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Pages 14-16

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Opinion

Imprisonment of looters is not enough, money should be recovered

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

TO effectively combat corruption, especially the looting of public funds, it must be waged as an all-out war. Superficial remedies alone will not dissuade offenders from committing further crimes, rendering such efforts ineffective.

Those familiar with the work of the Kuwaiti judiciary will recognize its constraints imposed by outdated and ineffective laws, which are exploited by seasoned criminals adept at exploiting legal loopholes for years.

Nevertheless, there are judges who issue deterrent judgments, marking significant milestones



Al-Jarallah

by establishing rules that should carry legal weight. However, to be frank, Kuwaiti law lacks the necessary amendments and modernization to keep pace with evolving circumstances.

In this regard, we can consider Italy as an example. When corruption became widespread and the looting of public funds became rampant in Italy, it worked to fortify the work of judges through a deterrent law. This approach yielded positive results in recent years in combating corruption and preventing further misuse of public resources.

Similarly, Switzerland, upon noticing its decline in the anti-corruption index, responded swiftly by developing its laws and closing loopholes, which resulted in it occupying top ranks in this regard.

As for the Gulf region, about 15 years ago, oversight agencies in Dubai discovered that some corrupt officials were profiting from public funds, and leveraging their positions for personal gain.

At that time, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid immediately ordered the judiciary to investigate the matter and impose harsh sentences on the corrupt. Since then, the Emirates have emerged as global leaders in transparency indicators.

We are all familiar with the measures taken by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, under the directives of King Salman, to eradicate corruption and prevent the misappropriation of public funds. These measures included placing the accused under house arrest in the Ritz Hotel in Riyadh.

Continued on Page 5

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Day by Day

AT the moment, the state monitors newspaper and social media reports. It is vital for the government to grasp what is happening around town. It is reassuring to know that someone is 'watching', giving us a sense of safety and well-being.

However, what is more important is action and investigation of suspicious cases. It is crucial for people to have confidence that the state is in trustworthy and efficient hands that can identify shortcomings and address mistakes.

Nothing is impossible as long as there is a will. There are always multiple pathways to solutions.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya (center) leaving for Tehran. KUNA photo

FM to attend Iran head inauguration

Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya headed Monday to Tehran to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian. The minister was seen

off by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Iranian Ambassador to the country Mohammad Totonji. (KUNA)

Loopholes in law exploited by cash corruption mafias

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Legal and cybersecurity experts have confirmed that loopholes in Kuwait's money laundering law are being exploited by financial crime mafias to conduct more money laundering operations.

During a special investigation by Al-Seyassah, the experts said they are surprised at the lack of updates to the money laundering law, especially given the international organization Financial Action Task Force (FATF) threat to include Kuwait on the grey list.

They called for adopting the experiences of Gulf countries in preserving their economic and social security from money laundering crimes.

The head of the Kuwait Society for Information Security and academic at Kuwait University, Dr. Safaa Zaman, views FATF's threat to place Kuwait on the grey list as an urgent warning that requires effective action to prevent Kuwait from reaching this negative status.

Dr. Zaman emphasized that Kuwait's Money Laundering Law, issued in 2013, along with the Electronic Crimes Law, needs significant strengthening and amendments. These laws do not adequately address the developments in social media networks and artificial intelligence.

Continued on Page 5

By Fares Al-Abdan and Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Capital Prosecutor and Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling in charge Ahmad Al-Kandari disclosed that human trafficking has two aspects - material and moral.

Al-Kandari made the statement during the Kuwait Nights program on Kuwait TV in the presence of Deputy Director General of the Manpower Protection Sector at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Dr. Fahad Murad.

He explained that the material aspect of the crime has three elements: reception, shelter and means including actions through the independence of authority or the threat of using force or trickery or material and financial benefits; hence, they are all related to various forms of trafficking like sexual exploitation, prostitution and forced labor.

He pointed out the moral element is that the perpetrator knows he is committing a crime and he has the will to do so.

He said Law No. 91/2013 stipulates many penalties for human trafficking, such as imprisonment for a period of 15 years. He added this penalty increases depending on the severity of the case, up to life imprisonment or death penalty.

He clarified the perpetrator is sentenced to life in prison if the victim is a child or a person with special needs, if the crime is committed by more than one person and if there is a visible or hidden weapon; while the death penalty is imposed in the event of the victim's death.

Reforms vital to fight academic misconduct, restore integrity

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Badr Al-Bahr, President of the Kuwait Society for Quality Education, has underscored the critical importance of fortifying Kuwait's educational system in alignment with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad's vision.

Al-Bahr emphasized that the next phase of reinforcing laws, values, and principles is essential to consolidate societal norms and counteract chaos and misconduct.

Al-Bahr highlighted that the educational system in Kuwait is plagued by violations of rules and regulations, leading to significant academic and administrative chaos. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of misconduct threaten the integrity and quality of education. In response, the Kuwait Society for Quality Education has proposed several legislative reforms aimed at addressing these issues.

The Society has put forward a law that criminalizes the plagiarism of research

and intellectual output. This proposed legislation is designed to safeguard the value of original research and scientific honesty. Plagiarism, defined as the total, partial, or altered use of published or unpublished work without proper attribution, would be considered a crime.

The law stipulates that those found guilty of plagiarism could face imprisonment for up to three months and/or a fine of up to 10,000 dinars. Additionally, individuals who obtain employment or promotions based on plagiarized work would be subject to similar penalties and dismissal.

A separate proposed law aims to tackle cheating and disruption within the examination and assessment systems. This legislation addresses various forms of exam-related misconduct, including the use of unauthorized tools, impersonation, and leaking of exam content.

Continued on Page 5

Report child abuse on Hotline 147

'Human trafficking punishable by death'



Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi talking to the press at the entrance of the department. KUNA photo

Minister lauds medics for saving lives

KUWAIT CITY, July 30, (KUNA): Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi has affirmed that the medical emergency department has contributed to securing various occasions and activities and saving lives round the clock.

The minister, in a statement after

a visit to the department on Monday, lauded the continuous efforts of the division, in harmony with the ministry's strategy and the government task plan.

Continued on Page 5

On the other hand, Murad confirmed that the shelter at PAM caters to human trafficking victims or those suspected of being victims. He revealed the victims can enter the shelter themselves or through the diplomatic missions in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Meanwhile, official spokesperson of the Health Ministry Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad confirmed that the State of Kuwait is keen on fulfilling its humanitarian and legal obligations through its institutions.

Continued on Page 5

EU eyes boost in Kuwait 'ties'

BRUSSELS, July 30, (KUNA): Charles Michel, President of the European Council, reaffirmed on Monday the EU's willingness to "deepen our cooperation" with Kuwait.

Following a phone call with His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah, Michel took to X, saying that "the EU-Kuwait partnership is growing stronger everyday".

He affirmed that he is looking forward to the EU-GCC Summit "which will showcase the positive momentum of the EU-GCC ties". "We will work on every aspect of the EU-Kuwait bilateral relations putting it at the service of peace and prosperity for our citizens" Michel added.

