifa: When I landed in Kabul and disembarked, I was shaking. But then suddenly, the beautiful sun on my face and the beautiful smell of Kabul gave me a feeling of being on my own land. I forgot the shaking. I avoided looking at the Taliban faces on my way from the airport.

AT: You have faced several assassination attempts. And yet you go back. How do you keep going?

Zarifa: You know what's happening today, is not something I want for my daughter. So I need to fight it now. If I don't want to go through what I am going through now, I must fight it. If not, it will remain the same. I don't want my girl tomorrow to stand before me and tell me why you didn't do something. I want my daughter to lead a life full of dignity, respect and rights, live in our country and not be called a refugee.

AT: How are you dealing with staying far away from your homeland?

Zarifa: I don't believe I am too far away. Just because I am physically not there doesn't mean I am not there. I'm connected with my people. My NGO is working. I'm working on rounding up a group of women from different corners of the country.

AT: You are advocating for direct dialogue between the Taliban and the Afghan women.

Zarifa: That could happen, but I'm sure the Taliban will not agree because they are really afraid of us. They know that we know them.

Asia

Typhoon Gaemi heads for China:

A strong typhoon was expected to make landfall in China on Thursday after sweeping across Taiwan, where it caused landslides and flooding in low-lying areas and left three dead.

Typhoon Gaemi swept up the western Pacific, intensifying seasonal rains earlier in the week in the Philippines, where the death toll has climbed to 22.

Offices and schools in Taiwan were closed for the second consecutive day on Thursday and people were urged to stay home and away from the coastline. Two people were killed on Wednesday before the storm made landfall around midnight, and a 78-year-old man died after his home was hit by a mudslide on Thursday afternoon, Taiwan's Central News Agency said. Another 380 people were reported injured.

A third death on Wednesday - a driver pinned under an overturned excavator - was initially attributed to the typhoon but later was determined not be linked, the news agency said.

The island is regularly hit by typhoons and has boosted its warning systems, but its topography, high population density and high-tech economy make it difficult to avoid losses when such storms hit. The capital, Taipei, was unusually quiet, with light rain falling and occasionally gusting winds.

In China's coastal Fujian province, flights, trains and ferry services were canceled, and more than 150,000 people evacuated as the typhoon approached, the official Xinhua News Agency said. After hitting the coast, the storm is expected to bring heavy rains to inland areas

including the capital, Beijing, over the next three days.

In the Philippines, the death toll rose due to drownings and landslides. At least three people are missing, according to police.

The Philippine coast guard reported that an oil tanker, MT Terra Nova, loaded with about 1.4 million liters (370,000 gallons) of industrial fuel oil sank off Limay town in Bataan province early Thursday and rescuers saved 15 of 16 crew members.

It's not immediately clear if the sinking was related to the bad weather and rough seas but Transport Secretary Jaime Bautista said coast guard personnel could not immediately reach the area to contain a possible oil spill because of the rough sea conditions.

The storm prompted the cancel-

lation of air force drills off Taiwan's east coast. (AP)



Oil tanker sinks in Manila Bay:

A Philippine oil tanker sank in Manila Bay early Thursday after encountering huge waves, and the coast guard was working to determine whether the vessel was leaking oil - in what could be a major spill - after it rescued 16 of 17 crew members in a nighttime operation, officials said.

The tanker Terra Nova left Bataan province en route to the central province of Iloilo with about 1.4 million liters (370,000 gallons) of industrial fuel oil stored in watertight tanks when it got buffeted by huge waves and took on water. The crew struggled to steer the tanker back to port but it eventually sank shortly after midnight,

coast guard spokesperson Rear Admiral Armando Balilo said, citing statements from surviving crew members.

The sinking followed days of monsoon rains, exacerbated by a passing offshore typhoon, that caused landslides and floodings across the archipelago, leaving at least 22 people dead and displacing more than half a million people.

An aerial survey spotted an oil spill about 3.7 kilometers (2.3 miles) long near the rough seawaters where the tanker sank but that may have come from the fuel intended to power the tanker's engine, not the much greater amount of fuel the Terra Nova was carrying as cargo, Balilo said.

A coast guard ship, the BRP Melchora Aquino, was in the waters where the tanker sank, more than 6 kilometers (about 4 miles) from Bataan province's coast, to search for the last missing crewman and to carry out an initial assessment of the tanker's fuel oil cargo, Balilo told an online news conference.

He added that the coast guard was bracing to contain a possible major oil spill.

"There's a big danger that Manila would be affected, its shorelines, if the fuel leaks because this happened within Manila Bay. It's part of the contingency we're preparing for," Balilo said. "The effect on the marine environment would not be good."

Balilo later said the oil tanker sank at a relatively shallow depth of 34 meters (111 feet), based on an initial assessment, and raised the possibility that its fuel oil cargo could be siphoned off by special ships in a delicate operation that could take about a week. (AP)

Africa

Ruto appoints oppn ministers:

Kenya's president on Wednesday incorporated the opposition in his new Cabinet, appointing four ministers from the main opposition party in a bid to form a broad-based government that would address governance issues raised in deadly protests.

President **William Ruto** on Wednesday appointed the minority leader in parliament and opposition leader Raila Odinga's party chairman in his new Cabinet despite a



Ruto

split in the opposition coalition that saw other parties distance themselves from government talks.

The weeks of turmoil in East Africa's economic hub have led to dozens of

deaths, the firing of most Cabinet members and calls for Ruto's resignation. Protests began with Kenyans' rejecting a proposed bill to impose more taxes as millions in the country barely get by amid rising prices.

The president on Wednesday lauded political parties for "their willingness to set aside partisan positions and interests in order to join a visionary partnership for the radical transformation of Kenya is a historic gesture of their patriotism."

Odinga, who earlier called for talks to calm the unrest, on Tuesday denied allegations that he had been bribed to join Ruto in forming a broad-based government. He expressed his support to protesters adding that there would only be dialogue after the president adheres

to the demands from demonstrators. (AP)



Biya postpones polls: Cameroonian President Paul Biya on Wednesday evening signed a decree postponing municipal elections scheduled for February next year.

The decree extended the mandate for current municipal councilors for a year from its expiry date of Feb. 25, 2025 to May 31, 2026.

The decree came barely two weeks after the country's National Assembly, or the lower house of parliament, approved a bill extending the mandate for its current lawmakers for a year.

Biya did not say why the elections have been postponed but officials of the ruling party, Cameroon People Democratic Movement (CPDM), explained that it was part of efforts by the government "to lighten a congested" electoral calendar. (Xinhua)



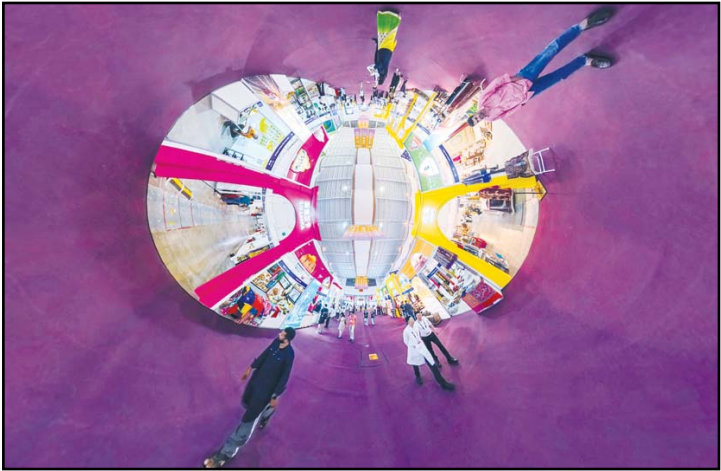
Ethiopia landslide death toll 257: The death toll from Monday's landslide in southern Ethiopia has risen to 257, and could reach up to 500, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) said Thursday.

More than 15,000 affected people need to be evacuated, and the government is finalizing an evacuation plan, UNOCHA said in a situation report.

The landslide in Geze Gofa District occurred Monday morning in the midst of a rainy season, which is expected to last until mid-September.

Some of the victims died in subsequent secondary landslides. Many remain unaccounted for.

Seasonal rains occasionally cause deadly landslides in some parts of the East African country. (Xinhua)



This panoramic photo shows people visiting the 8th China-South Asia Expo in Kunming, southwest China's Yunnan Province, July 23. The 8th China-South Asia Expo opened on Tuesday in Kunming, the capital of southwest China's Yunnan Province, attracting over 2,000 exhibitors. Nearly half of the exhibitors are companies from South and Southeast Asia. (Xinhua)

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
DUBAI	-	DFMGI			
	+9.00	4,237.65	SAUDI	-	TASI
			JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225
			PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi
			PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100
				-75.00	12,026.21
				-1,285.34	37,869.51
				-82.85	6,670.27
				-1,049.90	78,391.81

Business

First Group completes initial handover of East Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential Project

Delivery of road networks, 587 homes and public buildings finalized

By Saeed Mahmoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: For the third consecutive day, the First Group for General Trading and Contracting Company has been progressing with the initial handover procedures for the East Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential Project in collaboration with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW).

Yesterday, it successfully completed the initial handover procedures for public buildings as per the contract for the construction and completion of 587 houses, roads, and infrastructure networks.

The handover process took place in the presence of Eng. Monzer Al-Ustaz, the Chairman of the receiving committee and the Director of the Second Region Projects Department at PAHW, and Eng. Hussein Al-Ajmi from PAHW, in addition to representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, and the State Property Authority.

On Tuesday, the First Group had delivered the first part of the project - road networks and infrastructure services - to the relevant authorities. On Wednesday, it delivered the second part, which is related to the construction and completion of 587 homes, and on Thursday, it delivered the last part of the project.

The main receiving committee, which is composed of representatives of several ministries, were present to receive the public buildings, which consist of two mosques, two residences for the imam and the muezzin, two sets of shops, a health center, an ambulance center, and a gas branch.

In this regard, Chairman of First Group Eng. Emeel Abdallah said the delivery process proceeded smoothly, thanks to the project's meticulous implementation.

He explained that modern technologies, such as solar panels, were integrated into public buildings to enhance energy efficiency, in accordance with the standards set by the Ministry of Electricity and Water. These measures have resulted in an energy-saving rate exceeding 20 percent of electrical loads in the buildings.

Eng. Abdallah praised the successful completion of the initial delivery process and acknowledged receipt of all technical comments, if any, which will be addressed in preparation for the final handover of the project by PAHW to beneficiary citizens.

He explained that the company diligently implemented this project in accordance with the highest executive standards, thus leveraging its distinguished reputation in the field. The company has a strong track record in real estate development across multiple countries, with notable achievements in Kuwait, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

The public buildings in the project embody an integrated model that merges modern design, high-quality materials, and environmental sustainability. This approach fulfills the aspirations of families and promotes a modern sustainable lifestyle.



Group photo showing Head of the Committee Eng. Monzer Al-Ustaz, Eng. Hussein Al-Ajmi from PAHW, Chairman of First Group company and senior engineers & workers during the delivery of the mosque.



Interior image of the mosque.



Overview of the Health Center showing solar panel on the roof.

tainable lifestyle.

The design of these buildings maximizes the effective use of internal spaces, with windows strategically positioned to allow natural light, thereby enhancing the feeling of comfort and reducing energy consumption.

Eng. Abdallah stated that the company is eager to participate in future residential projects in Kuwait as a prominent real estate developer with deep experience. The company has successfully delivered many buildings and towers in the Administrative Capital of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Additionally, it has demonstrated distinguished performance in constructing modern residential compounds, encompassing both residential buildings and villas.

He emphasized the company's commitment to strictly adhering to the contract terms, including the technical specifications and service standards, as well as completing projects within the specified periods.

Eng. Abdallah highlighted some of the difficulties that the company faced but had managed to overcome, such as the company having to compensate for about six months of the contract term that it took to treat and replace the soil with the help of a French company specialized in dynamic compaction works.

He clarified that the original three-year contract timeline was effectively managed, with the project ultimately being completed in about two and a half years after accounting for the ground leveling and soil treatment period.

One of the main challenges faced by First Group was the shortage of specialized workers in construction, finishing, mortar, painting, concrete, carpentry, and marble work. This scarcity was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic due to quarantine measures and the restricted entry of workers of certain nationalities.

nationalities.

Eng. Abdallah expressed his gratitude to the cooperation and support the company received from all relevant official bodies.

He affirmed First Group's commitment to having a strong and distinguished presence as a real estate developer, supported by their extensive experience showcased in projects both within and outside Kuwait.

Meanwhile, the project manager and contractor representative at the company Eng. Hisham Rushdy said high-quality building materials were used for the construction of public buildings, revealing that top-grade flooring, paints and interior finishing materials were meticulously chosen to combine beauty and practicality, and ensure ease of maintenance and cleaning.

He affirmed the keenness of the company to use approved materials of top quality in the project including marble, stone, glass for doors and windows, concrete works reinforced with fiber-glass and aluminum, flooring, walls, decorative ceilings, and others.

Also, the Director of the Roads, Services and Infrastructure Department at First Group Eng. Sayyed Al-Mallah praised the great cooperation received from the official authorities in the State of Kuwait and expressed hope for its continuation to initiate many development projects, especially considering the company's experience of 30 years in carrying out housing projects.

He highlighted the company's dedication to executing such projects with the highest standards of engineering competence, and revealed the company's strong desire for this project to reflect the latest design trends through the use of premium materials, and achieve distinguished implementation.

Eng. Al-Mallah said the initial inspection serves as a stage for informing the relevant parties involved in each area of the project and for noting any observations to be addressed in preparation for its final approval at a later stage.

Furthermore, Projects Manager at First Group Eng. Hisham Rushdy confirmed the company's readiness to participate in projects for the development of real estate and residential cities in Kuwait.

He highlighted that First Group is one of the companies approved and qualified to participate in all tenders offered by the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT).

Also, Deputy Project Manager Eng. Khairy Ahmed explained that the public services buildings that were delivered included nine buildings and 13 secondary power plants. Beneficiary government agencies also participated in the receiving process, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, and the State Properties Authority.

He revealed that the project implementation required working for 20 hours per day, split into two shifts, without stopping, even on holidays.

In addition, Director of Planning and Scheduling at First Group Eng. Mohammed Thabet stated that one of the company's main principles is adherence to the terms of the contract, the most important of which is completing the implementation work on time.

He explained that careful follow-up by the company's administration and their determination to overcome obstacles, while ensuring all necessary work requirements such as human and financial resources, equipment, and materials were promptly provided, played a crucial role in the completion of the project on time without requiring an extension period.

Oil down to \$82.61 pb

KNPC launches fifth corporate hackathon

KUWAIT CITY, July 25, (Agencies): Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) has launched the fifth edition of its corporate hackathon, focusing this year on the Support Services Sector, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The event aims to enhance the skills and capabilities of employees by encouraging them to develop solutions for the sector's challenges.

The hackathon involves around 200 participants from various teams and departments, divided into 22 teams, supervised by experts from Support Services.

Deputy CEO for Support Services, Kholoud Al-Mutairi, highlighted that this is the first hackathon in the Kuwaiti oil sector to incorporate generative artificial intelligence (AI) platforms. The event follows workshops on innovation, brainstorming, and technical training related to modern tech platforms, including AI.

Al-Mutairi emphasized that the company's digital transformation strategy relies on innovation and the human element.

The hackathon aims to help employees learn global digital skills, particularly in AI, which is rapidly evolving and crucial as the industry faces energy transformation challenges.

Dr. Hussein Al-Natshah, an AI expert, explained that the generative AI platform used in the hackathon simplifies information retrieval without

needing complex codes, making it user-friendly.

This technology is expected to drive significant digital transformation within KNPC by providing secure and efficient information access and saving costs associated with internal networks.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: Price of Kuwaiti oil dropped USD 1.29 to settle at USD 82.61 per barrel on Wednesday compared with USD 83.90 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said in on Thursday.

Globally, the price of Brent crude rose by 70 cents to USD 81.71 pb, while West Texas Intermediate crude rose by 63 cents to USD 77.59 pb.

Oil prices settled higher on Wednesday, supported by large declines in US crude and fuel stocks, as well as growing supply risks from Canadian wildfires, but hovered close to their lowest level in six weeks due to concerns over weak global demand.

The US Energy Information Administration said that US crude oil inventories fell by 3.7 million barrels last week, while gasoline stocks fell by 5.6 million barrels and distillate stocks, which includes diesel and heating oil, fell by 2.8 million barrels.