His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah received a phone call

Continued on Page 5

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Director of the Security Media Department at the Ministry of Interior Brigadier Nasser Bousleib affirmed that the ministry is working on issuing a new traffic law, and increasing fines and penalties for some traffic violations.

He highlighted the tightening of fines for offenses such as crossing the red light, which previously incurred a fine of KD 50 but now carries a KD 150 penalty under the new law. Additionally, penalties for reckless driving violations will increase to KD 150 from KD 30, with the possibility of vehicle impoundment.

During an interview in a news channel, Brigadier Bousleib revealed about the plans for the application of home-impoundment of vehicles, similar to some countries, indicating that this initiative is currently being developed to establish a framework for its implementation under the new traffic law.

He outlined the implementation of a traffic system points scheme, through which repeated violations result in the deduction of points until the license is revoked. To obtain a new license, individuals must undergo a new procedure.

Regarding vehicle impoundment, Brigadier Bousleib clarified that the previously-conducted impoundments by the General Traffic Department were for vehicles subject to court rulings, with ownership subsequently reverted to the state.

Continued on Page 5

NewsWatch

India landslides death toll at 93

NEW DELHI, July 30, (AP): Multiple landslides in southern India have killed 93 people and many others are feared trapped under the debris, officials said Tuesday, after torrential rains triggered torrents of mud and water that swept through tea estates and villages.

The landslides hit hilly areas in Kerala state's Wayanad district early Tuesday, flattening houses, uprooting trees and destroying bridges. Rescuers were working to pull out people stuck under mud and debris, but their efforts were hampered by blocked roads and unstable terrain.

BEIRUT: A member of the resistance was killed during an Israeli airstrike on southern Lebanon, said a media source on Tuesday.

According to the National News Agency (NNA), the Israeli occupation targeted a house in Beit Lifa town, killing the resistance member and destroying house. (KUNA)

RABAT: Three journalists who were sentenced to years in prison after writing about corruption and abuse of power in Morocco were released Monday after receiving pardons from King Mohammed VI.

Omar Radi, Taoufik Bouachrine and Soulaime Raissouni were among 2,278 people pardoned this week, according to Morocco's Ministry of Justice. The pardons were announced as Morocco prepared to celebrate its national holiday marking the 25th anniversary of when Mohammed VI ascended to the throne. (AP)

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:37	Asr	15:30
Sunrise ..	05:07	Maghrib ..	18:42
Zohr	11:54	Isha	20:08

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate northwesterly wind to southeasterly wind, with speeds of 12-32 km/h.
By Night: Hot to rather hot with

Weather			
light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.	Kuwait Airport	49	32
	Abdaly	49	32
	Jahra	50	34
	Salmiyah	45	37
	Jal Aliyah	48	31
	Nuwaib	49	31
	Wafra	49	31

Twenty-fifth anniversary of Glorious Throne Day being marked

Moroccan envoy highlights strong bilateral relations with Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: The Moroccan ambassador to Kuwait has underscored the longstanding and profound relationship between the Kingdom of Morocco and Kuwait, a bond that has been cherished for decades, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Glorious Throne Day, being celebrated on 30th July, the ambassador emphasized the unique and special connection between the two nations.

The ambassador praised Kuwait's unwavering support for Morocco's territorial integrity, a position consistently affirmed at various regional and international forums.

He highlighted the mutual respect and solidarity shared between King Mohammed VI of Morocco and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, the Kuwaiti leader, as well as the deep bonds between the peoples of

both countries.

The Moroccan ambassador expressed a shared ambition to advance political relations into a dynamic force for bilateral cooperation across multiple sectors, including investment, trade, culture, and social interaction.

This year has seen significant progress, thanks to collaborative efforts between Morocco and Kuwait. Notably, the Moroccan-Kuwaiti trade days hosted by the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry have been instrumental in showcasing opportunities for business cooperation.

Additionally, the Moroccan cultural days held in Kuwait in May offered Kuwaiti audiences a glimpse into Morocco's rich and diverse cultural heritage.

Reflecting on the twenty-fifth anniversary of King Mohammed VI's accession to the throne, Ben Issa noted it as a significant occasion for the Moroccan

people to reaffirm their allegiance and loyalty to their leader.

He commended the King's strategic initiatives in driving development, including the establishment of free industrial zones, the attraction of investments in automotive and aerospace industries, and the enhancement of infrastructure.

These efforts have contributed to a substantial increase in Morocco's GDP, which reached \$140 billion in 2023, up from approximately \$46 billion in 2000.

The ambassador also praised King Mohammed VI's adept leadership in foreign policy, which has focused on strengthening Moroccan diplomacy, defending national interests, and diversifying international partnerships.

These efforts have bolstered Morocco's regional and global standing and enhanced its ability to safeguard national interests.



Al-Anba photo

Governor Sheikh Sabah Badr Sabah Al-Salem during his visit to the PAM.

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor visits PAM

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Sheikh Sabah Badr Sabah Al-Salem has conducted an inspection visit at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), reports Al-Anba daily.

Deputy Director General for Labor Affairs at PAM Musaed Al-Mutairi and the supervisors warmly welcomed the governor and the officials who accom-

panied him. The visitors reviewed the workflow, needs and administrative obstacles that PAM clients are facing in a bid to find the best solutions.

Sheikh Sabah Badr Sabah Al-Salem thanked the concerned parties at PAM for warmly welcoming him and his companions, wishing them success in their work at the authority.

Other Voices

Saddam and Gaddafi novels

By Ahmed alsarraf

A creative person is a rare commodity, and we admire what he presents, whether it is a drawing, a novel, a painting, a wonderful architectural structure, a musical tune, a singing or acting performance, a poem, a movie, a journalistic investigation, or even a sports game.

In all these cases and others, we usually do not care about the background of the creative person, nor his tendencies, or his opinions or his biography, no matter how light and strange, or even licentious and false, it is, because we are usually not concerned with his person, but with the creativity he presents.

The committed writer, critic, playwright, or filmmaker, and those who have a role in shaping public awareness, stand outside the context of the above paragraph, and it becomes important for them to have a special status, a background free of crime, and a reasonable CV, and there is no harm in trying to know something about them before believing what they write, whether about their political background, ideological affiliation, or otherwise.

For example, it is not advisable to read an opinion, criticism, article, or investigation by a writer, and to be influenced by it and believe it, without knowing the truth of his intentions, or if he was motivated by some party, in which case he does not deserve our trust, due to his loss of credibility, or because his personal actions contradict what he calls for in terms of "ideals."

The more backward societies are, the more their numbers increase, so we have a large number of them, knowing that we, for several factors that we have previously discussed, are among the peoples who suffer the most from severe contradictions in our actions.

I have been shocked, or disappointed, many times in people, when I thought they were perfect through their "production", but by getting closer to them I knew their truth, or so I thought.

An example of the hypocrisy that characterizes our societies is the strange number of writers, critics, and those who claim to carry the banners of culture and knowledge, and the owners of the "signifier," who are ready to heap praise and flattery on any action issued by a tyrant or dictator, whether it is a literary work or a political behavior,

as long as there is a material benefit behind that praise.

For example, the novel "Zabiba and the King," which is attributed to Saddam Hussein, received a lot of analysis and praise from people of high literary stature, despite the fact that it is a ridiculous novel with no meaning.

Recently, a message was spread, which included famous literary and cultural names, who devoted their pens to criticizing, analyzing and praising a collection of short stories entitled "The Village, the Village, the Earth, the Earth, and the Suicide of the Astronaut," which is attributed to Gaddafi.

He held a symposium entitled "Gaddafi, Thinker and Creator," in which a group of opportunist "Arab intellectuals" and writers of sultans participated, who sold their dignity for a few dollars, in exchange for participating in that symposium under titles such as "Place in Gaddafi's Stories," "The Dialectic of Time in Muammar's Stories," "The Human Dimension and the Search for the Moral City in the Text," "The Significance and Paradox of Place in the Literary Discourse of the Creative Leader Muammar Gaddafi," "The Significance of Spatial Formation in Gaddafi's Stories," "The Psychological Dimensions of Creativity in the Writer Muammar," "Narrative Techniques and Language in Muammar Gaddafi's Stories," "Sarcasm in Muammar Gaddafi's Literature," "Manifestations of Innocence and Astonishment in Muammar's Stories," and "Stories of 'Revealing a man who is followed by history'!!! ... and other nonsense.

Reviewing the names of the "elders" who participated in writing these "studies" and critical letters, we feel shocked first, because of the aura that some see over the heads of these people, and the miserable living conditions that they may be living in, and more dangerous than that is what these hypocritical writings represented and still represent in terms of self-abasement, and a title for a stage that has gone on for a long time, in which the intellectual lost his vanguard role, after living conditions and tyrannical regimes forced him to give up a lot, out of greed or fear.

This is the most important difference between backward societies and their advanced opposite, especially when comparing the positions of these people with the positions of Israelis who stood against their homeland, along with other Jews, and with the Palestinian right, despite all the risks and losses that befell them!

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By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Director of the Public Relations and Media Department and the official spokesperson for the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Aseel Al-Mizyad says PAM has achieved many accomplishments in the field of combatting human trafficking.

In a press statement issued on the sidelines of a celebration titled "Continuing Work Relationship", which was organized by PAM at the Avenues Mall with the cooperation of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and the Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF) on the occasion of the World Day Against Human Trafficking, she explained that some of these accomplishments are:

1. Contributing to the activation of laws to combat human trafficking through the committee for implementing the National Strategy to Prevent Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants
 2. Adopting the National Referral System, which has effectively contributed to identifying the victims of human trafficking, carrying out investigation procedures and implementing means of prosecution.
 3. Providing assistance to victims of human trafficking in accordance with applicable international standards.
 4. Establishing a specialized department to combat human trafficking in 2015 under the General Department of Criminal Investigations
 5. Establishing a shelter center for female expatriate workers, under the supervision of PAM, where they are provided with health, social and legal services to protect their rights.
- Al-Mizyad revealed that PAM's shelter center is regarded as top in the Gulf region in terms of its capacity to house 500 residents and the level of services it provides.
- She affirmed the keenness of PAM to raise public awareness about human trafficking issues by organizing activities in malls and places frequented by people, adding that it conducted a poll to gauge the level of public awareness on the issue of human trafficking, the results of which will contribute to the studies and statistics supervised by PAM in the future.

Awareness

Meanwhile, the Acting Director General of Manpower Protection and a member of the Permanent National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants Dr. Fahad Al-Murad said, "PAM celebrates this occasion by using it as an opportunity to raise awareness among people about this crime as well as about the rights and duties of workers and employers included in the National Strategy to Prevent Human Trafficking.

This is being done with the cooperation of the Workers' Union and KCCI, and under the auspices of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, which is concerned with implementing the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking that was set by the Council of Ministers.

This strategy has several goals, the most important of which are:

1. Providing assistance to victims
2. Increasing the efficiency of frontline workers and first responders
3. Dealing directly with those affected, especially male and female workers in the private and domestic sectors
4. Combating fake job opportunities within Kuwait
5. Legally pursuing the perpetrators of these crimes by facilitating the procedures for submitting reports and reviewing the legal and legislative frameworks related to the penalties for human trafficking."

Dr. Al-Murad went on to say, "The shelter center affiliated with PAM has hosted more than 13,000 female residents since its establishment in 2014, and provided them with health, psy-



PM Diwan photo

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

'Comply with formation of medical examination panel'

Farwaniya Hospital completes five phases and starts full operations, announces Dr Al-Rashidi

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi, Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Director of the Farwaniya Health Zone Dr. Mohammad Al-Rashidi announced the completion of the five operational phases of the new Farwaniya Hospital, indicating the start of work at full capacity after transferring all medical and support departments.

In a press statement issued Sunday, Dr. Al-Rashidi highlighted the expansion of capacity in the cardiac catheterization department.

He also announced the upcoming introduction of new medical services in the embryo and IVF laboratory, along with the launch of specialized surgeries including spine, hand, and blood vessels. Additionally, a new medical equipment repair service titled "Medical Workshop" will be inaugurated.

Dr. Al-Rashidi explained that the Medical Workshop service is concerned with repairing medical devices such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation and planning devices, thus reducing the documentation cycle for their repair to days. This contributes to their numerical and digital governance and repair requests as well.

He went on to explain that Farwaniya Hospital is a pioneer in implementing the electronic filing system. It receives approximately 5,000 visitors daily. The electronic filing system assists in managing and scheduling visitor appointments and ensuring timely transfer of data to doctors, which facilitates prompt medical interventions as needed.

Dr. Al-Rashidi also highlighted the link between the hospital and the blood bank to enable tracking of the blood transfusion process from the donor to the recipient.

He said the hospital, which is operating at full capacity, represents a significant medical asset, covering a total area of 423,000 square meters and comprising five main buildings.

Dr. Al-Rashidi clarified that since the launch of the first phase in September 2022 until October 2023, all medical departments along with support departments such as accidents, operations, laboratories, radiology, nuclear medicine, accounting, medical records, and hotel services have been transferred.

He added that the requirements of citizens are taken into account, as a large number of private rooms have been made available to provide more comfort to patients.

Medical examination panel: Ministry of Interior Undersecretary Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf issued a circular on the necessity of adhering to Resolution No. 626/2023 regarding the formation of the Medical Examination Committee.

The circular explained that with reference to Ministerial Resolution No. 626/2023 on the formation of the

chological and social services, as well as helped them with completing the procedures for their return to their countries in coordination with official bodies and diplomatic missions.

The shelter center received 1,892 female workers and 44 children in the year 2023. In the year 2024, 2,000 female workers, 95 female workers and 80 children were received."