Sustainable sukuk issuances reach \$5.2 bln

Kuwait emerging as leader in sustainable and green sukuk

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: As of mid-2024, sustainable sukuk issuances have reached approximately \$5.2 billion from January to June, according to a report by Standard & Poor's Credit Rating Agency, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This is a significant portion of the total sukuk issuances amounting to \$91.9 billion in the first half of the year. The agency projects that sustainable sukuk issuances could hit around \$12 billion by the end of the year.

The report highlights that 80% of these sustainable issuances in the first six months of 2024 originated from banks in the Gulf countries, reflecting their commitment to climate transformation and sustainable finance.

In this context of growing interest in sustainable financial instruments, Kuwait presents two distinct scenarios. On one hand, the Kuwaiti private sector is emerging as a regional leader in innovative financing instruments, including both Sharia-compliant "sustainable sukuk" and "green sukuk," as well as traditional "green bonds."

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has been instrumental in advancing sustainable and green sukuk. In 2021, KFH Capital, the investment arm of the group, orchestrated a landmark issuance of \$350 million in sustainability sukuk for KFH Turkey. This issuance was notable as it was the first sustainable sukuk issued by an Islamic financial institution and the first global sustainable tier-2 sukuk.

In a significant move earlier this year, the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) issued its first green bonds worth \$500 million. This issuance was part of a global medium-term securities program and marked a milestone as the first green bonds issued by a Kuwaiti financial institution. It is also among the largest green bond issuances by a conventional financial institution in the region and the first green issuance by a bank in the region in 2024.

NBK's green bond issuance is aligned with the bank's strategy to bolster its liquidity position while reinforcing its commitment to environmental, social, and institutional governance principles and practices. This move reflects the growing emphasis on sustainability in the Kuwaiti financial sector and positions Kuwait as a significant player in the regional and global green finance landscape.

In the first half of 2024, the total subscription requests for "Al-Watani" sukuk reached approximately \$1.5 billion, excluding orders from issuing managers. This high level of demand reflects investor confidence in Kuwait as an attractive investment destination. Following this issuance, Al-Watani announced its goal of growing its sustainable asset portfolio to \$10 billion by 2030.

The second scenario involves the issuance of "sovereign green sukuk" or "sustainable sovereign sukuk," which Standard & Poor's considers an optimal financing option for governments amid challenging economic conditions. However, according to financial sources, Kuwait faces significant challenges due to the absence of a public debt law. This reg-

ulatory gap limits the government's ability to leverage investor confidence in Kuwait's investment appeal and its high sovereign rating, which could positively impact financing costs. Furthermore, it hampers efforts to reduce costs for sustainable development projects. Kuwait has set a goal to derive 15% of its electricity from alternative energy sources, but this ambition is constrained by the current financial environment, including concerns over budget deficits and the government's reliance on oil revenues alone for funding development projects.

The restriction on issuing green sukuk, particularly in the context of Kuwait's regulatory framework, poses a challenge at a time when financial experts and economists recognize sovereign sukuk as a preferred financing option. The expected widespread adoption of these instruments in the Arab region is driven by global economic slowdowns.

According to recent reports from Standard & Poor's, there has been a significant increase in sukuk issuances since the beginning of the year. The agency noted that high financing needs are driving this surge, with many government entities and private sector players relying on sukuk to meet liquidity needs.

Statistics from Standard & Poor's reveal that global sukuk issuances totaled \$91.9 billion in the first half of 2024. Although this represents a slight increase from \$91.3 billion in the same period last year, experts anticipate further growth for the remainder of 2024. Major contributors to this increase include issuers from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, Malaysia, and Kuwait.

The agency maintains its forecast for global sukuk issuances in 2024 at between \$160 billion and \$170 billion, including \$45 billion to \$50 billion in foreign-currency-denominated sukuk. Improved expectations for interest rates in the medium term are expected to support the issuance of foreign-currency sukuk, with the Federal Reserve anticipated to begin rate cuts in December 2024.

Standard & Poor's highlights that high financing needs in key Islamic finance countries are contributing to the rise in sukuk issuances, reflecting the growing demand and evolving landscape of Islamic finance.

Financial crises impact countries differently across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Gulf countries benefit from strong credit ratings, which enhance their ability to attract financing through sukuk issuances. In contrast, nations like Tunisia and Lebanon, which have faced political instability, struggle to leverage this financing tool effectively.

According to recent assessments, Egypt and Morocco stand out for their political stability, positioning them to explore and expand sukuk financing options. Experts suggest that these countries have the potential to increasingly use sukuk as a key financial instrument in the coming years. This approach could support economic growth by providing access to loans with favorable interest rates and flexible repayment terms, whether in dollars or Euros.

General market index up 0.32%

Boursa Kuwait gains across main market indices

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Boursa Kuwait showed a positive performance with gains across the main market indices, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The General Market Index increased by 0.32%, or 22.65 points, closing at 7,154.95 points. Liquidity was 41.3 million dinars with 183.7 million shares traded through 12,547 transactions. Of the 130 traded shares, 67 gained, 43 lost, and 20 remained unchanged.

The Premier Market Index rose by 0.39%, or 30.37 points, to close at 7,802.69 points. Liquidity amounted to 32.6 million dinars with 112.1 million shares

traded through 7,719 transactions. Out of 34 traded shares, 19 gained, 10 lost, and 5 remained stable.

The Main Market Index declined slightly by 0.04%, or 2.27 points, ending at 6,015.15 points. Liquidity was 8.7 million dinars with 71.6 million shares traded through 4,828 transactions. Of the 96 traded shares, 48 gained, 33 lost, and 15 remained unchanged.

The trading session saw active buying, particularly in shares of IFA, Kuwait Real Estate, and Arzan;

KFH and National Bank stocks were notably active due to upcoming dividend announcements, with

KFH reaching 735 fils and closing slightly down by one fil, while National Bank remained unchanged at 872 fils; Agility experienced a rise of over 1% and stocks like GFH, Unicap, and Al Khaleeji Insurance also supported the market indices, with Al Khaleeji Insurance seeing significant percentage gains despite limited transactions.

The performance of Boursa Kuwait was generally positive, with buying activity surpassing selling offers. The GCC market indices mostly turned green, with only Qatar and Oman experiencing declines and the oil prices remained stable at \$81.5 per barrel.

Central banks plan to enhance and diversify reserves

Invesco survey highlights positive outlook for emerging markets amid geopolitical tensions

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: A recent survey by asset manager Invesco, covering 83 sovereign wealth funds and 57 global central banks with a combined \$22 trillion in assets, reveals that emerging markets are poised to benefit from rising geopolitical tensions, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Here are some key insights:

Emerging Market Outlook -- Two-thirds of survey respondents anticipate that emerging market returns will match or potentially surpass those of developed markets over the next three years. Non-Arab sovereign wealth funds are particularly eager to outperform relatively; Geopolitical tensions, especially between the U.S. and China, are seen as advantageous for developing countries. Companies are diversifying supply chains due to trade and customs barriers between the world's two largest economies.

Favorite Emerging Markets

India -- India has emerged as a leading choice among emerging markets, driven by its large domestic market and expanding middle class. Interest

in Indian debt has surged, with 88% of respondents showing increased interest, up from 66% in 2022.

Indonesia -- Indonesia is also seeing rising interest, with 47% of respondents planning to invest more in its debt, compared to 27% in 2022.

China -- Interest in Chinese debt has decreased, with only 35% of respondents interested, down from 71% in 2022.

Investment Trends

Debt Investments -- More than half of survey participants invest in emerging market debt. Government and corporate bonds denominated in dollars for emerging markets have gained 3.4% this year, contrasting with a 1.3% decline in global debt.

Private Credit -- Sovereign investors are increasingly interested in private credit, with a third of global sovereign funds planning to boost allocations in the coming year. This trend is attributed to strong performance and diversification benefits compared to fixed income investing.

Gold -- Geopolitical events and concerns about

rising U.S. debt levels are driving central banks towards gold. Nearly half of the respondents view gold as a hedge against economic uncertainty.

Equity allocations have increased to 32% from 30% a year ago, reflecting optimism about global growth, despite risks such as geopolitical tensions and persistent inflation while the sovereign wealth funds are increasing infrastructure allocations, with 27% globally and 50% in the Middle East planning to invest more in this sector. Only 6% globally and none in the Middle East expect to reduce allocations.

The central banks are enhancing and diversifying their reserves. Globally, 53% plan to increase reserves and 52% aim to diversify further, with figures at 56% for the Middle East. Concerns about rising U.S. debt are influencing views on the dollar's global role.

The importance of governance factors is growing. Greenwashing is a significant challenge for 84% of sovereign investors globally and 94% in the Middle East. Data quality, ratings, and impact measurement are also key challenges.

China cuts 1-year benchmark rate, moving to boost economy as world markets languish

China ratcheted up its effort to reinvigorate its economy Thursday by cutting a key policy rate and interest paid on bank deposits.

The move coincided with a downturn in world stocks, extending losses in Chinese markets that have declined this year while share prices soared in many other countries.

By midday, Hong Kong's Hang Seng was down 1.4% and the Shanghai Composite index lost 0.4%.

The People's Bank of China said it cut the lending rate for one-year medium term policy loans by 20 basis points to 2.3%. That is the biggest rate cut since China's economy was slammed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

The rate on 7-day loans was reduced to 1.7%.

Major state-run banks cut deposit rates to relieve pressure on their finances, reducing the rate paid on one-year fixed deposits by 10 basis points to 1.35%, the official Xinhua News Agency reported, citing official rates released Thursday by the country's "Big Four" banks: Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Agricultural Bank of China, Bank of China and China Construction Bank.

The banks cut deposit rates three times last year and this was the first reduction for 2024, it said.

But while lower deposit rates may be good for the bank's balance sheets they won't encourage more consumer spending - the one thing most economists agree is needed to help revive growth that has been falling for years and was hit especially hard by a downturn in China's property sector.

"Banks are already passing on lower deposit rates to savers: which will do nothing to encourage spending in the current environment, and people will instead save even more to generate the same return they were earning before," RaboResearch said in a commentary.

Growth in the world's second-largest economy slowed to 4.7% in the last quarter, down from 5.3% in January-March.

Earlier this week, the central bank cut several of its other lending rates, sticking to a cautious approach to stimulating the economy.

The flurry of rate cuts this week followed a major policy-setting meeting of the ruling Communist Party last week that laid out ambitious plans for reforms in many areas of the economy but did not spell out any specific plans for stimulus driven by government spending.

Instead, the party has opted for fine-tuning.

The planning meeting focused on mapping out long-term goals but also emphasized short-term targets, Nicholas Yeo of abrdn, formerly Standard Life Aberdeen plc, said in a report. (AP)

Minimum rest time to be increased between shifts

FAA agrees with air traffic controllers' union to give tower workers more rest between shifts

WASHINGTON, July 25, (AP): The Federal Aviation Administration said Wednesday it will increase minimum rest time between shifts for air traffic controllers after highly publicized close calls between planes that were following orders from controllers.

The FAA and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, the union representing the workers, agreed to a number of changes that will apply as schedules are negotiated for next year.

"The science is clear that controller fatigue is a public safety issue, and it must be addressed," FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker said. He promised more measures to address tired controllers.

Rich Santa, president of the controllers' union, said the group has been raising concern about fatigue for years. He said the agreement "will begin to provide relief to this understaffed workforce."

A report by experts to the FAA recommended 10 to 12 hours of rest before all shifts as one way to reduce the risk that tired controllers might make mistakes. The panel also said additional time off might be needed before midnight shifts, which don't allow workers to follow normal sleep patterns.

The agreement between the FAA and the union will give controllers 10 hours off between shifts and 12 hours off before and after a midnight shift. They also agreed to limit consecutive overtime assignments.

The FAA has limited the number of flights in New York and Florida because of a shortage of air traffic controllers. Whitaker said the FAA will hire 1,800 controllers this year and is expanding its ability to hire and train controllers.

Controllers have been in the center of some close calls. The National Transportation Safety Board said in January that a controller made faulty assumptions that led him to clear a FedEx plane to land in Austin, Texas, while a Southwest Airlines jet was taking off from the same runway. Fatigue was not cited as a factor.

In other cases, controllers have stepped in to stop runway conflicts that could have been disastrous, including when an American Airlines jet mistakenly crossed an active runway at JFK Airport in New York.

Consequences of tensions with China

Some US states purging Chinese companies from their investments

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo., (AP): As state treasurer, Vivek Malek pushed Missouri's main retirement system to pull its investments from Chinese companies, making Missouri among the first nationally to do so. Now Malek is touting the Chinese divestment as he seeks reelection in an Aug. 6 Republican primary against challengers who also are denouncing financial connections to China.

The Missouri treasurer's race highlights a new facet of opposition to China, which has been cast as a top threat to the U.S. by many candidates seeking election this year. Indiana and Florida also have restricted their public pension funds from investing in certain Chinese companies. Similar legislation targeting public investments in foreign adversaries was vetoed in Arizona and proposed in Illinois and Oklahoma.

China ranks as the world's second-largest economy behind the U.S.

Between 2018 and 2022, U.S. public pension and university endowments invested about \$146 billion in China, according to an analysis by Future Union, a nonprofit pro-democracy group led by venture capitalist Andrew King. The report said more than four-fifths of U.S. states have at least one public pension fund investing in China and Hong Kong.

"Frankly, there should be shame - more shame than there is - for continuing to have those investments at this point in time," said King, who asserts that China has used intellectual property from U.S. companies to make similar products that undercut market prices.

"You're talking a considerable amount of money that frankly is competing against the U.S. technology and innovation ecosystem," King said.

But some investment officials and economists have raised concerns that the emerging patchwork of state divestment policies could weaken investment returns for retirees.

"Most of these policies are unwise and would make U.S. citizens poorer," said Ben Powell, an economics professor who is executive director of the Free Market Institute at Texas Tech University.

The National Association of State Retirement Administrators opposes state-mandated divestments, saying such orders should come only from the federal government against specific companies based on U.S. security or humanitarian interests.

The U.S. Treasury Department recently proposed a rule prohibiting American investors from funding artificial intelligence systems in China that could have military uses, such as weapons targeting. In May, President Joe Biden blocked a Chinese-backed cryptocurrency mining firm from owning land near a Wyoming nuclear missile base, calling it a "national security risk."

Yet this isn't the first time that states have blacklisted particular investments. Numerous states, cities and universities divested from South Africa because of apartheid before the U.S. Congress eventually took action. Some states also have divested from tobacco companies because of health concerns.

Most recently, some states announced a divestment from Russia because of its war against Ukraine. But that has been difficult to carry out for some public pension fund administrators.

The quest to halt investments in Chinese companies comes as a growing number of states also have targeted Chinese ownership of U.S. land. Two dozen states now have laws restricting foreign ownership of agricultural land, according to the National Agricultural Law Center at the University of Arkansas. Some laws apply more broadly, such as one facing a legal challenge in Florida that bars Chinese citizens from buying property within 10 miles (16 kilometers) of military installations and critical infrastructure.

State pension divestment policies are "part of a broader march toward more confrontation between China and the United States," said Clark Packard, a research fellow for trade policy studies at the libertarian Cato Institute. But "it makes it more challenging for the federal government to manage the overall relationship if we've got to deal with a scattershot policy at the state level."

Indiana last year became the first to enact a law requiring the state's public pension system to gradually divest from certain Chinese companies. As of March 31, 2023, the system had about \$1.2 billion invested in Chinese entities with \$486 million subject to the divestment requirement. A year later, its investment exposure in China had fallen to \$314 million with just \$700,000 still subject to divestment, the Indiana Public Retirement System said.

WASHINGTON, July 25, (AP): The American economy, boosted by healthy consumer spending, is believed to have regained some momentum this spring after having begun 2024 at a sluggish pace.

Development reflects resilient economy



Amazon employees load packages on carts before being put on to trucks for distribution for Amazon's annual Prime Day event at an Amazon's DAX7 delivery station on Tuesday, July 16, 2024, in South Gate, Calif. (AP)

Clashes arise over the economic effects of Louisiana's \$3b coastal restoration project

NEW ORLEANS, July 25, (AP): Proponents of a nearly \$3 billion project to restore part of southeast Louisiana's rapidly vanishing coastline released a study touting the expected economic benefits of its construction, even as the project faces pushback and litigation from communities who fear the environment and their livelihoods will be severely affected.

The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion project broke ground in August last year. But construction was halted because of legal disputes, and since June the project has only partially resumed work.

The project is expected to spend around \$1.6 billion inside the state over its five-year construction period, according to a new study funded by Restore the Mississippi River Delta, a coalition of environmental groups. During the building phase, the project expects to generate an average of 3,095 jobs across five parishes in Louisiana, mainly in construction and significantly higher-paying than average local wages, the study says.