Dr. Al-Murad revealed about the ongoing work to open a new shelter center for male expatriate workers during the fourth quarter of this year.

In addition, Advisor to KTUF and Head of the Migrant Labor Office Mohammad Al-Arada said, "Based on national responsibility within the framework of cooperation between the parties of production, the government and employers, KTUF

participated in PAM's event on the occasion of the World Day Against Human Trafficking.

Human trafficking is an organized global crime that can only be combated and eliminated by the combined efforts of government agencies and civil society organizations. Labor awareness is a powerful weapon in the hands of unions, the aim of which is to protect the workers."

CSC set to release new employment nominees

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) will soon announce a batch of employment nominees that government agencies need continuously, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources revealed this batch will include holders of stagnant specializations according to the job titles that have been created. Sources said the CSC will take this step upon receipt of the manpower needs lists from ministries, government agencies and institutions. Sources added the deadline for government entities to submit their manpower needs lists will end soon.

As per the directive of CSC Chairman Dr. Issam Al-Rubaian, the concerned sector in the CSC has implemented a modified mechanism to hire citizens registered in the central employment system; including those who rejected the job offers and those rejected by a government agency. The mechanism includes nominating them to another government agency -- not the same entity where they were previously nominated, sources explained.

Sources affirmed that a candidate who rejected the nomination to two government agencies will not lose his employment right, but he will lose his queue on the job waiting list.

Sources stated this step is fully appreciated; indicating it coincides with the implementation of the new recruitment mechanism, which stipulates in one of its clauses that the candidate who rejects nomination for two different government agencies will be returned to the system as an employment registrant for the first time, regardless of the period he remained on the waiting list.

Medical Examination Committee, which stipulates the committee's competencies in Article Two, including following up the implementation of Ministerial Resolution No. 306/2023 stating the conditions of health fitness for regular service in the police force.

This is in addition to ensuring that the conditions stated therein are met to continue military work or to enroll in it, as well as the minutes of Committee Meeting No. 1 on forming the work teams to assist in providing materials to equip the laboratory of Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences Hospital to conduct toxicology tests for drugs and psychotropic substances.

The circular mandates all police forces, members of Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences and its educational bodies, and those enrolled in the Ministry of Interior courses, to strictly comply with Ministerial Resolution No. 626/2023.

Corruption in educational body is 'most dangerous'

"WE all applauded when the Minister of Education, Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, began referring forged and fictitious certificates to the Public Prosecution in successive batches. We also applauded earlier when he fought against cheating, despite the unprecedented scandal of leaked high school exams. However, what we read today about suspicions of corruption and profiteering at the country's most prestigious academic institution, Kuwait University, is unacceptable. Silence about it is even more dangerous," columnist **Asrar Johar Hayat** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.



Asrar Hayat

"Both the esteemed Al-Jarida and Al-Qabas newspapers published important and sensitive files related to Kuwait University. These files concern promotions, the mechanism for evaluating university professors based on their research submissions, and the missions file, where a student is appointed as a mission assistant and sent to study for a master's degree and a doctorate, then returns to be directly appointed as an academic staff member at the university.

"In both files, the newspapers highlighted suspicions of violations and the benefiting of leaders, among other matters that require thorough investigation. Corruption within the educational body, if true, represents the most dangerous type of corruption in societies. If violations in the promotion files are proven, it means that some teachers instructing our children are untrustworthy, using corrupt methods and weak research as a ladder to promotion. How can they be trusted in education?"

"Regarding scholarships, if a student begins their journey with an undeserved scholarship, bypassing more competent and deserving students, and enjoys significant financial benefits during the scholarship, then returns to teach at Kuwait University, how can they be trusted with education if they accepted a professorship by bypassing more worthy candidates?"

"Although the university issued a statement refuting the newspapers' publications, it would have been more appropriate to investigate the published details instead of using threatening language against those who published the documents.

"Even a superficial investigation committee, as is often seen in some government agencies, would have been better. However, the university threatened and confirmed the acceptance of leaders' relatives, who may indeed be deserving. An investigation would have been the decisive factor in verifying the claims. If the university were correct, Kuwaiti society would be reassured of the university's honesty regarding the integrity of promotion and scholarship procedures.

"In any case, we hope that the Minister of Education will be as decisive with the Kuwait University file as he was with the forged certificates issue. Suspicious promotions and missions are no less dangerous."

Also:

"The Kuwaiti legislator enacted the new Juvenile Law -- Law 111 of 2015 -- to reduce juvenile crimes and rehabilitate juveniles to become good members of society after the significant rise in juvenile delinquency in recent years," columnist Prof. **Dr. Bahija Behbehani** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"In the new Juvenile Law, the legislator recognized that juveniles who commit crimes pose a danger to themselves and to the society. According to this law, a 'juvenile' is defined as any person under the age of eighteen, whether male or female.

"A 'deviant juvenile' is defined as a juvenile who has completed the age of seven but has not reached the age of eighteen and has committed one or more acts punishable by law.

"A 'juvenile at risk of delinquency' is defined as someone found in one of the following situations: begging, engaging in unsuitable work for livelihood, committing acts of immorality, taking drugs, assisting those who engage in such acts, associating with the homeless and imitating their behavior, frequently running away from home, school, or institute, or lacking a stable place to live.

"The law stipulates several protections for juveniles, which benefit them

greatly. Juveniles are to be tried without publicity, with no information being published about their cases before, during, or after the trial. Additionally, juvenile court rulings are not to be counted as criminal records later.

"For juveniles between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, they are subject to half the penalty due according to the Kuwaiti Penal Code for adults. This raises a crucial question: Does the Social Welfare Institution follow up on these juveniles after they leave its care, especially since their criminal records will be expunged? For years, I have followed programs about crimes committed by delinquent juveniles in Europe and the United States, based on real cases from police files.

"These programs show that many of these juveniles, after leaving care homes, are arrested and imprisoned for crimes against society, such as theft, alcohol and drug abuse, and even murder.

"Why, then, juveniles in care homes in Kuwait are not monitored in their family, educational, and community lives for a period of 1-3 years to ensure they follow a safe and proper path in their dealings with others? This would help preserve the safety and security of society.

"Monitoring would also enable early intervention before they commit any deviations from the law. This approach aligns with the constitution, which states: 'The state protects the pillars of society and guarantees security and tranquility.'"

"With apparent clarity and calmness in the situation currently, it is evident to both supporters and opponents without any reasonable doubt that the dissolution of the National Assembly and the suspension of certain articles of the Constitution were carried out with both governmental and popular consensus for the benefit of the country and its citizens. In fact, not a single citizen shed a tear over these measures. In fact, people applauded the leadership's decision. So now the important question is - What comes next?" columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"If the elections are repeated, we are confident that the choices will not be better than before, or better than the councils that were dissolved. We will not advance even a single step forward, and we will return to square one - the square of crisis.