"This project will bring more wetlands than any other individual restoration project in the world, and it will bring a whopping number of new earnings, jobs and revenue to coastal Louisiana," said Simone Maloz, campaign director for Restore the Mississippi River Delta, at a Tuesday news conference announcing the study's findings. "It is exactly the scale of the project we need to address the very serious challenge we face."

The study estimates that for Plaquemines Parish, where the project is being built, the construction will lead to \$308.2 million in total wage earnings, \$65.4 million in tax revenue and an average of 540 jobs over a five-year period.

But Mitch Jurisich, a third-generation oysterman and parish council representative, was dismissive of the idea that the project would help more than hurt his community's economy in the long term and described the study as "political propaganda."

His oyster company is one of several plaintiffs, including an environmental group, suing to halt the project on the grounds it will alter water quality, endanger birds and sea life, and kill thousands of bottlenose dolphins in the Barataria basin.

The project, which went through years of assessment before being approved, will divert freshwater from the Mississippi River to bring sediment into the basin's brackish and saltwater marshes.

US home sales fell in June to slowest pace since December

LOS ANGELES, July 25, (AP): The nation's housing slump deepened in June as sales of previously occupied homes slowed to their slowest pace since December, hampered by elevated mortgage rates and record-high prices.

Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes fell 5.4% last month from May to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.89 million, the fourth consecutive month of declines, the National Association of Realtors said Tuesday.

Existing home sales were also down 5.4% compared with June of last year. The latest sales came in below the 3.99 million annual pace economists were expecting, according to FactSet.

Despite the pullback in sales, home prices climbed compared with a year earlier for the 12th month in a row. The national median sales price rose 4.1% from a year earlier to \$426,900, an all-time high with records going back to 1999.

Home prices rose even as sales slowed and the supply of properties on the market climbed to its highest level since May 2020.

"Right now we're seeing increased inventory, but we're not seeing increased sales yet," said Lawrence Yun, the NAR's chief economist.

All told, there were about 1.32 million unsold homes at the end of last month, an increase of 3.1% from May and up 23% from June last year, NAR said.

That translates to a 4.1-month supply at the current sales pace. Traditionally, a 4- to 5-month supply is considered a balanced market between buyers and sellers.

While still below pre-pandemic lev-

els, the recent increase in homes for sale suggests that, despite record-high home prices, the housing market may be tipping in favor of homebuyers.

"The latest data is implying that maybe we're seeing a slow shift away from what had been a sellers' market and slowly moving into a buyers' market," Yun said.

For now, sellers are still benefiting from a tight housing market inventory. Homebuyers snapped up homes last month typically within just 22 days after the properties hit the market. That's up from 18 days in June last year. And 29% of those properties sold for more than their original list price, which typically means sellers received offers from multiple home shoppers.

The U.S. housing market has been mired in a slump dating back to 2022, when mortgage rates began to climb from pandemic-era lows. Existing home sales sank to a nearly 30-year low last year as the average rate on a 30-year mortgage surged to a 23-year high of 7.79%, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac.

The average rate has mostly hovered around 7% this year - more than double what it was just three years ago -- as stronger-than-expected reports on the economy and inflation have forced the Federal Reserve to keep its short-term rate at the highest level in more than 20 years.

One reason home sales have kept declining this year even as the inventory of properties on the market has increased is that many Americans may be holding out for mortgage rates to come down.

BANGKOK, July 25, (AP): Chinese officials warned a delegation of top U.S. executives visiting Beijing this week that higher tariffs on imports from China will harm their businesses inside the country.

potential minefield for foreign businesses that face intense scrutiny of their China operations by authorities.

Both the U.S. and China have cited national security concerns in imposing restrictions on trade and investment, and American businesses have at times been caught in the middle. Beijing has objected strenuously to Washington's moves to hike tariffs on Chinese-made products and limit Chinese access to advanced technologies, including leading-edge computer chips used for artificial intelligence.

The administration of President Joe Biden has sought to improve ties with China, including several meetings be-

tween Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping, but has largely left in place sanctions ordered by former President Donald Trump, who imposed punitive tariffs on Beijing.

The Treasury Department also has proposed a rule that would restrict and monitor U.S. investments in China for artificial intelligence, computer chips and quantum computing.

In his meeting with the group, Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao emphasized that U.S. investment restrictions on China will "seriously affect the investments and operations of American companies in China," the ministry said in a statement. It provided no details.

The U.S. China Business Council is a private, nonpartisan group of more than 270 American companies that do business in China. It said the visit to Beijing, just days after the Communist Party's four-day planning meeting, was intended to advance economic and policy priorities and support dialogue between U.S. and Chinese government and business leaders.

"We appreciate the opportunity to engage with Chinese leaders to promote commercial relations and advocate our priorities for the benefit of our companies and employees," the council's chairman and FedEx CEO Raj Subramaniam said in a statement.

The delegation of influential business people belonging to the U.S. China Business Council, including the CEOs of FedEx and Micron, followed a top-level meeting last week where ruling Communist Party leaders endorsed a blueprint for policies that included numerous pledges to improve the business environment for foreign investors. But they also vowed greater vigilance in protecting state secrets, a

Chinese officials warn of risks from higher US tariffs

As part of its commitment to rewarding its customers and enhancing their experience and lifestyle

KIB announces winners of first draw in its Summer Card Campaign

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has announced the names of the winners of the first draw in its Summer Card Campaign, designed to reward its Visa Credit and Prepaid Cardholders and recently launched in collaboration with Visa. The winners are Faisal Ayesh AlSalaameen, Abdulaziz Fouad Abdulathim, Sulaiman Khalaf AlHussaini, Mohammed Saad AlDosari, Othman Eid Al Shammeri, Nawaf Hamad AlGhanim, Waleed Mahmoud Awaad, Hussain Khalil Abbas, Eissa Eid Alazmi and Hamad Waleed AlDuwaisan. The announcement was made in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as KIB representatives.

Commenting on the occasion, Laila Naserallah, Senior Manager of Product Development at the Digital Innovation and Data Intelligence Department, said: “We are pleased to announce the winners of the first draw of this campaign, which falls within the framework of the Bank’s comprehensive strategy. This strategy underscores our commitment to offering the best banking benefits and products that enhance the customer experience and suit their lifestyle, in line with our main slogan, Bank for Life.” She added: “This initiative, aimed at rewarding KIB customers, runs throughout the travel and holiday season, making it a valuable addition to their lives and providing a great opportunity to enjoy an exceptional shopping experience both in Kuwait and abroad.”

This special campaign, which runs until August, continues to attract more customers who wish to earn double Cashback on purchases made with their



Laila Naserallah



Ali Hinnawi

cards, both within Kuwait and abroad. The prize amount will be equal to the Cashback earned during the draw spending period, with the minimum prize set at KD 150 and the maximum prize set at KD 600. This means that for every purchase made, cardholders will have a chance to win and receive twice the usual Cashback amount.

On his part, Ali Hinnawi, Visa’s Business Development Lead for Kuwait, said: “We are delighted to partner with KIB to reward our Visa cardhold-

ers in Kuwait with exciting prizes. By incentivizing the bank’s customers to use their Visa cards and rewarding them when they do, we’re supporting the Kuwait government’s digital commerce agenda for the benefit of consumers and businesses. Congratulations to all the winners, and we look forward to announcing the next round of winners soon.”

The latest campaign enables KIB customers who are holders of Visa Classic, Gold, Platinum, Signature, and Infinite Credit Cards or Visa Prepaid and Multicurrency Prepaid Cards to qualify for the campaign. Customers enter the monthly draw when using eligible KIB cards for their purchases of at least KD 600 for Credit Cards and KD 200 for Prepaid Cards, whether within or outside Kuwait. They will receive one chance to enter the draw for every KD 10 spent locally, and three chances for every KD 10 spent internationally during the campaign period.

It is worth noting that KIB spares no effort in launching different banking initiatives in partnership with Visa, such as the ‘Surprises for Every Season’ campaign, the February promotion commemorating Kuwait’s National and Liberation Day, and the ‘Win with KIB Rewards’ campaign, and much more. The Bank encourages its customers to keep an eye on KIB’s different platforms and social media accounts for updates on how to maximize their benefits, along with other promotions and services it continuously offers to fulfill all their needs.

Easier entry with KD 10 deposits for extra chances

Speeds up issuance, reduces errors & allows online tracking

ABK unveils Muhammad Seleem as ‘Alfouz’ weekly draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Muhammad Muhammad Seleem as the winner of Alfouz KD 10,000 weekly draw on Monday, 22 July, 2024. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

From the highly coveted mega annual draw of a KD 5,000 monthly salary for 10 years to its KD 10,000 weekly prize, the Alfouz account has already attracted the attention of the Kuwaiti market. Based on the account’s great success, ABK decided to go above and beyond to reward customer loyalty.

By introducing a KD 100,000 quarterly draw, in addition to an exciting KD 20,000 monthly draw, the Alfouz offering has continues to surpass expectations and deliver even more customer satisfaction.

To top it off, ABK has simplified the ability to open the account and win! Customers can enter the draws and get extra entry chances for every KD 10 deposited as opposed to KD 100 previously. The more you save, the higher your chance to be the next Alfouz winner!

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the



Alfouz winner.

upcoming monthly draw, which is scheduled to take place on Monday, 29 July, 2024.

Open an Alfouz account today and enjoy increased opportunities to win the lifestyle you’ve been waiting for!

To learn more about the Alfouz account and its range of exciting draws and prizes, please follow the ABK’s Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank’s branches across Kuwait.

Warba launches new smart banking solutions to clients

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: Warba Bank announced the provision of many smart banking solutions and new services to its clients, which include providing letters of guarantee and documentary credits through online corporate banking services, which enable clients to submit their transactions to the Bank from their workplace comfortably without their need to visit the Bank. This comes as part of Warba Bank’s continuous endeavor to provide a set of distinctive digital banking solutions and expand to better serve its growing customer base through diversification in innovative financial products and services.

Layali Mustafa Al-Fahad, Chief Operations Officer at Warba Bank, said that this service will speed up the issuance of letters of guarantee and documentary credits, save the client’s time and effort, reduce the rate of errors related to filling out data, and give clients the ability to



Layali Al-Fahad

follow the status of the application online.

Al-Fahad added that the new banking solutions and services that Warba Bank provides to clients form an added value by combining different banking solutions that meet the requirements, needs and interests of the clients.

She further said that Warba always

aims to raise the level of Islamic digital banking services towards a more innovative and distinguished future, where client’s comfort is the priority. Pointing out that this strategic investment, which meets the diverse and advanced needs of its corporate and individual clients, will confirm Warba Bank’s leadership position as a leading Islamic digital bank in the local market.

She stated that the digital transformation at Warba Bank has gained great momentum, relying primarily on innovation, creativity, and focus on the high quality of customer service through digital and traditional channels in accordance with the provisions of Islamic Sharia.

Al-Fahad noted that, with deliberate steps, Warba was able to successfully reach high levels of competition in the field of digital services and bring about change in the lives of clients through the services and products it provides.

Death Valley, Las Vegas, and other regions face unprecedented heat

Extreme heat waves hit record highs globally in summer 2024

By Mathew Barlow
UMass Lowell

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

A month into summer 2024, the vast majority of the U.S. population had already experienced at least one extreme heat wave, and millions of people were under heat alerts, with forecasts warning of more ahead.

Death Valley hit 125 degrees Fahrenheit (51.7 Celsius) or higher for nine consecutive days in early July. Las Vegas broke its all-time heat record at 120 F (48.9 C). Days of 100-degree heat dried out the California landscapes, fueling wildfires there and in the Northwest. Oregon reported several suspected heat deaths.

Globally, the planet had its hottest day in at least eight decades of record keeping on July 21 — and then broke the record again on July 22, according to the European Union’s Copernicus Climate Change Service.

The extreme heat is part of a longer trend: Each of the past 13 months has been the hottest on record for that month globally, including the hottest June, the EU service reported in early July. It also found that the average temperature for the previous 12 months had been at least 1.5 C (2.7 F)

warmer than the 1850-1900 pre-industrial average.

The 1.5 C warming threshold can be confusing, so let’s take a closer look at what that means. In the Paris climate agreement, countries worldwide agreed to work to keep global warming under 1.5 C, however that refers to the temperature change averaged over a 30-year period. A 30-year average is used to limit the influence of natural year-to-year fluctuations.

So far, the Earth has only crossed that threshold for a single year. However, it is still extremely concerning. We study weather patterns involving heat. The world appears to be on track to cross the 30-year average threshold of 1.5 C within 10 years.

Several countries have experienced record heat across the Americas, Africa, Europe and Asia in 2024. In Mexico and Central America, weeks of persistent heat starting in spring 2024 combined with prolonged drought led to severe water shortages and dozens of deaths.

Extreme heat turned into tragedy in Saudi Arabia, as over 1,000 people on the Hajj, a Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, collapsed and died. Temperatures reached 125 F (51.8 C) at the Grand Mosque in Mecca on June 17.

Hospitals in Karachi, Pakistan, were overwhelmed amid weeks of high heat, frequent power outages, and water shortages in some areas.

Neighboring India faced temperatures around 120 F (48.9 C) for several days in April and May that affected millions of people, many of them without air conditioning.

Japan issued heatstroke alerts in Tokyo and more than half of its prefectures as temperatures rose to record highs in early July.

Large parts of Europe were suffering through a long-running heat wave as the 2024 Summer Olympics prepared to open in Paris in late July.

Although heat waves are a natural part of the climate, the severity and extent of the heat waves so far in 2024 are not “just summer.”

A scientific assessment of the fierce heat wave in the eastern U.S. in June 2024 estimates that heat so severe and long-lasting was two to four times more likely to occur today because of human-caused climate change than it would have been without it. This conclusion is consistent with the rapid increase over the past several decades in the number of U.S. heat waves and their occurrence outside the peak of summer.

These record heat waves are happening in a climate that’s globally more than 2.2 F (1.2 C) warmer — when looking at the 30-year average — than it was before the industrial revolution, when humans began releasing large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions that warm the climate.

While a temperature difference of a degree or two when you walk into a different room might not even be noticeable, even fractions of a degree make a large difference in the global climate.

At the peak of the last ice age, some 20,000 years ago, when the Northeast U.S. was under thousands of feet of ice, the globally averaged temperature was only about 11 F (6 C) cooler than now. So, it is not surprising that 2.2 F (1.2 C) of warming so far is already rapidly changing the climate.

While this summer is likely to be one of the hottest on record, it is important to realize that it may also be one of the coldest summers of the future.

For populations that are especially vulnerable to heat, including young children, older adults and outdoor workers, the risks are even higher. People in lower-income neighborhoods where air conditioning may be unaffordable and renters who often don’t have the same protections for cooling as heating will face increasingly dangerous conditions.

Extreme heat can also affect economies. It can buckle railroad tracks and cause wires to sag, leading to transit delays and disruptions. It can also overload electric systems with high demand and lead to blackouts just when people have the greatest need for cooling. (AP)

The Conversation

Good feedback is art, here’s how I teach it

By Patrick Barry
University of Michigan

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

Uncommon Courses is an occasional series from The Conversation U.S. highlighting unconventional approaches to teaching.

“Feedback Loops: How to Give and Receive High-Quality Feedback”

Given that my students pursue careers in an incredibly wide range of fields — business, philanthropy, sports, medicine, finance, human rights, education — I wanted to teach them skills that could serve a general purpose. Being able to give and receive high-quality feedback will help them and the people they work with wherever they end up.

We learn how to solicit and deliver feedback. But we also learn how to interpret feedback, particularly when receiving it from multiple sources.

We also experiment with a wide range of feedback frameworks. A few frameworks come from external sources, such as “Radical Candor” by corporate management coach Kim Scott and “Thanks for the Feedback” by Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen of Harvard University’s Negotiation Project. The rest of the frameworks are the product of collaborations with students, lawyers, doctors, consultants and entrepreneurs. These include strategies for how to give your boss feedback, how to receive feedback from a peer and how to process feedback even when it isn’t clear or consistent.

Stone and Heen write about three:

■ **Appreciation:** applauding someone’s effort and performance

■ **Coaching:** showing someone a better way to do something

■ **Evaluation:** telling someone

where they stand

The optimal mix varies by person and situation, so we discuss different scenarios when one piece or another should be emphasized. Beginners or someone who is discouraged may need more appreciation, but a more advanced person may crave “coaching” and “evaluation.” That is, a pro baseball player may want tips on improving their swing.

Just because you are ready to give someone feedback doesn’t mean they are ready to receive it. The comedian Craig Ferguson has said it took him two failed marriages to learn that lesson. He now asks himself three questions before volunteering his thoughts:

■ Does this need to be said?

■ Does this need to be said by me?

■ Does this need to be said by me right now?

Another key idea comes from cognitive psychologist LeeAnn Renninger who explained in a TED Talk the importance of timing. Rather than blindsiding people with criticism, she suggests offering them some control over the delivery. Start by saying something like, “Do you have time to talk about how that last presentation went?”

Consent and autonomy can be critical feedback ingredients.

Last year, I put the main concepts and exercises from the course into a book called “Feedback Loops: How to Give and Receive High-Quality Feedback” that people can read or download for free. I also use videos, quizzes and assignments from an online course for which the book is a companion text.

Many students say the course helped them become better editors. Others have said it has helped them become better listeners and leaders. Perhaps the biggest benefit, however, is that they develop a set of tools and a conceptual vocabulary that helps them become better at getting better. They learn how to improve the way they — and others — improve. (AP)

UPS adds cooling equipment and ice access for drivers

New tech enhances worker safety amid rising heat

MCKINNEY, July 25, (AP): At the start of every work day, construction worker Charles Smith puts on the essentials: Hard hat. Safety glasses. A reflective vest. And a small, watch-like band for his wrist.

But rather than track time, its purpose is to ensure he doesn’t overheat while working during sweltering summer days in Texas. The wristband monitors his heart rate, core body temperature, stress level and more. If it detects signs of overheating, it warns him and his safety manager, advising Smith to rest and hydrate. The device serves as an early warning system to prevent heat-related injuries and illnesses.

The technology is one way that workplaces are setting up employee protections as summers grow hotter, longer and more extreme due to climate change. On Sunday, the Earth reached the hottest day ever measured, according to a European climate service group. And in the absence of federal heat rules for workers, which the Biden administration recently proposed, some employers in states without rules are taking it upon themselves to safeguard employees from extreme heat dangers.

“We can catch it before it happens,” said Seth Campbell, safety manager for the construction company Rogers-O’Brien, Smith’s employer, of monitoring signs of heat-related illnesses. Their team started using the technology last summer.

UPS recently equipped delivery drivers with cooling hats and sleeves that provide relief from heat — and increased access to ice, cold water and electrolytes for employees, according to its website. They have also added more cooling equipment to its vehicles and facilities, said vice president of global communications Genny Bowman in an email. That includes installing exhaust heat shields to lower vehicle floor temperatures, as well as fans in package cars and more fans in its facilities.

Some greenhouse companies, including Eden Green and Cox Farms, have said they adjust workers’ schedules to account for excessive heat, such as starting them earlier in the morning, breaking during peak heat, and returning in the evening as temperatures cool.

During June’s record-breaking heat wave in the Midwest and Northeast,

an organization in Columbus, Ohio, prepared frozen towels and cold water for their workers to stay cool and hydrated.

And in some California warehouses, where indoor temperatures can reach above 90 degrees Fahrenheit (about 32 Celsius), employers have provided cooling vests with ice packs in them and bandanas that can get cool when wet, according to Tim Shadix, legal director for the Warehouse Worker Resource Center, a nonprofit dedicated to improving working conditions in Southern California’s warehouse industry.

Such measures can help keep workers cool and comfortable, but Shadix said they’re not enough to protect them from worsening heat dangers. “Under standard workplace safety practices, those are meant to be responses of last resort,” he said, “but when you’re addressing a hazard, including heat, you usually try to start with what’s most effective,” which can include installing air conditioning, slowing down the workplace schedule or providing more breaks.

Last summer, during a historic heat wave, the Texas-based Rogers-O’Brien launched a pilot program that gives

workers the option to wear a heat sensor paired with a software called SafeGuard. If the worker’s heart rate or body temperature are too high, Campbell is among the people who receives an alert to check on them. He then assesses ways to cool them down, such as putting ice packs under their armpits.

“Last year we had two alerts and we were able to get that employee to the shade inside, get (them) plenty of electrolytes, and we didn’t have any clinic visits with anyone wearing the technology,” he said.

On really hot days coupled with intense physical exertion, Smith’s wristband has warned him and the safety manager that his body temperature and heart rate were high. It served as a signal to take a shaded break and drink water. And he did.

“The importance of it could stretch very far,” said Smith on a day of triple-digit temperatures. “Making sure that workers stay at levels where they could actually go home every night and see their families, making sure that workers are able to recover properly. I think it could be a great benefit to the industry and just about any other industry.”

What to expect as convention returns to San Diego

SAN DIEGO, July 25, (AP): Comic-Con International, the comic book and pop culture extravaganza, is kicking off in San Diego. The convention, which draws over 130,000 fans annually, opened for a preview night Wednesday and runs through Sunday.

With the COVID-19 pandemic and the Hollywood strikes disrupting past years of the convention either through complete cancellation or modifications to the way they ran, this year will be the most traditional Comic-Con since 2019.

Actors, filmmakers, comic book authors and illustrators and fans are making their way to the San Diego Convention Center and the several official (and unofficial) event locations for a weekend brimming with programming.

Here's what to expect at the sprawling convention.

With the highly anticipated release of "Deadpool & Wolverine," Marvel is set to be a strong presence, from the costumes fans don to the panels that draw the longest lines. The Ryan Reynolds and Hugh Jackman-led feature is the first and only Disney-backed Marvel movie of the year. The panel promoting the film and celebrating its release Thursday is expected to draw thousands to the convention's famed Hall H.

Marvel is also expected to announce news teasing their upcoming titles in their "Phase 5" cinematic universe plan and beyond, with Marvel president Kevin Feige as the only confirmed speaker on their Saturday panel. He will be joined by special guests, who may include stars

of upcoming Marvel titles like "Captain America: Brave New World," "Thunderbolts(asterisk)" and " The Fantastic Four."

After their absence from the convention last year due to the actors strike, stars are returning to the convention in full force to showcase upcoming series and movies. While the lineup for Marvel's panel will likely remain under wraps until the event starts, several A-listers are confirmed to attend the convention.

Chris Hemsworth, Keegan-Michael Key and Brian Tyree Henry will be speaking on a panel for "Transformers One," the upcoming animated movie with a star-studded cast that also includes Scarlett Johansson, Jon Hamm, Laurence Fishburne and Steve Buscemi.

Appearances

The cast of the anticipated August release "Alien: Romulus," Cailee Spaeny, Isabela Merced and David Jonsson, will speak on a panel with director and writer Fede Alvarez.

Christian Slater, Lupita Nyong'o and the cast members of "The Boys" and "Abbott Elementary" will also make appearances. And of course, Reynolds and Jackman, who have kept busy promoting "Deadpool & Wolverine," will be there, too.

Beyond the convention hall, San Diego will be buzzing with activities, brand activations, parties and events celebrating all things pop culture. Pop and R&B artist Jason Derulo, Japanese singer LiSA and the

San Diego Symphony Orchestra are each expected to perform at parties during the weekend.

While several parties and events are invitation-only - including the notable Entertainment Weekly party that draws huge crowds and several celebrities - visitors can keep an eye out for events and pop-ups throughout the city's Gaslamp Quarter. The area surrounding the convention center embraces the spirit of the weekend, with local businesses, restaurants and bars typically rolling out Comic-Con-specific products or menus.

Part of the draw for many Comic-Con attendees is the plethora of merchandise available to purchase on the exhibit floor. Booths selling collectibles from Marvel, DC, Star Wars, Lego, Hasbro, Sony, Mattel and dozens of other companies and franchises will take over the sprawling venue. Visitors can also expect some free items and giveaways on the floor.

The "Artists' Alley" in the exhibit hall also features dozens of rising creators selling art prints, comics, toys, books, collectibles and more.

Many attendees scramble on preview night and in the convention's first day to try to snag the merchandise that is exclusive to the event. Retailers big and small boast rare collectibles, and they sell out quickly.

Another highlight of the weekend for many is the inventive (and often lifelike) costumes attendees wear. The main exhibition floor is a good place to scout out the best looks, but visitors can expect to see decked-out fans throughout the city all weekend.

Variety



This image released by 20th Century Studios/Marvel Studios shows Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool/Wade Wilson and Hugh Jackman as Wolverine/Logan in a scene from 'Deadpool & Wolverine.' (AP)

Film

'Deadpool & Wolverine' delivers meta comedy, action

Superhero film embraces its true self

By Krysta Fauria

If one thing is certain about "Deadpool," it's that its titular hero, for reasons never explained, understands his place in the world - well, in our world.

Indeed, the irreverent and raunchy mutant is sure to belabor his awareness of the context in which he lives - namely an over-saturated, increasingly labyrinthine multibillion-dollar Marvel multiverse which spans decades, studios and too many films for most viewers to count.

From its inception, the "Deadpool" franchise has prided itself a subversive, self-aware anti-superhero superhero movie, making fun of everything from comic books to Hollywood to its biggest champion, co-writer and star, Ryan Reynolds.

It's no surprise then, as fans have come to expect, that the long-anticipated "Deadpool & Wolverine" further embraces its fourth wall-breaking self-awareness - even as it looks increasingly and more earnestly like the superhero movie blueprint it loves to exploit. That tension - the fact that "Deadpool" has called out comic book movie tropes despite being, in fact, a comic book movie - is somehow remedied in "Deadpool & Wolverine," which leans into its genre more than the franchise's first two movies.

Perhaps this gives viewers more clarity on its intended audience. After all, someone who hates superhero films - I'm looking at you, Scorsese - isn't going to be won over because of a few self-deprecating jokes about lazy writing, budgets for A-list cameos and the over-used "superhero landing" Reynolds' Deadpool regularly refers to.

But this time around, director Shawn Levy - his first Marvel movie - seems to have found a sweet spot. Levy is surely helped by the fact that the third film in the franchise has a bigger budget, more hype and, of course, a brooding, eventually shirtless, Hugh Jackman as Wolverine - who has long been teased as someone Deadpool has, er, complicated feelings toward.

That anticipation makes their relationship, packed with hatred, fandom and homoeroticism, all the more enticing. Their fight scenes against each other

are just as compelling as their moments of self-sacrificial partnership in the spirit of, you guessed it, saving the world(s).

Speaking of worlds, there is one important development in our own to be aware of ahead of time. The first two "Deadpool" films were distributed by 20th Century Fox, whose \$71.3 billion acquisition by the Walt Disney Co. in 2019 opened the door for the franchise to join the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, "Deadpool & Wolverine" takes full advantage of that vast playground, which began in 2008 with Robert Downey Jr.'s "Iron Man" and now includes more than 30 films and a host of television shows. The acquisition is also a recurring target of Deadpool's sarcasm throughout the movie.

Cameos

Although steeped in references and cameos that can feel a bit like inside baseball for the less devoted, "Deadpool & Wolverine" is easy enough to follow for the casual Marvel viewer, though it wouldn't hurt to have seen the first "Deadpool" and Jackman's 2017 "Logan," a harbinger of the increasing appetite for R-rated superhero violence. The Disney+ series "Loki" also gives helpful context, though is by no means a must watch, on the Time Variance Authority, which polices multiverse timelines to avoid "incursions," or the catastrophic colliding of universes.

A defining feature of "Deadpool" has been its R rating and hyper violent action scenes. Whether thanks to more money, Levy's direction or some combination of the two, these scenes are much more visually appealing.

But "Deadpool & Wolverine" does succumb to some of the deus ex machina writing that so often plagues superhero movies. Wade Wilson's (the real identity of Deadpool) relationship with his ex (?) Vanessa is particularly underdeveloped - though it's possible that ambiguity is a metaphor for Deadpool's future within the MCU.

The plot feels aimless at points toward the end. One cameo-saturated battle scene in particular is resolved in a way that leaves its audience wanting after spending quite a bit of time building tension around it. While there are a few impressive stars who make an appear-

ance, audiences may be disappointed by the amount of MCU characters referenced who don't make it in.

The bloody but comedic final fight scene, however, is enough to perk viewers back up for the last act, solidifying the film's identity as a fun, generally well-made summer movie.

The sole MCU release of 2024, "Deadpool & Wolverine" proves it's not necessarily the source material that's causing so-called superhero fatigue. It also suggests, in light of Marvel's move to scale back production following a pandemic and historic Hollywood strikes, that increased attention given to making a movie will ultimately help the final product.

"Deadpool & Wolverine," a Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for strong bloody violence and language throughout, gore and sexual references. Running time: 127 minutes. Two and a half out of four stars.

Also:

BEIJING: China's box office revenue for the 2024 summer movie season, which runs from June 1 to Aug. 31, had exceeded 6 billion yuan (about 841 million US dollars) as of Monday noon, with three domestic films topping the box office chart.

According to film data platform Beacon, the comedy "Successor," featuring renowned comedic duo **Shen Teng** and **Ma Li**, leads the chart. The film, released on July 16, tells the story of a wealthy couple who fakes a challenging environment for their son to foster his personal growth. By Monday noon, it had raked in over 1.58 billion yuan, accounting for 26.4 percent of the total box office sales.

Ranking second is the crime thriller "A Place Called Silence." The film, which delves into the topic of campus bullying, debuted on July 3 and had grossed nearly 1.12 billion yuan as of Monday noon.

The drama "Moments We Shared," released on June 22, secured the third spot in the seasonal rankings with approximately 496.5 million yuan in box office earnings.

The summer moviegoing period is the longest single screening season on the Chinese mainland. In 2023, the summer box office totaled 20.6 billion yuan. (Agencies)

MONTREUX, Switzerland: As the curtains fell on the 58th Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, famous for its iconic live music performances since 1967, its CEO told Xinhua that the upcoming China edition is an opportunity to connect East and West.

This year's edition took place from July 5 to 20 in the Swiss resort town on the shores of Lake Geneva, nestled between steep hills and the Lavaux vineyard terraces, a UNESCO-listed world heritage site.

It attracted 250,000 festival-goers and recorded an average of 90 percent of tickets sold, its CEO **Mathieu Jaton** told Xinhua in an interview.

"I'm happy to say that even though we had a lot of extra costs, we covered the budget. This is the best news because it was quite a risky edition," he said.

"We are happy to say that we are safe. The beauty of the experience is that we started on a blank canvas without knowing exactly how it's going to work. And it worked tremendously," he said.

Organized outside the Convention Center which usually hosts the festival's main stages but is undergoing renovation, the main stages of the event were the Lake Stage constructed on the surface of Lake Geneva, and the Casino Stage.

Highlights this year included sold-out headliners such as **Sting** and **Lenny Kravitz**, as well as **Deep Purple**, **Raye**, **Dionne Warwick**, and **The Smashing Pumpkins**.

With 12 concerts sold out and an average occupancy rate of 92 percent, the Lake Stage met and even exceeded its objectives, Jaton said, adding that the Casino Stage also recorded very good figures, with 10 sell-outs and an 88 percent occupancy rate.

Jaton highlighted that the international expansion of the festival was now gathering pace. "We're very happy that the expansion of the brand is getting stronger and stronger with another addition of Montreux Jazz Festival China. We're very happy about it."

Swiss music promoter **Claude Nobs**, who died in 2013, founded the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1967 and built it into an international festival and event platform for music lovers.

Since its creation, the festival

under its slogan "Where Legends Are Born" has seen many iconic live music performances. Superstars including **Miles Davis**, **Aretha Franklin**, **Prince**, **Elton John** and **Stevie Wonder** have all performed here over the years.

The festival will also travel to China for the third time in the fall and take place in Suzhou, Jiangsu



Sting



Warwick

province, from Oct. 25 to 27 under the Montreux Jazz Festival China's theme "When West Meets East."

"It's a beautiful experience we have with the Chinese people and the Montreux Jazz Festival China team," Jaton said. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

AMMAN: The 38th Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts kicked off on Wednesday in the ancient historic city of Jerash, some 50 km to the north of Amman.

This year's festival celebrates the silver jubilee of **King Abdullah II**'s accession to the throne and draws together participants from over 40 countries, reaffirming commitment to Arab causes,

primarily the Palestinian cause, and showing solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Participants from **Saudi Arabia**, **Egypt**, **Kuwait**, **Tunisia**, **Oman**, and **Jordan** also set up pavilions to showcase traditional industries, heritage, culture, media, and architecture from these countries. (Xinhua)

People & Places

Film

Strong message

New AI film honors female sports icons

PARIS, July 25, (Xinhua): A documentary that pays tribute to great female athletes over the past century has been jointly launched by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Chinese e-commerce and technology company Alibaba and its cloud arm Alibaba Cloud here.