"Today, we are in the first year of the dissolution of the National Assembly, which means that there is plenty of time to discuss the reasons and causes for the dissolution of the previous councils, and to focus on the reasons for the poor choice of nation representatives in the National Assembly.

"Also, the issue of five electoral constituencies needs to be studied. Are they suitable for the new era, or is there an urgent need to revise the electoral law? Should Kuwait be restructured into one constituency, or more or should it bring back the system of 25 constituencies or ten constituencies?"

"In other words, we need to initiate a national dialogue, or perhaps multiple dialogues at various levels, involving all segments of Kuwaiti society. This will help us reach a consensus and move beyond the current impasse.

"It is also assumed that the government has a specific vision that it will adopt in the next stage after four years. This vision is certainly something that the Kuwaiti people have an opinion about. It may be changed, deleted, or added in a way that makes the people and the leadership agree on a unified opinion, which is the closest to the truth, so that the train can ride its tracks and set off at full speed to catch up with the train of civilization.

"We may need to partially amend the constitution, or we may need a new electoral system. Registering voters will avoid conflict and the mistakes of the past.

"In short, we do not want to waste this golden opportunity without reaching a new horizon and avoiding the mistakes of the past, which will allow us to serve our country in the way it deserves.

"We are in dire need of a national dialogue to hear the voice of reason instead of previous clashes, which dragged us backwards and did not benefit the country and its people.

"We always say - Kuwait deserves the best, and the best is always achieved through serious national dialogue."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes & Mahmoud Ateyieh**



Some of the suspects in police custody.

Mol photo

Four arrested for inciting domestic workers to leave sponsor's homes

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Personnel from the Criminal Investigation and Licensing Department have arrested four expatriates for inciting female workers to leave their sponsors' homes and illegally re-employ them on hourly basis, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Among those arrested is a taxi driver who played a key role in the operation. The suspects have been referred to the competent authority for appropriate legal action.

According to a security source, the arrests came after the criminal investigation sector received several reports about the mysterious disappearances of domestic

workers from the homes of their sponsors.

Following the complaints the investigators checked the surveillance cameras footages around several homes where the workers had gone missing.

Through these investigations and camera recordings, they were able to identify the license plate of a taxi that transported one of the missing expatriate women.

The taxi driver was subsequently arrested and during interrogation he confessed, along with the other accused, that they incited the workers to run away and then re-employ them illegally.

Clarification by KOC

The Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) has confirmed that the employee sentenced to prison by the Criminal Court on Monday, July 29, previously held a supervisory position as a team leader within the company. Following an internal investigation, the employee was dismissed from his position in 2020.

The company subsequently filed

a report against him with the Public Funds Prosecution after the charges were substantiated.

The company clarified that the CEO involved in the same case is the head of a private-sector oil services company, which has no affiliation with the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation or its subsidiaries.

Expat doctor freed after anti-drugs officers expose false drug charges

Court acquits citizen of drugs trafficking

By **Munif Naif, Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: The anti-narcotics officers solved the mystery of the case of a Lebanese doctor who was arrested with narcotics in his possession, and there was an attempt to deport him from the country due to disagreements with a Kuwaiti female doctor and an Iraqi nurse who work with him at a clinic, in cooperation with two police officers -- a citizen and a Bedoun.

The Public Prosecution ordered their detention and the completion of investigations with them.

According to a security source, the emergency patrols referred a Lebanese doctor with narcotics in his possession and he was handed over to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) with a piece of hashish.

During investigation at the department, it became clear that the case was ambiguous, especially since the doctor said he did not even smoke cigarettes. He was immediately examined in the drug laboratory and it was found that he had not taken any narcotics.

The source added that the anti-narcotics officers summoned the patrol officers and subjected them to intensive investigations, where they revealed the details of the case. They confessed that they had 'planted' the narcotics in the doctor's vehicle and then stopped him, so that they could deport him at the instigation of a Kuwaiti doctor who works with him at a clinic, as well as an Iraqi nurse, a citizen and a Bedoun.

The source pointed out that the anti-narcotics officers immediately began arresting all the accused, unraveling the case and referring all those arrested to the Public Prosecution. Regarding the immediate deportation of expatriates or other Gulf citizens who use narcotics, the source confirmed this procedure is subject to intensive investigations and inquiries, indicating the person himself is booked and then the procedure is carried out.

He explained that the anti-narcotics officers are up to the responsibility of not wronging anyone and that the law applies to everyone. The case was supervised by Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Affairs Major General Hamed Al-Dawas, DCGD Director General Brigadier General Mohammed Qabazard and a number of competent officers. This resulted in the release of the Lebanese doctor.

In this regard, the Public Prosecution said in a statement on 'X' platform that it ordered the detention of a female citizen, a male citizen and four expatriates on charges of arresting another resident and detaining him under circumstances not permitted by law, kidnapping him, possessing narcotic and psychotropic substances, and forging an official document.

□ □ □

400-m electrical cable stolen: An employee of the Ministry of Electricity has filed a case of theft of an electrical supply box containing a 400-meter-long electrical cable that was cut before being taken away.

According to security sources, the employee, upon discovering the theft, rushed to the police station of the area and reported the theft of the electric cables. Investigations are currently ongoing to apprehend the perpetrator(s).

□ □ □

Citizen acquitted of drugs trafficking: The Criminal Court, headed by Judge Nasser Al-Bader, acquitted a citizen of trafficking in drugs although he was caught red-handed selling the narcotic substance to a secret agent sent by the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) at the Interior Ministry.

According to the case files, the investigation officer testified that his secret sources revealed the accused possessed narcotic and psychotropic substances for the purpose of trafficking and personal use. After obtaining the Public Prosecution's permission, he headed a force of anti-narcotics officers to Kabad on the day of the incident.

His informant met with the accused to buy some of the seized items, during which the accused affirmed his readiness to sell. At the time of delivery, the accused was arrested. Upon inspection, the marked money estimated at KD200 was found. A transparent bag containing a suspected herbal substance (marijuana) was handed over to the informant. When the accused was asked about the money in his pocket, he admitted that it was from his sale of five grams of marijuana.

The defendant's lawyer, Attorney An'am Haidar, argued that the Public Prosecution's permission was invalid, because it was based on frivolous investigations. He pointed out the evidence that resulted from this permission was invalid as well, considering the permission was issued to arrest his client for a crime which has yet to happen. He added the arrest and search procedures were invalid.

'Legislation needed to protect food market'

By **Najeh Bilal**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: The concerns raised by experts about the susceptibility of Kuwait's food market to penetration by money laundering operations underscore the need for robust legislative and regulatory measures to close existing legal loopholes.

The Kuwaiti food market has seen massive and steady growth, which is understandable given the country's population increase in recent years.

Despite this growth, the market is vulnerable to the infiltration of "dirty money" or "black money" through legal loopholes that need to be addressed legislatively.

The local food market is valued at over \$30 billion, with more than 70 cooperative societies controlling about 75% of retail trade in the country.