The eight-minute film, To the Greatness of HER, tells the stories of these athletes who have made significant strides in sports, from a time when women were excluded from the Olympics to the upcoming Paris Games, where gender representation is expected to be equal.

Expressing his appreciation of Alibaba for using AI-powered technology, IOC President **Thomas Bach** said in a video message at the film's premiere on Wednesday night that "the film allows us to reflect on one of the most important priorities of the Olympic community, empowering women in and through sport."

The film includes a large share of restored and colorized archival footage and photos of these athletes, thanks to Alibaba Cloud's AI technology.

It features notable athletes including Susan Lenglen, the legendary French tennis player who was the inaugural world No. 1 from 1921 to 1926, winning eight Grand Slam titles in singles and 21 in total; Zhang Shan, the first woman to earn an Olympic shooting sport gold medal in mixed competition at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics; and Kathrine Switzer, a trailblazer for women's marathon inclusion in the Olympics.

Switzer, 77, famously known as "forever 261," made history by participating in the Boston Marathon in 1967 despite facing resistance from race officials, one of whom even tried to rip off her bib-number 261 and throw her out of the course.

Opportunities

"That moment changed my life and showed the world that women must be taken seriously as people as well as athletes. This race propelled me and others to create opportunities for other women all the way to the inclusion of the women's marathon and beyond, in the Olympic Games," said Switzer at the premiere.

"The story of No. 261 has been told many times, and the AI-powered cloud technology just presented it in the most special way possible," she said.

"Looking into the future, I hope AI-powered cloud technology can help with athletic training, letting more people unlock their full potential and reach new heights."

Another heroine of the documentary, Zhang Shan, the 56-year-old Chinese Olympic champion, remains sharp, confident and humorous when speaking about her career.

"I never reminisce about my youthful glory because I have always had it," she told Xinhua.

"Many people say they enjoy watching my competitions because they find my shooting stance to be graceful. Even when I was coaching the youth team, I rarely picked up a gun because I believe it is important for these young athletes to learn on their own. However, when I do pick up a gun, it still leaves them in awe," she said.

Zhang remembers vividly the medal ceremony at the Barcelona Olympics 32 years ago, when the silver and bronze medal winners, both males, raised her up high on the podium.

"My goal is not to defeat any male athletes. I just love shooting," Zhang said.

"In the history of the Olympics, there were many sports that were considered unsuitable for women in the past. But with social development and advancement of technology, women have demonstrated their abilities in various aspects of society. Therefore, I think it is not just about seeking equality, but more about seeing it as a progress for humanity," she said.

Winning the Olympic gold had a profound impact on Zhang's life.

"I was only 24 when I won the gold, and my life was just at its beginning. I have often said that I have been living on top of this gold medal my whole life — having this gold medal made me more disciplined in my training and competitions since 1992," Zhang said.

"I cannot afford to be negligent because I feel that every move I make will influence the younger generation. I hope to be a role model and benchmark for them," she said.

Zhang retired two years ago, but sports still hold an important place in her life. She now serves as the vice president of the Sichuan provincial charity federation, while promoting electro-optical shooting among young people. She has also organized a dragon boat team with an average age of 60.

For Zhang, the essence of life is "to be the best version of oneself." "If every individual does their best, then we will all be fine," she said.

Shot more than a century ago, a scene showing Lenglen playing at her Wimbledon debut in 1919 looks as if it were filmed just yesterday.

A treasure trove of nearly 100 vintage film clips and photos has been reborn in high-definition with the AI technology of Alibaba Cloud. The engineers behind this transformation revealed their secrets to Xinhua.

Restoration

"It's like embarking on a journey through time, not just for me but for all those who watch the documentary," said Huang Jun, a senior staff engineer on the Alibaba Cloud AI platform, and is in charge of the documentary restoration project.

Though still in black and white, the remastered footage no longer appears jittery and sped-up, as silent films usually do.

The Alibaba Cloud team uses sophisticated AI models and algorithms to recreate the missing visual information in these old photos and films, enabling motion to advance as smoothly as it does in contemporary film and to make the images look eerily modern, said Huang.

"We employ image super-resolution technology to convert low-resolution, blurry old photos into high-resolution images, and then we use advanced image coloring technology to add realistic colors to black-and-white photos, bringing them to life and making them more engaging," he said.

Huang noted that the true test lies in coloring. With scant visual references available for the aged photos and films, achieving accurate hues poses a real challenge.

He highlighted the complexities, from varying skin tones of athletes based on sunlight exposure to the blurred backgrounds and inconsistent coloring across different elements, such as medals and surroundings.



A member of staff views exhibits from previous concert tours that are displayed at the 'Taylor Swift Songbook Trail Exhibition' at the Victoria & Albert Museum, on Wednesday, July 24, in London. (AP)

Music

Gardiner quits choir, orchestra he founded

Swift's eras shine at V&A museum

LONDON, July 25, (AP): Taylor Swift fans who missed her world tour or those who can't get enough of her can catch her at the museum this summer.

As a celebration of her double run of sold-out shows in London on her Eras Tour, real items from Swift's different musical eras have been integrated into galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Costumes, guitars and other memorabilia from the pop star's archive have been curated into a "Songbook Trail" that opens Saturday and runs through Sept. 8.

"There's so many really iconic objects and looks worn by Taylor across her career from her breakout moment in country," said Kate Bailey, senior curator of theater and performance at the V&A. "It's wonderful to be able to share her musicality and her microphone. So, many, many things."

The exhibit is not the first museum treatment of Swift. Last summer, the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) in New York City presented "Taylor Swift: Storyteller," featuring a different array of costumes and objects spanning her career.

Die-hard Swifties may recognize items in a display case dating back to an early tour in 2007 when she was a supporting act: pale blue heart-adorned cowboy boots, turquoise dress and a Taylor acoustic guitar made of koa wood.

The exhibits are set among priceless works in a museum that houses collections of art, fashion, photography, furniture, performance, architecture, and ceramics.

A purple skirt and pink and green sequined jacket from the 2015 tour of her Grammy-winning 1989 album are in a case next to a painting by the High Renaissance artist Raphael. A sweater from the "Cardigan" video from her "folklore" album sits in front of a piano in a gallery of landscape paintings.

The Cinderella-like yellow gown from the "Bejewelled" music video from the "Midnights" album is displayed in the Prince Consort Gallery. A stage costume from her Reputation Tour, complete with snake microphone, is in the British Gallery.

"The V&A feels like the perfect stage for a Taylor Swift trail," Bailey said. "I think there's so many touchpoints within Taylor's work that respond to art, literature, history. ... There's so many ways that we can kind of interpret and layer and present Taylor's work here."

Also:

LONDON: Renowned British conductor **John Eliot Gardiner** said Wednesday he is quitting the orchestra he has led for six decades, almost a year after he allegedly hit a singer backstage after a concert.

Gardiner said he was stepping down as leader and artistic director of the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra "with a heavy heart."

NEW YORK, July 25, (AP): Get ready to say willkommen to the next stars to enter the Kit Kat Club on Broadway - Adam Lambert and Auli'i Cravalho,

Producers of the Tony Award-nominated revival revealed Wednesday that Lambert, the singer-songwriter who has fronted Queen, and Cravalho, the voice of the title character in Disney's animated musical film "Moana," will play the Emcee and Sally Bowles, respectively, in the current revival of "Cabaret."

The two - each making their Broadway debuts - will take over for English actors Eddie Redmayne and Gayle Rankin, who both earned Tony Award nominations for their parts. The newcomers will start Sept. 16 and play through the end of March.

"I feel so lucky to have this baton passed to Adam and I," said Cravalho in an email from Indonesia. She noted that she saw the musical before her audition, pen and paper in hand. "The show feels so fresh and current."

Lambert, who has just released his new dance-centric EP "Afters," started his career in musical theater - he was in the ensemble of the first national tour of "Wicked" and later was in the show in Los Angeles for two years. "It sounds cliché, but this is literally a childhood dream," he said by phone.

He steps into the sinister and lascivious role of master of ceremonies, one made famous by Joel Grey and Alan Cumming. Redmayne's take was more dark and audacious.

"I get the role. I get who he is. I'm excited about it. I think it works with my skill set," Lambert says. "And I'm really, really excited to be in a cast again because with pop music, it's like it's all on you. To be able to do a show with a whole team of people onstage, it's what I miss."

"Cabaret," about the collapse of democracy and rise of fascism in Germany, centers on the world of the indulgent Kit Kat Klub in Berlin as it becomes more precarious on the brink of World War II. The songs by John Kander and Fred Ebb include "Willkommen" and "Tomorrow Belongs to Me."

"It's so timely right now. We're potentially on the verge of fascism again, just like they were then," says Lambert. "There's so many parallels to what's going on in the real world, which is what I think gives it so much weight, and so much validity."

Cravalho, who appeared in "The Power" on Amazon, NBC's drama "Rise" and Netflix's "All Together Now," also starred in the film adaptation of Tina Fey's Broadway "Mean Girls: The Musical."

She next takes up one of the stage's most iconic roles, one created by Liza Minnelli. Others who have played Sally Bowles on Broadway include Natasha Richardson, Michelle Williams, Emma Stone and Sienna Miller.

ties," he said.

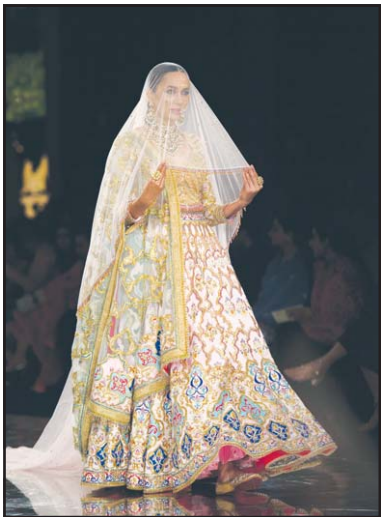
Gardiner is a Grammy-winning baroque music conductor who has made more than 60 appearances at the BBC Proms, an annual summer classical music extravaganza.

He led the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists in a performance for guests at **King Charles III's** coronation ceremony at **Westminster Abbey** in May 2023. He was knighted for his services to music in 1998.

"The Monteverdi Choir, which I founded in 1964, has been the proudest and most inspiring project of my life and I have arrived at this decision with a heavy heart after six decades of remarkable collaborative achievement," Gardiner said.

The choir and orchestra's board said Gardiner's "extraordinary musical influence over the past 60 years has made a lasting impact."

"The MCO acknowledges with gratitude his monumental contribution, and holds a deep-seated commitment to honor and preserve these phenomenal accomplishments," it said.



A model presents a creation during the FDCI India Couture Week 2024 in New Delhi, India, July 24. (Xinhua)

Variety

DOHA: In the bustling heart of **Souq Wajif**, the Majles of **Qatar** stands as a living testament to the nation's rich cultural heritage.

Established in 2016, the unique venue not only introduces visitors to Qatar's customs and traditions, but also serves as a vibrant meeting place for locals and tourists alike.

The Majles offers an immersive experience into Qatari society, showcasing its values, ethics, and way of life, according to the founder of the Majles, **Hussein Al-Haddad**.

He told KUNA that this space was created to provide a platform for cultural exchange and highlight the enduring legacy of Qatar's ancestors, the Majles of Qatar was established to represent all Qataris and to educate visitors about Qatari traditions and heritage.

Over the years, the Majles has hosted a variety of events, from celebrating the national holidays of GCC countries to marking international sporting events such as the 2022 FIFA World Cup and the AFC Asian Cup. Not only that these gatherings foster a sense of community, but also allow visitors to experience Qatari hospitality firsthand.

One of the Majles' key roles is preserving and promoting traditional Qatari crafts and professions that have been the backbone of the society, as visitors can learn about historic trades like blacksmithing, carpentry, jewelry making, and pearl diving, offering insight into the economic and cultural history of Qatar and the Gulf region. (KUNA)

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.: A judge says controversial social media personality **Andrew Tate**'s defamation lawsuit against a **Florida** woman who accused him of imprisoning her in Romania can move forward, but he threw out Tate's allegations against her parents and some allegations against the woman.

Palm Beach County Circuit Judge **Joseph Curley** ruled that the widely followed former professional kickboxer, 37, and his brother, **Tristan**, 36, can pursue their allegations that the woman in 2022 enlisted another woman in a plot to extort money from them.

The British-American brothers say the woman falsely accused them of human trafficking and rape, costing them their freedom and millions of dollars in income from their lucrative social media, podcasting and business ventures. Romanian officials indicted the Tates last year, saying the brothers forced seven victims into pornography and subjected them to physical violence.

Her attorneys say the lawsuit is in retribution for her reporting him to authorities. The Associated Press generally does not name people who say they have been sexually assaulted.

Curley said in last week's ruling, posted to online court records Tuesday, that the Tates' attorneys have shown enough possible evidence that the woman defamed their clients and was attempting to defraud and extort them to warrant that the sides exchange discovery. He pointed to April 2022 text messages the woman and her friend exchanged where they say they will ask the Tates for \$200,000 and "act like we still love them and stuff." (AP)

BUFFALO, N.Y.: A man who severely injured author **Salman Rushdie** in a frenzied knife attack in western **New York** faces new terrorism charges.

A three-count indictment unsealed in **US** District Court in **Buffalo** on Wednesday charges Hadi Matar with attempting to provide material support to Hezbollah, a militant group based in **Lebanon** and backed by **Iran**. The indictment didn't detail what evidence linked Matar to the group. It also includes charges of committing terrorism



Tate



Rushdie

transcending national boundaries and providing material support to terrorists.

The federal charges come after Matar earlier this month rejected an offer by state prosecutors to recommend a shorter prison sentence if he agreed to plead guilty in **Chautauqua County** Court, where he is charged with attempted murder and assault. The agreement also would have required him to plead guilty to a federal terrorism-related charge, which hadn't been filed yet at the time. (AP)

WHO warns of global spike

Floods, climate change blamed for dengue surge in the UAE

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, July 25, (AP): Since the United Arab Emirates witnessed its heaviest recorded rainfall ever three months ago, the desert nation has issued a multitude of warnings about dengue which, activists say, has surged and struck hardest among the vast populations of laborers.

The tropical disease, spread by mosquitos, has witnessed a world-wide spike. The World Health Organization declared it an emergency in December as cases have globally increased tenfold over the last generation.

Many people infected by the virus are asymptomatic, but some experience headaches, fever and flu-like symptoms. Severe cases can lead to serious bleeding, shock and death.

In the UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms, the disease has usually spread due to travel on long-haul carriers into the country. However, on April 25, the Department of Health alerted that locally transmitted cases without travel history have been documented since 2023 “as a result of climate change and an environment conducive to mosquito breeding.”

Changes in weather patterns turn countries previously inhospitable to Dengue-carrying mosquitos into possible habitats.

The April deluges, which flooded portions of major highways and Dubai’s international airport, only amplified the risk in the Gulf country. While major thoroughfares quickly saw vacuum pumps arrive, others remained saddled for weeks with stagnant pools of water, where virus-carrying mosquitos lay their eggs and spread the disease.

No official figures have been shared in the Emirates where broad laws severely restrict freedom of speech and almost all major local media are either state-owned or state-affiliated outlets. Queries sent to various governmental organizations about the exact number of confirmed dengue cases went unanswered.

The WHO also declined to discuss the situation in the UAE when reached by The Associated Press. However, the UN health agency noted in its May 30 report that there have been continued dengue outbreaks in Mideast “countries with stronger health-care systems that have been affected by unusual rains due to climate change.” It also said: “Timely data sharing also remains a challenge for other countries in the region for reasons such as the potential impact in the tourism, economy and other sectors.”

Meanwhile, public awareness campaigns across the sheikdom on the importance of cleaning stagnant water and warnings about dengue, also known as backbone fever, have been widely aired on state media.

Laborers

Still, activists stressed that communities of laborers are bearing the brunt of the disease.

The slow cleanup of flooded areas in industrial sites has worsened the spread of the disease among laborers,

some of whom have left their home countries already affected by climate change for a chance to earn money in the UAE, according to a report issued by FairSquare, a London-based group focused on labor rights in the Gulf Arab states.

The July 4 report detailed a surge in dengue cases among migrant worker communities across the Emirates, citing three healthcare workers, a government official, and migrant workers. The group attributed the rise in cases to a lagging government response to the spread of the viral infection in areas where migrant laborers live and work.