There has been a proliferation of wholesale and retail food centers, some of which sell products at lower prices than cooperatives and central markets, while others see little to no consumer activity.

Experts are concerned about the financial sustainability of these centers, questioning the logic behind maintaining operations that incur continuous losses.

Professor of Accounting at Kuwait University, Dr. Sadiq Al-Bassam, has expressed surprise at the unusually large number of food centers, hinting at possible money laundering activities behind their spread. He stressed the importance of verifying the capital of these centers.

Ali Al-Attar, a lawyer specializing in money laundering cases, highlighted the significant increase in money laundering in recent years.

He emphasized the need for stringent checks on food centers and pharmacies, pointing out that food bills can be easily manipulated for laundering purposes. He called for comparing company books, invoices, and documents with capital and sales activity to ensure legality.

There is a pressing need for tightening control over the food sector to prevent it from becoming a conduit for illicit funds.

Authorities should implement the anti-money laundering law rigorously, comparing the movement of funds in bank accounts and registered capital with the volume of sales recorded in company books.

Ensuring the legality of transactions and verifying that business activities do not conceal funds from illegal sources is crucial for maintaining market integrity.

The warnings and recommendations highlight the importance of vigilant oversight and proactive legislative actions to safeguard Kuwait's food market from exploitation by money laundering operations.

Ex-board members of 2 co-ops referred to Public Prosecution

By **Fares Al-Abdan**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: A number of former members of the boards of directors of Abdullah Al-Mubarak and Jahra cooperative societies were referred to the Public Prosecution, say reliable sources from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

According to the sources, those referred to the prosecution include expatriates working in the two cooperatives as per the recommendations of the investigation committees that were formed earlier and confirmed the violations; in addition to the recommendations of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha).

Sources affirmed that certain measures will be taken against the erring cooperatives, stressing that majority of the investigation committees have completed their work and submitted their reports to the competent authorities.



Dr Al-Huwailah

On the other hand, Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah announced Monday that experts will soon conduct a comprehensive review of the laws concerning the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) and the cooperative societies.

She added that she is exerting tremendous efforts to improve services provided to those entitled and review legal loopholes hindering the achievement of the objectives for which these laws were issued.

She also emphasized the importance of adhering to the laws and regulations governing the work of PADA and the cooperative societies in the interest of the public.

□ □ □

'Make Your Future' drive: The General Secretariat of the Council of Private Universities has announced the launch of its second annual guidance campaign, 'Make Your Future', targeting high school graduates, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The campaign, which can be accessed through the website of the Secretariat and various social media platforms, is designed to assist students seeking internal scholarships.

176 arrested in July for drug use

Mol discusses 'development' of craft workshops in correctional institutions

By **Munif Nayef**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: In the month of July, a total of 176 individuals were referred to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) for using and/or possessing illicit drugs.

According to the weekly statistics issued by the General Department for Rescue Patrols, a total of 59 people were arrested and referred to DCGD in the first week of July, 49 in the second week, 34 in the third week, and 34 in the fourth week. This brings the total number of those arrested and referred to DCGD to 176, with an average of six people being arrested on a daily basis by the rescue patrols only.

A security source revealed that security campaigns held by rescue patrols will be

intensified to apprehend wanted individuals and criminals. This will involve increased security presence across all governorates and verification of individuals' data.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior has taken steps towards the development of a mechanism for operating craft incubator workshops within correctional institutions, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The Correctional Institutions Sector, under the leadership of Director General Brigadier General Fahd Al-Obaid, recently convened with various government agencies to discuss this initiative.

This effort falls under the 'Sandhom' initiative, which was launched in strategic partnership with the Human Construction Society for Social Development, the National Bureau for Human Rights, and Kuwait University.

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Funds to boost health services on remote islands

KFAED grants Maldives KD3 mln loan

KUWAIT CITY, July 30, (KUNA): The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed a loan agreement with the Republic of Maldives on Monday worth three million Kuwaiti dinars (about USD 9.8 million) to contribute to financing the small islands hospitals project.

The fund stated in a release to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the project aims to support economic and social development in the Maldives by providing necessary health services, enhancing the quality and efficiency of health services, and reducing transportation costs from small islands and resorts to larger cities for health services.

It is expected that the project will contribute to achieving several sustainable development goals, notably eradicating poverty, promoting good health and welfare, and forming partnerships to achieve these goals. The loan term is 24 years, including a four-year grace period.

The interest rate on the loan is 1 percent annually, with an additional fee of 0.5 percent annually to cover administrative and service costs related to the loan agreement.

The agreement was signed by Waleed Al-Bahar, Acting Director General of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, and Mohammed Shafiq, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Maldives.

It is noteworthy that the Fund has provided 20 loans to the Maldives across various sectors, totaling approximately 58.1 million dinars (about 189.9 million dollars), and has offered nine grants and technical as-



KUNA photo
Acting Director General of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, Waleed Al-Bahr, and Minister of Finance of the Republic of Maldives, Mohamed Shafiq, after signing the loan agreement.

sistance totaling about 1.09 million dinars (about 3.5 million dollars).

The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development is recognized as a development tool that relies entirely on its own resources to provide loans and development assistance, characterized by its ease and focus on helping developing countries finance their development projects.

Prevents tampering, ensures efficiency

MPW launches road maintenance app

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: In an effort to monitor road maintenance work, informed sources revealed that the Ministry of Public Works will use an application enabling the ministry's competent leaders to follow up on maintenance work in real-time.

This initiative aims to ensure that asphalt mixtures are not tampered with and to avoid neg-

ligence in all forms. Sources confirmed that this step is part of the ministry's preparations to implement 18 major road maintenance contracts, which are currently being tendered and awarded by the Central Agency for Public Tenders. Additionally, teams from the ministry's staff will follow up on the ground.

The ministry will hold a series of meetings with several concerned parties, including the Ministry of Interior, represented by the Gen-

eral Traffic Department, to ensure safety and security standards on the roads during the implementation of the works, especially as they will occur during peak hours for schools and employees.

Notably, there are 12 contracts for internal roads across the six governorates, with two contracts per governorate, while there are six contracts for expressways being implemented by the General Authority for Roads and Land Transport.

New criteria set for financial rewards in education sector

Performance and tenure key to eligibility

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: The Minister of Education, Higher Education, and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani has set the conditions for granting financial rewards to the employees of institutes, schools and kindergartens, irrespective of whether they are teachers or administrators, for their outstanding service in the 2023/2024 academic year.