James Lynch, a FairSquare co-director once banned from entering the UAE while at Amnesty International, told the AP that “the important thing here is the disproportionate impact” of how the virus seems to mainly spread among laborers. “What you would want to see is an even-handed approach to dealing with clean up and it doesn’t seem to be the case here.”

No specific figures were shared in the report which quoted a nurse, who works at a private clinic in the city of Sharjah, as saying they receive over 30 cases every four or five days, describing the rise in cases as “alarming.”

The UAE’s overall population of more than 9.2 million is only 10% Emirati, with millions of low-paid workers from Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

“I call it a double whammy of climate change on this very vulnerable population,” said Barrak Alahmad, a research fellow at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. “I see that these migrant workers are on the front line facing the effects of climate change and health.”

The effect of the virus also resonated in Iran.

The Islamic Republic relies on Dubai as a major transit point to the rest of the world due to the international sanctions it faces over its nuclear program and tensions with the West.

On July 9, Shahnam Arshi, an Iranian health ministry official said of

149 people infected with dengue, 130 had been infected in the UAE while Hossein Farshidi, deputy health minister, said the first known infected person entered Iran on May 15, after the flooding in the Emirates.

Farshidi, in his latest remarks on July 23, said the number of infected people in the country, rose to 152, without giving further details.

This year, Iran also reported its first locally transmitted cases of dengue, saying the number rose to 12 in July, all of them located in the Bandar Lengeh port, south of Iran.

Earlier this year, Brazil’s Rio de Janeiro declared a public health emergency because of mosquito-borne dengue fever, while in July, US officials warned doctors to stay on alert as the tropical disease broke international records.

“Each year, we are going to see new places and different local governments struggling with either dengue or other issues from climate change,” said Alahmad, the research fellow. “It is an ever-expanding issue. I don’t know if we have an easy fix to this.”

733 m faced hunger in 2023

Sudan’s war intensifies cancer patients plight

KHARTOUM, July 25, (Agencies): Fatima, a Sudanese patient with blood cancer, had traveled on a dangerous journey nationwide searching for life-saving treatment despite the country’s ongoing war and bloodshed.

Fatima, 43, told Xinhua from an oncology center in Port Sudan how she had embarked on an odyssey from the southern inland state of West Kordofan all the way up to the Red Sea city and secured a place in a medical center already in great shortage of supplies and overwhelmed by patients.

“It was a frightening and arduous journey. We were exposed to stress, hunger, security risks, and repeated inspections from the army and rapid support points,” she said.

Due to prolonged clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which began in April 2023, all health facilities in West Kordofan stopped working. Many patients died due to the lack of treatment, she noted.

Seeking medical help, she took the rugged roads from Kailik city in her home state to Wad Madani, the capital city of the Gezira State in central Sudan, where she was lucky enough to be enrolled in a treatment program at these state-run Wad Madani Oncology Center, right away.

Unfortunately, the treatment went on for merely a couple of months until last December, when the clashes spreading there disrupted everything.

She was forced to flee once again. She decided to try Port Sudan, the capital city of the Red Sea State in eastern Sudan.

“In this oncology center, I receive chemotherapy, but I still lack radiotherapy,” she said.

At the center, every cancer patient has a different story, but all of them agree that the war has exacerbated their suffering.

Maimuna, a breast cancer patient, said an arduous trek from the South Kordofan state took her here, but she immediately found the facility was lack of radiotherapy, and she had to opt for much more expensive alternatives.

Due to the war, Sudan has lost five radiotherapy devices that were in Khartoum and Gezira State, according to Dafalla Omer Abudiris, director of Sudan’s National Centers for Oncology Treatment.

“There is no radiotherapy available now in Sudan. We have one machine in Merowe Hospital in northern Sudan, providing only about 5 percent

of needed radiotherapy treatment,” Abudiris told Xinhua.

He further noted that there is about a 40 percent shortage in Sudan’s real need of chemotherapy drugs for cancer patients, appealing to world countries and organizations to provide chemotherapy drugs.

Sudanese doctors warned as early as in October in the open-access medical journal Eancermedicscience that “the limited access to oncology services during the current war endangers the lives of more than 40,000 Sudanese cancer patients.”

The WHO said in a report published on June 18 that nearly 15 million people are estimated to need urgent lifesaving healthcare services in the country, for which health cluster partners are aiming to reach 4.9 million people, requiring 178 million U.S. dollars to do so, but which is only 26 percent funded.

The ongoing war has wreaked havoc on the country’s health sector, with an estimated loss of nearly 11 billion dollars on hospitals, health centers, and medical supplies, according to Sudan’s Acting Health Minister Haitham Mohamed Ibrahim.

□ □ □

Nutrition: About 733 million people, or some 9 percent of the world population, may have faced hunger in 2023, according to the latest edition of the United Nations’ (UN) “State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World” released on Wednesday.

The figure is about 152 million more than in 2019, said the report titled “State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024: Financing to End Hunger, Food Insecurity and Malnutrition in All Its Forms.”

The report, which was published by five UN agencies: the Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Children’s Fund, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, was launched in the context of the G20 Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty Task Force Ministerial Meeting in Brazil.

According to the report, trends are not yet moving in the right direction to end hunger and food insecurity by 2030, and the indicators of progress towards global nutrition targets similarly show that the world is not on track to eliminate all forms of malnutrition, with billions of people still lacking access to nutritious, safe and sufficient food.

Unsecured internet access poses risks

Tech tip: To hide internet activity or IP address, use a virtual private network



(Pic A) An IT field services technician works on software on an information display near United Airlines gates at Chicago O'Hare International Airport, in Chicago, Friday, July 19. (AP)

‘Let bad data slip through’

CrowdStrike blames update bug for global tech collapse

NEW YORK, July 25, (AP): CrowdStrike is blaming a bug in an update that allowed its cybersecurity systems to push bad data out to millions of customer computers, setting off last week’s global tech outage that grounded flights, took TV broadcasts off air and disrupted banks, hospitals and retailers.

CrowdStrike also outlined measures it would take to prevent the problem from recurring, including staggering the rollout of updates, giving customers more control over when and where they occur, and providing more details about the updates that it plans.

The company on Wednesday posted details online from its “preliminary post incident review” of the outage, which caused chaos for the many businesses that pay for the cybersecurity firm’s software services.

The problem involved an “undetected error” in the content configuration update for its Falcon platform affecting Windows machines, the Texas company said.

A bug in the content validation system allowed “problematic content data” to be deployed to CrowdStrike’s customers. That triggered an “unexpected exception” that caused a Windows operating system crash, the company said.

As part of the new prevention measures, CrowdStrike said it’s also beefing up internal testing as well as putting in place “a new check” to stop “this type of problematic content” from being deployed again.

Just remember a VPN won’t hide everything. If you’re logging into your Gmail account, for example, Google will still know who you’re emailing.

VPNs are perfectly legal in most countries. However, they are outlawed or restricted in places where the authorities control internet access or censorship, such as North Korea and China.

There are dozens if not hundreds of available VPN services, but not all are credible. Experts warn that some could be run by shady operators.

Start with tech review websites that have tested and analyzed their privacy policies, encryption practices, ease of use, speed, price and other categories. Some review sites rank VPNs according to specific uses like streaming.

Some better-known or established providers include NordVPN, Mullvad, Proton, Surfshark, ExpressVPN and Private Internet Access.

There are a few key features to look out for.

One is a “kill switch” that halts all internet traffic if the VPN’s connection goes down, preventing stray bits of data from getting out.

Security

“The kill switch is a pretty powerful security feature,” because it will never leave you exposed, said Paul Bischoff, security and privacy advocate at consumer research group Comparitech. But he said some find it annoying because, for example, if your phone switches networks, your connection will go down briefly.

Experts also recommend VPNs with a “no-logging” guarantee. It’s a promise that none of your online activity will be recorded. But it’s not easy for an ordinary user to verify whether the VPN operator is fulfilling such promises, so look for audits by third-party inspectors.

Expect to pay a monthly fee to use the most reputable VPNs.

Experts warn against using free VPNs because many offer sub-par security or could be harvesting your data.

Bischoff warned some free VPNs could be from rogue operators who disclose little information about who’s behind them or the security they’re using.

“Some of them are straight up malware,” Bischoff said. They might inject ads into your browsing or not be able to unblock many streaming services. Free VPNs also tend to be slower because they “usually have too many users on too few servers,” he said.

Some reputable VPNs provide a free version, but they typically come with restrictions such as limiting use to one device or a cap on data. They’re a good option if you only need to occasionally browse privately.

MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health

To advertise in this page please call: (+965) 24813566 Ext.: 513 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

For
your
ads on
this page

Call: 24813805 E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

www.arabtimesonline.com

SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE
الفروانية FARWANIYA

DENTAL & COSMETIC DEPARTMENT

- SCALING & GUM TREATMENT
- COSMETIC SMILE RECONSTRUCTION
- GUM & ORAL SURGERY
- BAD BREATH TREATMENT
- SURGICAL TREATMENT
- ROOT CANAL TREATMENT
- COSMETIC FILLING
- FIXED & REMOVABLE DENTURES
- CROWN TREATMENT
- SIMPLE & SURGICAL EXTRACTION

Working Time: From 9am to 1pm & 5pm to 9pm
Ph: 24 734 000

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp. Police station - Farwaniya
www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

Match played at Levi’s Stadium

Ugochukwu scores in 82nd, Chelsea salvage draw with Wrexham in friendly



Chelsea defender Tosin Adarabioyo (center), moves the ball past Wrexham forward Ollie Palmer (left), during the first half of a club friendly soccer match in Santa Clara, Calif. (AP)

Brunetta has a goal, an assist to lead

Liga MX All-Stars past MLS All-Stars

Crowd of 20931 watched the game

COLUMBUS, Ohio, July 25, (AP): Juan Brunetta and Maximiliano Meza scored a minute apart in the second half, and Mexico’s Liga MX All-Stars beat the Major League Soccer All-Stars 4-1 in the MLS All-Star Game on Wednesday night.

Brunetta (Tigres) scored in transition in the 68th minute to make it 3-1 and set up Meza (Monterrey) soon after in front of a record crowd of 20,931 at Lower.com Field.

It was the first MLS All-Star Game victory for Liga MX in three tries. The MLS All-Stars won in 2022 and won on penalty kicks after a 1-1 draw a year earlier.

“It was an incredible game,” Liga MX coach Andre Jardine said. “There were a lot of high-level players. It was a tight game. Both teams definitely came out to play. In the second half they came out with a lot of great names as well. I was a bit surprised. It was a bit difficult, especially in the first 15 minutes, but we had to adjust and ultimately it was a great game.”

SOCCER

There were plenty of big names on the field, but the absence of the brightest and biggest one took some luster out of the event. The league announced Monday that Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi was unable to play because of ligament damage in his right ankle.

The 2022 World Cup champion was injured while playing for Argentina in its victory over Colombia in the Copa America final on July 14.

Fans cheered when Columbus forwards combined to tie the match 1-all in the 17th minute, about a minute after Germán Berterame (Monterrey) scored for Mexico on a header.

From the left flank, Diego Rossi found Crew teammate Cucho Hernandez racing unmarked down the middle of the box for the equalizer.

“Unbelievable for me to score in front of my home fans,” Hernandez said.

Oussama Idrissi (Pachuca) made it 2-1 in the 41st with a strike from the top of the penalty area.

MLS had two chances to tie it in the 63rd when Riqui Puig (Los Angeles Galaxy) hit the crossbar and on the follow, Luca Orellano

Australian coach comes under fire at Olympics

after saying he’s pulling for S. Korean swimmer

PARIS, July 25, (AP): An Australian swimming coach came under fire from his own team on Thursday after saying was pulling for a South Korean athlete to beat his country’s medal contenders at the Olympics.

Head coach Rohan Taylor called the comments by Michael Palfrey “un-Australian” and said he might be sent home before the swimming competition, which begins Saturday at La Defense Arena in the western Paris suburbs.

“Very disappointed. Extremely disappointed,” Taylor said. “For a coach on our team to promote another athlete ahead of our athletes is not acceptable.”

Palfrey is part of the Australian staff at the Olympics, overseeing the preparations for three swimmers and working with a fourth athlete as well. But he previously coached South Korean men’s 400-meter freestyle world champion Kim Woo-min.

In an interview with South Korean television, Palfrey said he was pulling for Kim to claim gold in that event on the opening day of the swimming competition.

“I really hope he can win, but ultimately I really hope he swims well,” Palfrey said. He added, “Go Korea.” Palfrey has conceded making

the comment and apologized for the lapse in judgment, according to Taylor, but it may not be enough to keep him in Paris. The head coach said he would meet with the athletes later Thursday to discuss whether Palfrey should remain at the Olympics.

“For me, my priority is the performance of the team, the performance of the athletes,” Taylor said. “I need to look at the performance of the team and make a judgment call on that.”

OLYMPICS

Australia has two of the leading gold-medal contenders in the 400 freestyle: 2023 world champion Sam Short and 2022 world champion Elijah Winnington.

It’s not unusual for coaches to work with athletes from other countries. One of the top American coaches, Bob Bowman, leads a training group that includes French star Léon Marchand.

But in an Olympic year, Taylor said, it was totally unacceptable for a coach on the Australian staff to express support for another country’s swimmer.

“We confronted him with those details,” Taylor said. “He owns that

and was taken to task for it. He’s very remorseful and we’re now dealing with it.”

Australian swimmer Bronte Campbell, competing in her fourth Olympics, said the controversy has “barely caused a ripple” within the powerhouse team, which is expecting a big medal haul at the pool.

“When you come into an Olympic Games, it’s all about protecting your energy. It’s a big, long, emotional competition,” she said. “Everyone knows what they have to do. We always talk about focusing on performance first. The way you do that is focusing on the things you can control that are right in front of you.”

Another Aussie swimmer, Zac Stubblety-Cook, said he understands why Palfrey’s comments have stirred up such discord.

“Yes, it’s disappointing, but it hasn’t rocked the boat too much,” Stubblety-Cook said.

Still, it was an unwanted distraction with the Games fast approaching.

“It’s just very, very disappointing to me that one of our coaches promoted another athlete ahead of our athletes,” Taylor said. “That really is the thing that concerns me and dis-appoints me.”

(Cincinnati) was denied on a goal-line clearance by Unai Bilbao (Tijuana).

Minutes later, Liga MX put the game out of reach.

MLS recognized the revival of the Columbus market by awarding it the

All-Star Game. The Crew, a 1996 charter member, were threatened in the fall of 2017 with relocation to Austin, Texas, by then-owner Anthony Precourt.

A grassroots movement called Save the Crew drew international

attention and helped persuade Cleveland Browns owners Jimmy and Dee Haslam to buy the team and keep it in Columbus.

The Crew won the MLS Cup in 2020 and 2023, reached the final of the 2024 CONCACAF Champions Cup and opened Lower.com Field in 2021, where there have been 28 straight sellouts for MLS matches.

“It shows everyone the courage of the owner,” Crew and MLS All-Stars coach Wilfried Nancy said. “Listen, this is a representation of what Columbus is and the passion for the soccer.”

The All-Star squad had five Crew players. Hernandez and Rossi were joined by midfielder Darlington Nagbe and defenders Rudy Camacho and Steven Moreira.

MLS and Liga MX continue the rivalry with the start of the Leagues Cup on Friday All 47 teams will compete in a World Cup-style format, with the championship match on Aug. 25. There will be 77 matches in the United States and Canada. Inter Miami is the defending Leagues Cup champion.



MLS All-Stars’ Hany Mukhtar (right), dribbles the ball as Liga MX All-Stars’ Brian Garcia defends during the second half of the MLS All-Star soccer match in Columbus, Ohio. (AP)

After a grueling Tour de France, top riders are racing to recover for Paris Olympics time trial

PARIS, July 25, (AP): The conclusion to the Tour de France last Sunday in Nice, where Slovenia’s Tadej Pogacar became a three-time champion by dominating rival Jonas Vingegaard and the rest of the field, has sent some of the world’s best cyclists into the road race at the Paris Olympics in the best possible shape.

For others, the race is on to recover from three grueling weeks in time for Saturday’s time trial.

The cycling schedule was altered for this Summer Games, and the traditional

road race that starts the program was pushed back to give riders competing in it a longer break. But to make the revised schedule work, the time trial was pushed ahead to the day after the opening ceremony, which means many riders from the Tour will still have wobbly legs.

The biggest among them is Remco Evenepoel, the 24-year-old from Belgium who won the first of the Tour’s two time trials and went on to finish third in the overall. But after Pogacar withdrew from the Olympics, citing fatigue, the race against the clock is wide

open, especially given how little time riders have to recover from their trek through the French countryside.