According to the decision issued by Minister Al-Adwani, article 1 stipulates that the conditions for entitlement to the reward are:

1. The employee should have been appointed for at least two years within the ministry or in any other government agency for those transferred to the ministry, or seconded outside the ministry for those appointed on or before September 18, 2022.
2. The employee must have obtained a performance evaluation of "Excellent" in the year 2023/2024.
3. There must be no disciplinary penalties in force against the employee during the year of entitlement (2023/2024) unless they are canceled in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Law or by a final judicial ruling.
4. The actual working days of the employee for the entitlement year of 2023/2024 in the various educational stages shall not be less than the 70 percent as stipulated in Civil Service Council's Resolution No. 43/2016,



Dr Al-Adwani

New digital tool to boost integration

MoE unveils Takamol platform to streamline project management

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: The Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Adwani has announced the launch of a new electronic platform called "Takamol" (integration) with the aim of enhancing the efficiency and impact of the Projects Department in the Ministry of Education, reports Al-Rai daily.

Al-Adwani explained that the platform will present comprehensive statistics and convert included information into digital data. It includes operational plans from various directorates and observations recorded by the Government Performance Follow-up Agency, along with contracts, advertisements, and tenders. It also facilitates direct contact with the control section while ensuring privacy and confi-

dentality.

The platform's launch is in line with the governmental trend towards electronic processes. It reflects the ministry's keenness to take advantage of the advanced digital technology to boost integration among its different directorates.

It aims to provide data and information on operational plans to enhance project management, including preparations for the upcoming academic year.

The platform will enable citizens to identify the strengths and weaknesses through digital data and charts, and monitor the performance of different departments with the help of precise figures. It will contribute to cost rationalization and reduce document circulation.

which is 120 days for workers in the kindergarten stage, 125 days for workers in the primary stage, and 129 days for workers in the intermediate and secondary stages.

The periods of interruption and suspension from work, delegation and sabbatical leave of all types and titles, missions and vacations of any type or duration, official holidays, Fridays, and rest days are excluded from the actual working days referred to, except for sick leave during hospitalization in the entitlement year 2023/2024.

According to the controls, those who are reappointed or contracted with shall be treated as new employees when calculating the period specified in the first clause.

Those referred to legal affairs will be entitled to a bonus for excellent services

immediately after the vetting is completed and the result is known, provided that the finance department keeps amounts in the trust accounts for two months for grievances, and for six months for those referred for investigation.

According to Article 2 of the decision, employees who are not entitled to excellent performance bonus can submit their grievances within 60 days from the date of disbursement of the bonus through the website of the Ministry of Education. No grievance requests will be received except through the website of the Ministry of Education and during the specified grievance period.

Article 3 of the decision stipulates that it is not permissible to combine this bonus with any financial bonus for excellent services issued by other regulatory decisions.

Sheikh Athbi assures regional development

Farwaniya Governor addresses South Abdullah Al-Mubarak residents issues

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser of Farwaniya met with representatives from the South Abdullah Al-Mubarak region to discuss recent developments and addressing local concerns, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the session, residents presented various ideas, initiatives, and proposals aimed at enhancing the development and improvement of their region. They also highlighted several problems and needs affecting the community.

The meeting covered both the region's ongoing issues and potential solutions to address them.

Sheikh Athbi expressed the governorate's dedication to alleviating burdens and removing obstacles faced by citizens across the region.

He emphasized the importance of advancing development and ensuring that all demands and proposals are carefully considered.

The governor assured residents that their concerns and requests would be pursued in coordination with relevant authorities, within the bounds of available resources.

The meeting reflects a proactive ap-

Fresh water station opens in Al-Mutlaa

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy will open a fresh water filling station in Al-Mutlaa tomorrow to serve the people of the region.

This comes as part of the Ministry's efforts, represented by the Customer Services Sector, to provide fresh water service to citizens in new residential areas.

proach to engaging with local communities and addressing their needs in Farwaniya.

Sheikh Athbi said he is committed to improving the region highlights the governorate's focus on responsive governance and community development.



Governor of Farwaniya, Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser with representatives of South Abdullah Al-Mubarak residents.

New initiative aims to cut bills by 40%

Water efficiency in mosques launched

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Bader Al-Mutairi, the chairman of the Energy Rationalization and Sustainability Enhancement Committee, Assistant Undersecretary for Mosque Affairs Bader Al-Otaibi and Eng. Salem Al-Qahtani had a meeting with the delegation from Kuwait Water Association headed by Chairman of the Board of Directors Dr. Saleh Al-Muzaini and Board Member Mohammad Al-Qanaei.

The meeting is aimed at coordinating efforts between the ministry and the association to support the ministry in implementing the water efficiency program and stopping water waste in mosques.

In a press statement after the meeting, Al-Muzaini disclosed they discussed the latest developments in implementing the sustainable water development system, and the impact of these developments in providing water in general to the State and its application to the ministry.

He added: "The Undersecretary of the

Ministry of Awqaf stressed the importance of raising public awareness on conserving water, especially during the five prayer times in mosques, to ensure water sustainability, as well as the need to find effective solutions to control water needs and address the issue of water waste. Eng. Al-Otaibi confirmed the development of a strategic plan to achieve water sustainability in mosques."

He affirmed the association's willingness to cooperate with the ministry to achieve water sustainability and meet water security requirements.

He also announced the implementation of the water efficiency project in mosques in cooperation with the ministry, indicating it is funded by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and the goal is to guarantee the judicious use of water in mosques, which contributes to reducing water bills by 30 to 40 percent.

Al-Qanaei added "the water efficiency project includes the use of modern technologies in the ministry's facilities to monitor water consumption and detect leaks. This greatly contributes to identifying areas of water waste, and then taking the necessary measures."



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Summer enrichment programs for developing future innovators

SACGC sends 16 Kuwaiti students to advanced AI camp in South Korea

Imprisonment of

Continued from Page 1

Those who cooperated with the state and returned the embezzled funds were released, while those who refused underwent public trials and were subsequently imprisoned for the crimes they committed against the state. Also, their names and charges were publicized in the media.

As a result, during that period, the government successfully recovered over USD 200 billion in tangible assets, land, money, and other resources. These funds were then reinvested into infrastructure and productive projects that aim to bolster the national economy.

In Qatar, the rulings issued against the former Minister of Finance, a member of the royal family, and other citizens served as a stern warning to anyone contemplating violations in this regard.

Due to insufficient deterrent laws in Kuwait, we keep hearing about embezzlements proven by court rulings, some exceeding KD 50 million or KD 60 million, with cases of individuals embezzling up to KD 101 million. This highlights the urgent need for laws that “have teeth and nails”.

Most of these perpetrators fled abroad, and some of them were exposed by their accomplices following disputes over dividing the spoils.

It is a known fact that some individuals have been milking the state to such an extent that it started bleeding. Despite that, they continue to walk free and evade accountability, leading to a dangerous normalization of their crimes against the state and its people.

We therefore call for the disclosure of the names of corrupt individuals and the crimes they have committed, along with efforts exerted by the government to recover stolen funds. It will undoubtedly benefit from these funds, at least in paying the fines of the debtors who have been imprisoned for issuing dud cheques worth KD 2,000 or KD 3,000, or even pump the recovered money to cover the budget deficit.