“The big three are Filippo Ganna, Remco and Josh Tarling,” said Brandon McNulty, the American time trial champion, who did not compete in the Tour and hopes his fresh legs can carry him to his nation’s first medal in the men’s time trial since 2008.

After a pause, McNulty kept on going, throwing out Stefan Kueng of Switzerland as another podium contender. Belgium’s Wout van Aert also

could be in the mix, provided he has recovered from seven top-10 finishes during the Tour.

The race begins at Invalides and ends at the gilded bridge of Pont Alexandre III. All the riders will pass by Notre Dame, the Place de la Bastille and the former royal residence at Chateau de Vincennes, along with several more of Paris’ iconic sites.

One they will avoid: the Champs-Élysées, the historic thoroughfare where the Tour typically finishes but has been taken over during the Olym-

SANTA CLARA, July 25, (AP): Lesley Ugochukwu scored in the 82nd minute to help Chelsea salvage a 2-2 tie with Wrexham in a friendly match Wednesday night at Levi’s Stadium.

Ugochukwu rolled a shot from the middle of the box through traffic into the right corner.

Wrexham took a 2-1 lead when Jack Marriot scored on a counterattack in the 72nd minute.

Luke Bolton also scored for Wrexham, the Welsh team co-owned by actor Ryan Reynolds that was promoted this year to the third tier of English soccer.

SOCCER

“It’s important that we show the Wrexham spirit we’ve been known for the last few years,” Wrexham manager Phil Parkinson said.

“We had to dig deep at times and tonight we did that again. Whether it’s preseason or not you want to see that kind of spirit we’ve kind of built a reputation. We’re representing a working-class town and a fantastic area and we’ve got to reflect that

with our performances.”

Christopher Nkunku scored first for Chelsea in the perennial Premier League power’s first preseason match and its first under manager, Enzo Maresca, the former Leicester City manager.

“I’m very happy about the performance in general because in this moment, if we think that we started just two weeks ago, it’s important that as a staff and in general people can start to see the identity of the team and I think tonight it was quite good,” Maresca said.

Nkunku fired a shot from the middle of the box into the left corner of the net past goalie Arthur Okonkwo in the 35th minute off an assist from Marc Guiu after a corner kick.

Wrexham tied it in the 58th minute when Bolton scored from the right wing off an assist from Sebastian Revan, who connected with Bolton on a crossing pass.

Chelsea goalkeeper Robert Sanchez blocked a breakaway shot from James McLean in the 29th minute.

Chelsea beat Wrexham 5-0 in a friendly last season.

German coach settles in at new club

Flick impressed by Yamal,

Ansu & Barcelona’s youth

BARCELONA, Spain, July 25, (AP): Hansi Flick says he will be counting on Lamine Yamal and Barcelona’s batch of talented youngsters to help the German coach make a positive start at his new club.

Yamal was the breakout player at the European Championship. He turned 17 a day before Spain beat England in the final two weeks ago.

“What (Yamal) did in the Euros is unbelievable,” Flick said at his official presentation Thursday, two months after the former Germany and Bayern Munich manager signed up with Barcelona.

Yamal’s performances included upstaging new Real Madrid star Kylian Mbappé in the semifinals against France, when the Barcelona teenager became the youngest scorer in tournament history aged 16 after curling home the goal of the tournament.

That came after Yamal had already scooped up several “youngest ever” records for his club.

“Now it is important for him to stay with both legs on the Earth,” Flick said. “He gives us great moments and also can improve and make things better, but he is on a really fantastic way.” Flick took over from the fired Xavi Hernández on a two-year contract after Barcelona finished last season finished without a title.

The club has been struggling financially to keep up with Madrid, but it has been boosted once again by the talent that its famed La Masia training academy continues to produce.

Flick has only had two weeks to train with some of his team, as the players that participated in Euro 2024 and the Copa America have some time off. Others, like 17-year-old center back Pau Cubarsí, are playing at the Paris Olympics.

But he said he was pleased with what he had seen so far, especially the youths from Barcelona’s reserve team.

The only player Flick wanted to name was forward Ansu Fati, who is back after a loan spell with Brighton. He was considered Barcelona’s rising star a few years ago before he suffered serious leg injuries.

Unfortunately, the 21-year-old hurt his right foot in practice Thursday. That will rule him out of the team’s preseason tour of the United

States, Flick said.

“Ansu on the first days was unbelievable. He was very fit, and he showed it on the pitch and in training,” Flick said. “And now it is not good and we don’t have him here and in America, but we will help him come back stronger.” Flick added that 19-year-old midfielder Gavi Paéz, who tore his right ACL while playing for Spain in November, must take his time coming back.

Barcelona will likewise start the season without defender Ronald Araújo after he injured his right hamstring while playing for Uruguay at the Copa America. Frenkie de Jong is also recovering from an injury that caused him to miss the Euros with the Netherlands.

Barcelona president Joan Laporta said he was convinced Flick would bring back “renewed energies” to a team that has not won the Champions League since 2015, Lionel Messi’s heyday at the club.

SOCCER

Flick had a direct part in bringing down that great Barcelona side. He was in charge of Bayern when its historic 8-2 demolition of the Catalan club in 2020 marked a definitive end to its status as one of Europe’s supreme teams.

Flick did not mention that most painful moment for Barcelona fans during his press conference at the auditorium next to its Camp Nou stadium. Instead, he said he will respect the club’s sacred playing style of ball possession and high pressure.

“The thing I want to see is that we are playing great football, technical football, so everyone at home on TV can see that this team gives its heart for the club,” he said. “It is crucial that you can see that on the pitch.” Perhaps it is wishful thinking given the club’s recent financial troubles, but the Barcelona sports press speculates it could make a bid for Athletic Bilbao’s Nico Williams after the winger starred at the Euros alongside Yamal.

Laporta would only say Barcelona is in position to make any signings it needed.

When asked about Williams, Flick said he would not speak about players at other clubs.

6 Kuwaitis suspended for

doping ‘violations’: KADA

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: Hana Al-Bati, Director General of the Kuwait Anti-Doping Agency (KADA), has announced the suspension of six athletes across various sports due to anti-doping rule violations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Kuwaiti disciplinary committee has imposed suspension on the following athletes ranging from one to four years.

The athletes suspended are -- Hamad Al-Rashed, a judo player, received a four-year suspension; Suleiman Al-Marzouq, a handball

player, suspended for one year; Mohammed Bousakher, a weightlifter, was handed a three-year suspension for refusing to comply with doping test procedures and Hadi Al-Azmi and Fatima Al-Shatti, both athletes in track and field, along with Bader Al-Mutairi, a boxer, each received a two-year suspension for violating location control program requirements.

These sanctions highlight KADA’s ongoing commitment to enforcing anti-doping measures and ensuring fair play in Kuwaiti sports.

pics and forced the second of the three Grand Tours to finish in Nice.

“It’s pretty flat, a few corners, but it’s pretty simple overall,” McNulty said. “Some bumpy roads and stuff, but fast.”

That could play into the hands of American time trial world champion Chloe Dygert in the women’s race.

The 27-year-old from Brownsburg, Indiana, has overcome a lot to become the favorite to win gold in Paris. Dygert was in a career-threatening crash at the world championships in 2020

that derailed her plans to race for gold the following year at the Tokyo Games, then dealt with a series of injuries and illnesses along with some off-the-bike-hurdles in her personal life.

“Looking back at Rio in 2016, I took everything for granted,” said Dygert, who helped the U.S. win silver in the team pursuit in the velodrome that year. “I remember Rio better than Tokyo because I was happier and healthier. I respected and felt so much more grateful for being able to go to Tokyo after my accident.”

MMA often misunderstood

Kuwaiti parents embrace martial arts to foster discipline,confidence in children

KUWAIT CITY, July 25, (KUNA): Martial arts often evoke images of brave warriors employing their skills in hand-to-hand combat or with weapons to defeat adversaries and protect loved ones. Such notions attract men and women from all walks of life, guiding them towards a path of discipline, honor, and self-growth.

For children, martial arts, when taught properly from a young age, can harness their innate capabilities, encouraging kids to become accomplished martial artists or, if necessary, defend themselves and others. In Kuwait, many parents are eager to enroll their children in various martial arts dojos, including Karate, kickboxing, jujitsu, Judo, and the increasingly popular Mixed Martial Arts (MMA).

Speaking to KUNA, Mohammad Al-De'ee, Under 92 KG champion of the now-defunct Gladiator Fighting Championship (GFC), emphasized that martial arts are often misunderstood as a means to inflict violence. He clarified that while some might misuse it, the vast majority of martial artists are upstanding individuals who seek peace and contribute positively to society.



MMA champion and Brazilian Ju-Jitsu (BJJ) instructor Hussam Qashou.

Al-De'ee highlighted that, under the guidance of skilled and well-mannered instructors, children with confidence issues and shyness can thrive, becoming disciplined individuals who are willing to help themselves and others. He noted that the rising trend of enrolling children in martial arts dojos in Kuwait is driven by parents' desire to see their kids grow into better persons.

MMA Champion and Brazilian Ju-Jitsu (BJJ) instructor Hussam

Qashou mentioned that parents often bring their children to dojos, especially during the summer break when the soaring heat limits outdoor activities. The growing interest in martial arts across the Arab world has produced world champions and attracted media attention. Qashou believes that introducing children to martial arts is a worthwhile and beneficial endeavor.

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

Mohammad Al-Muzaini, a parent, shared that he enrolled his children in Kajukenbo, a hybrid martial art originating from Hawaii, along with Karate, Judo, Kenpo, and Boxing. Al-Muzaini noted that his children, Fahad (9) and Rakan (7), have greatly benefited from Kajukenbo and are currently preparing for a tournament in Las Vegas, Nevada. This preparation has motivated his children to train harder and develop their skills further.

Al-Muzaini and his children expressed their joy in discovering Kajukenbo, stating that the significant benefits of martial arts would last a lifetime.



Children practising martial arts.

KUNA photos

Kerber to retire

Nadal, Nole could meet in 2nd round

PARIS, July 25, (Xinhua): The world's top tennis players got to know their opponents in the opening round of the 2024 Paris Olympic Games here on Thursday.

In the men's singles, 24-time Grand Slam winner Novak Djokovic will face Australian Matthew Ebden, and is possible to meet his old rival Rafael Nadal, the Beijing 2008 gold medalist who has won 14 French Open titles at Stade Roland Garros, in the second round.

The recent Wimbledon and French Open winner Carlos Alcaraz of Spain will fight against Lebanon's Hady Habib. China's sole male player Zhang Zhizhen, men's world No. 34, will take on Tomas Machac of Czech Republic in his maiden Olympic journey.

Two-time Olympic champion Andy Murray, who will retire after Paris 2024, said on the draw ceremony that he decided to withdraw from the men's singles event and will only focus on the men's doubles with fellow Briton Dan Evans.

"I trained in the last few weeks to try to get myself ready to play the singles and doubles, but I'm getting a bit old, and now it becomes a bit harder to recover from the injuries, and it's running out of time," Murray noted.

In the women's singles, world No. 1 Iga Swiatek of Poland will meet Irina-Camelia Begu, while Coco Gauff, the world No. 2, will combat Ajla Tomljanovic of Australia. China's Zheng Qinwen, the 6th seed, will face French favorite Caroline Garcia.

The Rio silver medalist Angelique Kerber of Germany said that Paris Olympics would be her last competition on the draw ceremony. Kerber, winning both the Australian Open and the US Open in 2016 as well as the 2018 Wimbledon, had ranked No. 1 in the world for 34 weeks between 2016 and 2017.

"It's really a special tournament because I just announced a few hours ago that this is my last tournament here. I think I did the toughest decision of my life today, but I feel good with that. So I would just try to enjoy my last tournament here, and I hope that I will have a great time here in Paris," said Kerber.

The tennis competition of Paris 2024 will take place at the iconic Stade Roland Garros, home of the French Open, from July 27 to August 4.



Hussein Al-Musallam delivers a speech during the forum.

Al-Musallam emphasizes the role of sports in cities transformation

PARIS, July 25: Hussein Al-Musallam, President of the International Federation of Aquatics, affirmed that true investment in the development of countries and cities comes through sports.

He made this statement during the International Sports Forum titled "United Through Sports," held yesterday, Thursday, alongside the 2024 Paris Olympics.

The event was attended by French Minister of Sports Emilie Odea Castera.

Al-Musallam, hailing from Asia, pointed to the transformation of cities like Seoul, Beijing, and Doha. He noted how these cities

Paris aims to reset the Olympics with audacious Games and a wow opening

With big goals and gambles

PARIS, July 25, (AP): Paris has long been a city of dreamers: Just look at the Eiffel Tower, for decades the world's loftiest structure. Audacity also underpins the French capital's plans for its first Olympic Games in a century, which open Friday with an opening ceremony for the ages.

The most sprawling and elaborate Olympic opening ever - a gala spectacular Friday evening on the River Seine that even French President Emmanuel Macron says initially felt like "a crazy and not very serious idea" - kicks off 16 days of competition that promise to be ground-breaking, with nearly every corner of the city hosting some aspect of competition.

OLYMPICS

After two toned-down, pandemic-hampered Olympics, expect a bold celebration. The heady marriage of sports and France's world-renowned capital of fashion, gastronomy and culture could also help secure the Olympics' longer-term future.

Olympic organizers were struggling to find suitable host cities for their flagship Summer Games when they settled on Paris in 2017, enticed by its promise of innovations and the potential for the city of romance to rekindle love for the Olympics, especially with younger audiences that have so many other entertainment options.

But Paris' challenges are huge, too.

The city that has been repeatedly struck by deadly extremist attacks has to safeguard 10,500 athletes and millions of visitors. The international context of wars in Ukraine and Gaza add layers of complication for the gargantuan security effort. French elite special forces are part of the security detail for

Israel's delegation.

Still, if all goes well, Paris hopes to be remembered as a before-and-after Olympic watershed.

The first Games with nearly equal numbers of men and women, an advance that's been a long time coming since 22 women first got accepted as Olympians 124 years ago, also in Paris, will take another step toward aligning the Olympics with the post-#MeToo world.

Paris also hopes to reassure climate-conscious Generations Z and beyond by staging Games that are less polluting, more sustainable and more socially virtuous than their predecessors. Many of the sports venues are temporary, because Paris didn't want to repeat the mistake of previous Olympic host cities that built new arenas and then had no use for them.

With iconic Paris monuments as backdrops - beach volleyball in the Eiffel Tower's shadow - and breakdancing added to a growing list of Olympic sports that target young audiences, expect plenty of viral moments on Instagram, TikTok and elsewhere.

Crowds will be back for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic forced Tokyo to push back its Games to 2021 and keep spectators away, and the Beijing Winter Games in 2022, when China was locked down.

Prize-winning French theater director Thomas Jolly is turning central Paris into an open-air stage for the opening ceremony that will run through sunset and showcase France, its people and their history. The 330-meter-tall (1,083-foot-tall) Eiffel Tower will surely feature prominently.

Hundreds of thousands of people, including 320,000 paying and invited ticket-holders, are expected to line the Seine's banks as athletes are paraded along the river on boats.

During the extravaganza, a no-fly zone extending for 150 kilometers (93 miles) around the capital will close Paris' skies, policed by fighter jets, airspace-monitoring AWACS surveillance flights, surveillance drones, helicopters that can carry sharpshooters and drone-disabling equipment.

Showcasing and celebrating Paris could be joyously cathartic

Kuwait youth team faces Montenegro in Serbia ahead of Asian Cup qualifiers



Players hold their final training session before the friendly against Montenegro.

BELGRADE, July 25: The Kuwaiti youth team will face the Montenegro youth team in a friendly match this evening at its camp in Serbia as part of Al-Azraq's preparations for the upcoming Asian Cup qualifiers.

In recent training sessions, the technical staff, led by Croatian coach Dario Pasic and his assistant Mohamed Al-Failakawi, provided players with instructions to correct individual mistakes observed during its last friendly match against the Serbian team Sivogono, which it won 3-2.

The technical staff aims to identify the best team combination before the qualifiers begin. They also seek to enhance the players' physical fitness and increase team harmony.

for the city that was plunged into mourning by extremist attacks in 2015.

Guesses about the identity of the person or people who might get the honor of lighting the Olympic cauldron include soccer icon Zinedine Zidane and other French sporting heroes, but also survivors of Islamic State-group gunmen and suicide bombers who killed 130 people on Nov. 13, 2015.

Paris is also taking gambles in hopes of leaving an indelible impression on the Olympics' global audience of billions.

The decision not to stage the opening ceremony in the traditional setting of France's biggest stadium - the Stade de France that was among the 2015 attackers' targets and is now the venue for Olympic track and field and rugby sevens - and to host skateboarding, archery and other sports in temporary arenas in the heart of Paris have made safeguarding the Games more complex.

Rights campaigners and Games critics worry about the broad scope and scale of Olympic security, including the use of AI-equipped surveillance technology.

The furthest venue is on the other side of the world in the French Pacific territory of Tahiti, where Olympic surfers will compete on famously giant waves that first form in storm belts off Antarctica.

Up to 45,000 police and gendarmes, plus 10,000 soldiers, are safeguarding Paris and its suburbs that together are hosting most of the 32 sports that will crown Olympic champions in 329 medal events. The gold, silver and bronze medals they'll hand out are inlaid with a hexagonal, polished chunk of iron taken from the Eiffel Tower.

The Seine's banks and riverside roads and more than a dozen of its

bridges were fenced off nine days ahead of the opening ceremony, creating a no-go zone for people who haven't applied in advance for passes and making it tough for Parisians and visitors to get around and see the sights in the city of 2 million. Owners of restaurants and other businesses inside the security fence are howling about fewer customers.

Limiting new construction has saved money and, Paris organizers say, contributed to their goal of halving the Games' overall carbon footprint compared with London in 2012 and Rio in 2016. Among the new venues, an Olympic aquatics center in Seine Saint-Denis is expected to help that underprivileged suburb of northern Paris teach more children to swim.

French organizers argue that the Games will leave positive impacts on Paris long after the Olympians and Paralympic athletes who follow from Aug. 28 to Sept. 8 have departed.

A costly and complex cleanup of the long-polluted Seine, sped up by the deadline of the Games, is expected to reopen the river to public swimming next year, after Olympic marathon swimmers and triathletes have competed in it. Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo took a dip this month to demonstrate that its waters are safe.

With estimated overall costs of around 9 billion euros (\$9.7 billion), more than half from sponsors, ticket sales and other non-public funding, Paris' expenses so far are less than for Tokyo, Rio and London.

Once opening ceremony fireworks have become memories, the City of Light will then become the playground of Olympians.

American gymnastics superstar Simon Biles is back. French-born basketball phenom Victor Wembanyama will carry home hopes on his 7-foot-4 (2.24-meter) frame. Ukrainian and Palestinian athletes have points they want to prove about conflict, resilience and sacrifice that go beyond the realms of sport.

The lucky few will win medals. Many will wish they had gone higher, faster and stronger.

But, together, they'll always have Paris.

WADA takes one track and field athlete out of Games

Anti-doping leaders accept that some cheating is inevitable

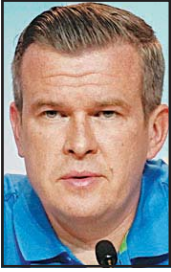
PARIS, July 25, (AP): The days are over when Olympics organizers and anti-doping officials would typically predict "the cleanest games ever." Not at these Paris Olympics.

"It's not our role to do it," World Anti-Doping Agency president Witold Batika said Thursday.

"It's not that now we want to assure that every single athlete is clean. We do not," Batika said at the agency's pre-games news conference. "It's obvious that you will never eliminate doping from the sporting landscape." "You will always find someone who wants to cheat." The lesson of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and 2012 London Olympics is that it can take years to judge how clean or dirty it was.

Dozens of medals were stripped and athletes disqualified years after those competitions, in large part because more advanced testing could be used on samples.

The samples taken in Paris will be stored and can be re-tested until 2034 in a program run by the International Testing Agency (ITA), the operational wing of the global anti-doping system based in the Olympic home city of Lausanne, Switzerland.



Banka

"Our role is to oversee the system," Batika said of Montreal-based WADA, "to make sure the system is robust, to make sure that we are using all the existing tools to test athletes properly."

OLYMPICS

"And not to tell you that the Games are going to be totally clean and you will not have even one single positive test," said the 39-year-old former 400-meter runner from Poland.

WADA took one track and field athlete out of the Paris Olympics on Thursday, after winning an appeal hearing at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne.

CAS judges imposed a two-year ban on Romanian long jumper Florentina Iusco who had tested positive last year for a banned diuretic, furosemide. WADA used its right to challenge doping verdicts worldwide after a Romanian tribunal decided she was not at fault and issued only a reprimand.

Batika said Thursday the program overseen by the ITA took 87,000 samples from potential Olympic athletes in March to June. The best-in-class operator is likely track and field's Athletics Integrity Unit.

"Our focus has been that the Olympics and Paralympic Games are protected," Batika said, "and the athletes are afforded a level playing field that they deserve."



Argentina's Marco di Cesare (left), and Morocco's Abde Ezzalzouli jump for a header during the men's Group B soccer match between Argentina and Morocco at Geoffroy-Guichard Stadium at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Saint-Etienne, France. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

France rout US 3-0

Morocco stun Argentina, Oly soccer gets off to violent and chaotic start

Al-Faqaan and Al-Shamlan 'carry' Kuwait flag at opening ceremony

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal visits Kuwait delegation

PARIS, July 25: Kuwait rowing team player Suad Al-Faqaan and national fencing team player Yousef Al-Shamlan had the honor of carrying the Kuwaiti flag at the opening ceremony of the 33rd edition of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games today, Friday. The Games will continue until August 11.

In a departure from tradition, instead of athletes parading along an athletics track, guests and spectators enjoyed a colorful river parade in the heart of the French capital. The Seine River replaced the traditional path, with side-walks transformed into platforms for spectators and famous Parisian landmarks providing a picturesque backdrop for the event.

Athletes, gathered on boats with their national teams, made their way to the Trocadero, the square opposite the Eiffel Tower. Here, official protocols were carried out, the Olympic flame was lit, and the Paris 2024 Games were declared officially open.

OLYMPICS

Nearly 100 boats carrying an estimated 10,500 athletes floated along the Seine River during the show. Cameras mounted on rooftops allowed spectators to get close-up views of the athletes and witness their emotions.

The athletes of the Kuwaiti national teams are completing their final preparations for the Olympic Games competitions, entering official training sessions specified by the organizing committee upon their arrival in Paris. Yousef Al-Shamlan will compete in the preliminary round of the fencing (saber) competition tomorrow, Saturday. Suad Al-Faqaan will compete in the preliminary rounds of the rowing competition. Other Kuwaiti athletes, including Lara Dashti (swimming), Khaled Al-Mudhaf (shooting - trap), Muhammad Al-Zubaid (100m free-style), and Mohammed Al-Daihani (skeeet), will compete in the following days. Amina Shah will participate in sailing, and the athletics competitions will conclude with Yaqoub Al-Youha in the 110m/h race and Amal Al-Roumi in the 800m race on August 4.

Shooter Khaled Al-Mudhaf expressed optimism about his technical preparations and looks forward to competing in the individual trap competition on July 29 in Chateauroux. He aims to achieve strong results in the qualifiers to secure a place in the finals and achieve a new Olympic milestone for Kuwaiti sports.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal, Vice President of the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee, visited the Kuwaiti delegation at their headquarters in the Olympic Village upon his arrival in Paris. He met with delegation director Captain Ali Al-Marri and the technical and administrative staff of the national teams to assess their preparations and readiness for the competitions.



Khaled Al-Mudhaf



The Kuwaiti delegation.

Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef advocates for unity, support for national team

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, former Chairman of the Kuwait Football Association, has urged the sports community to refrain from speculating about the future leadership of the Football Association and to focus instead on supporting the national team. The team faces two crucial matches against Jordan and Iraq next September as part of the 2026 World Cup qualifiers.

Al-Yousef called on sports officials, pundits, media professionals, and fans to prioritize the interests of the national team and the reputation of Kuwait. He emphasized the importance of providing full support to the team at this critical stage and suggested postponing discussions about the administrative issues related to the association until after the national team's matches. He assured that there are established mechanisms and organizational regulations to address association matters in due time.

Al-Yousef expressed his hope that the national team and the



Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef

players' morale would not be disrupted by rumors and speculation about resignations or presidential candidates for the association. He conveyed his pride in the players and wished them the best of luck in their upcoming matches.

Lim breaks archery world record

PARIS, July 25, July 25, (Xinhua): Lim Si-hyeon from South Korea broke the archery world record with 694 shots at women's individual ranking round at the Paris Olympics on Thursday, beating the previous record of 692 shots. This is the first world record at Paris 2024.

"It's my first Olympics and I wanted to give it my everything. I've prepared for it and I tried to enjoy the matches and the results followed," said Lim.

South Korean archer Nam Su-hyeon ranked second with a personal best of 688 shots. Together they help South Korea set an Olympic record in women's team

with a score of 2,046 shots.

Chinese archer Yang Xiaolei ranked third with 673 shots, while compatriot Li Jiaman ranked 9th and An Qixuan ranked 26th, earning China's women's archery team second place after South Korea.

"We played to our full strength today, and we'll keep up the effort for the upcoming competitions," said Kwon Yong-hak, coach of the Chinese women's archery team.

The women's archery ranking round was held at the Invalides, with 64 female athletes. The ranking round takes place on the first day of competition and is used to seed athletes, teams and mixed teams for matches.

New season set for Sept 15 kickoff

Kuwait team heads to Asian Championship

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 25: The Kuwait Volleyball Association has announced that the new season for 2024-2025 will commence on September 15th and concluding in early June 2025. The association has requested that participating clubs submit player lists across various age levels and confirm their participation in local competitions through official letters.

VOLLEYBALL

Meanwhile, the delegation of the national junior volleyball team departs today from Istanbul, Turkey to Manama, Bahrain, to participate in the 15th Asian Championship for U-18 teams, scheduled to be held from July 26 to August 5.

The team's delegation, led by Nayef Al-Failakawi, a member of the Board of Directors of the Volleyball Association, includes Abdullah Al-Rayes Adria, national coach Khaled Al-Mutairi, assistant coach Meshal Al-Sabti, Egyptian physiotherapist Ahmed Fouad, and 12 players: Walid Al-Shammari, Ahmed Al-Sarhid, Sa-

MARSEILLE, France, July 25, (AP): On a wild opening day for the Olympic men's soccer tournament, the United States came within the width of the crossbar from taking the lead against host nation France.

Within moments, Alexandre Lacazette had the ball in the back of the Americans' net - and when Michael Olise added a second for the French, they were on their way to a 3-0 win.

"It was unfortunate - on another day maybe it goes in," said Djordje Mihailovic, whose long-range effort came back off the bar when the Group A game in Marseille was still goalless in the second half. "I think most importantly, (we need to) emotionally recover because we were in the game for the first 70 minutes, even after they scored, we responded very well."

OLYMPICS

Earlier in the day, Morocco beat Argentina 2-1 in a game that was suspended for about two hours because fans invaded the pitch deep into stoppage time. And the U.S. looked like it could produce another upset when repeatedly opening France up in the first Olympic game for American men since 2008.

"I can't say anything to the players. They were in the right spot," U.S. coach Marko Mitrovic said. "I have that feeling inside that we didn't deserve to lose this way."

The United States never came closer than Mihailovic's effort, and France made the most of its fortune - responding with stunning strikes from Lacazette in the 61st minute and Olise in the 68th.

Loic Bade added the third with a header in the 85th.

"I knew it was going to be tough. You guys never give up," France coach Thierry Henry told American reporters afterward. "That fighting spirit is always in you. You always believe that you can come back. I know that. I played in MLS, I coached in MLS, so I know that's something that you have."

It was two moments of quality that ultimately put France in control, with former Arsenal striker Lacazette driving low from around 20 yards past U.S. goalkeeper Patrick Schulte.

New Bayern Munich signing Olise curled a shot from distance into the same corner.

Bade's header effectively put the game away and saw France move to the top of Group A, ahead of New Zealand, which beat Guinea 2-1.

"There was definitely stuff to make us feel good going into the next two

matches," Mihailovic said.

Morocco secured an unforgettable win over Argentina - but not before furious fans invaded the pitch to protest what appeared to be an equalizer by Cristian Medina in the 16th-minute of stoppage time.

Objects were thrown onto the field and security had to restrain fans, causing the game in Saint-Etienne to be suspended for nearly two hours and the crowd being told to leave the stadium.

The goal was eventually ruled off-side just before play resumed, drawing celebrations from Morocco players as the final minutes concluded.

It was a chaotic and dramatic start to the tournament after Argentina, which won gold medals at the 2004 and 2008 Olympics and is considered among the favorites in France, mounted a comeback after going 2-0 down on goals from Soufiane Rahimi on either side of halftime.

Giuliano Simeone struck in the 68th minute and Argentina peppered Morocco goalkeeper Munir El Kajoui with shots before Medina's header from close range appeared to tie it.

That caused outrage from Morocco fans, who rushed the field, while others threw trash, and the game was officially put on hold.

Rahimi had put Morocco ahead in first-half stoppage time, then converted on a penalty kick in the 49th, which proved to be the decisive goal against an Argentina team that included four members of the squad that won the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Sergio Gomez scored the winning goal in Spain's victory over Uzbekistan to open Group C.

The match at Parc des Princes in Paris was the first official competition of the Olympics and drew some 35,000 fans.

Marc Pubill scored in the 29th minute for Spain, which won the gold medal at the 1992 Olympics. The team has won silver twice since then, most recently at the Tokyo Games.

Eldor Shomurodov converted on a penalty kick in first-half stoppage time to tie it for Uzbekistan, which was making its first Olympic appearance.

Gomez had a penalty saved by Abduvohid Nematov in the 59th minute, but some three minutes later he scored from about 12 yards out.

Ben Waine scored the go-ahead goal and New Zealand won its Group A opener over Guinea in Nice.

New Zealand was awarded a penalty in the 24th minute, but Guinea goalkeeper Soumaila Sylla dove to punch away captain Matthew Garbett's attempt. New Zealand quickly recovered and Garbett scored a minute later for a 1-0 lead.



The Kuwaiti volleyball team.

lem Al-Shammari, Saad Al-Failakawi, Abdullah Al-Ali, Nasser Al-Sanea, Bandar Al-Ahmad, Salem Khadada, Mishari Al-Mutouteh, Muhammad Al-Dukhi, Fahd Eyada, and Mishari Al-Ansari.

During Turkish camp, the team played four trial matches: two against the IBB team, champions of the Turkish Youth League, and two against the Gimza U-20 team.

In other news, the national youth volleyball team suffered its third consecutive loss in the third group of the preliminary round of the 22nd Asian Youth Championship for U-20, currently being held in Surabaya, Indonesia, until July 30th.

The team lost to Bangladesh 0-3 (rounds 11-25, 15-25, 15-25). Earlier, it lost to Japan and India, placing them fourth and last in its group.

Taking part in Olympics 'already a win': Palestinian

RAMALLAH, July 25, (Xinhua): To be in Paris to raise the Palestinian flag and to say the word "Palestine" is already a win, Palestinian Olympic swimmer Yazan Al Bawwab has told Xinhua during a recent video interview.

The 24-year-old Palestinian young man will compete in the Men's 100-meter backstroke in the upcoming Paris Olympic Games.

"For any Palestinian, it doesn't matter how you swim or how you do your competition, to be here and to be like the rest of the world is the win," he said.

Al Bawwab, who has already arrived in the French capital, will be the Palestinian team's flag bearer at the opening ceremony, and this is his sec-

ond Olympics after Tokyo.

As the conflict in Gaza has entered its tenth month, the Palestinian team has received more attention.

"There are more eyes on Palestine. There's more media coverage on Palestine. There are more people caring about Palestine," he told Xinhua, adding some athletes have asked about his family in Palestine.

The Palestinian death toll rose to 39,145 and injuries to 90,257 since Israel launched a large-scale offensive against Hamas in Gaza to retaliate against a Hamas rampage on Oct. 7, 2023, according to Gaza-based health authorities on Wednesday. Around 1,200 people were killed in Israel and more than 200 were taken hostage.

Al Bawwab's father had also dreamt of being a swimmer. However, after leaving Palestine at a young age, he faced hardships, including sleeping on the road, which prevented him from pursuing his dream. Born in Saudi Arabia and raised in Dubai, Al Bawwab took up his father's dream and carried it forward.

During the past year, he was training himself for 10 hours a week. "I have had a very difficult time. I had to work to support myself to swim," he said.

Since he got into the Paris-based training camp, he has doubled the training duration to 20 hours a week before the Olympics. "This time, I can do better than in Tokyo," Al Bawwab said.