Red light

Continued from Page 1

He said, “Traffic accidents last year resulted in the death of about 300 people, most of whom were young people. We are working to protect them by increasing the penalties in the new traffic law to be a deterrent to some serious violations. The current law is about 30 years old”.

Brigadier Bousleib disclosed that all cameras installed at intersections are manned by personnel who monitor traffic violations, especially reckless driving, adding that they capture footage of violators and issue tickets directly.

He explained that traffic detectives track the movements of reckless drivers from the groups that they create to decide on the place and time to perform reckless stunts with their vehicles. The detectives then go to these locations and film them, after which the suspects are summoned for necessary measures including the impoundment of their vehicles.

Brigadier Bousleib highlighted the responsibility of parents to monitor their children, particularly if they venture out late at night to engage in reckless behavior.

He affirmed that security campaigns have been effective in reducing the locations where reckless driving and stunts occur.

Meanwhile, Brigadier Bousleib revealed that violators of the residency law were given a three-month period to amend their status. Because the period coincided with Eid al-Adha, it was extended for two more weeks.

He indicated that the number of expatriates who benefited from this opportunity exceeded 70,000.

Brigadier Bousleib explained that the Ministry of Interior, with the participation of the Special Forces, Rescue, Traffic, Public Security, and Residency Affairs Investigations sectors, is exerting great efforts to pursue residency law violators in all areas and to carry out campaigns randomly in areas crowded with expatriates.

Reforms vital

Continued from Page 1

Penalties for exam-related violations include imprisonment of up to three years and fines ranging from 20,000 to 50,000 dinars. Additionally, those convicted may face permanent dismissal from educational or training institutions and be prohibited from applying for government-funded scholarships.

The proposed laws also target the broader spectrum of academic fraud, including illegal activities that undermine the evaluation and examination processes. Those involved in promoting or facilitating cheating, tampering with evaluation documents, or engaging in fraudulent practices would face severe penalties.

For example, individuals convicted of conspiring to promote unauthorized tools or methods for cheating could face imprisonment of up to five years and fines between 20,000 and 50,000 dinars.

EU eyes

Continued from Page 1

earlier from Michel, during which they discussed means to develop EU-Kuwaiti bilateral relations. They also discussed regional and global developments of shared interest and coordinated their responses towards them.

Loopholes in

Continued from Page 1

She highlighted that money laundering laws are closely linked to information security. Therefore, the money laundering law must address the evolving digital fraudulent methods infiltrating trading and stock exchanges, including digital currencies.

Currently, there is no law in Kuwait that criminalizes digital currencies, even though they can be used for money laundering. Additionally, many social media celebrities have escaped punishment despite their wealth increasing due to legal shortcomings, making them potential tools for money laundering.

Dr. Zaman pointed out that existing laws are outdated and need to be modernized. This includes establishing specialized courts for financial and technical cases to reduce delays in adjudication, which contribute to the rise in financial crimes. She also stressed the need to expand departments dealing with money laundering and electronic crimes.

Dr. Zaman urged Kuwait to emulate Gulf countries’ experiences, noting that Saudi Arabia has issued deterrent laws against money laundering through its central bank, and Bahrain has made significant strides in cybersecurity to curb fraud. She concluded by saying that action must be taken to preserve Kuwait’s reputation abroad and prevent it from becoming a haven for money laundering.

Lawyer Salem Hamoud explained that money laundering in Kuwait involves many complex and intertwined methods.

‘Human trafficking

Continued from Page 1

In a press statement on the occasion of the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, which falls on July 30 every year, Al-Sanad affirmed that the Constitution of Kuwait has established the fight against human trafficking, according to which, national legislation was issued and agreements were concluded with regional and international organizations.

He said the ministry is carrying out its lofty humanitarian mission to combat human trafficking through the services it provides to victims, in cooperation with official authorities in the country, indicating legal and security teams are present in health facilities round the clock.

He added the ministry is coordinating with the relevant government agencies in the Permanent National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling; which lays down plans and strategies, and provides protection for the victims.

He revealed the services provided in shelters include medical services, stating that medical and nursing staff are assigned to check the health condition of the shelter residents, prepare treatment plans for them, monitor their medical condition and provide support medical services; in addition to ambulances equipped with the latest medical devices according to international standards. He stressed that the resident is not charged for these services.

He added the doctors inform the concerned security authorities about residents who are medically examined upon discovering that they could be victims of human trafficking. He affirmed the law on practicing the medical profession made it easier for medical personnel to identify cases that require reporting, as well as enhancing the capabilities of medical and nursing staff on how to deal with human trafficking victims.

He disclosed the ministry also conducts laboratory tests and X-rays for victims in shelters and provides them with seasonal vaccinations, without requiring the inmate to pay fees for the services rendered.

He affirmed the legislator was keen on ensuring the safety of individuals and establish the provisions and principles of Islamic Law. He said the Organ Transplant Law prohibits the sale or purchase of body organs by any means or receiving any financial compensation. It prevents the doctor from performing the organ removal operation if he is aware of such transactions. It also supports the ministry in combating human trafficking through the sale of human organs, he explained.

On the ministry’s continued efforts in this regard, Al-Sanad confirmed the establishment of hotline number 147 for receiving calls from children or their families who want to report cases of child abuse or exposure to any illegal act. “Verification is done to ensure that the child calling is below 18 years old. Calls are received by a specialized team trained on how to deal with the cases in accordance with the Child Rights Law,” he concluded.

Minister lauds

Continued from Page 1

He revealed that the emergency department received 61,000 contacts for urgent aid, according to the 2024 bi-annual report. The personnel dealt with 86,000 cases, scrambled to aid victims in 5,400 road accidents, and transferred 73,000 cases, in addition to 530 others who were taken to hospitals by air. Moreover, they had conducted 296 first-aid operations.

Furthermore, the department covered and secured 5,400 activities, conducted 24,000 diabetes examinations, carried out 405 catheterization operations, 23 training activities and campaigns during the year’s half.

KUWAIT CITY, July 30, (KUNA): The Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC), one of the centers of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), announced in coordination with the Research Capabilities Program in the Research and Technology Department at the Foundation the participation of 16 Kuwaiti students from the 10th and 11th grades in an artificial intelligence camp in South Korea.

The center stated in a press release that the camp, which kicks off today, Tuesday, and continues until August 10, is being conducted in cooperation with the Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST), a strategic partner. This camp is considered one of the enrichment programs of the center and KFAS for the summer of 2024.

The center added that the participation of these

students, selected based on specific scientific criteria, presents a valuable opportunity for them to showcase and hone their talents while learning about the latest developments in artificial intelligence globally. South Korea is known for its significant advancements in this field.

This initiative aims to cultivate a new generation of innovators within Kuwaiti society by equipping them with advanced skills in artificial intelligence, engineering, science, technology, and related fields. It also focuses on developing their abilities to overcome challenges, work in teams, and engage in brainstorming activities.

The center reiterated its commitment to enhancing the educational system in the country by providing specialized programs, workshops, training, and cultural and educational camps.

The students participating in the camp are Ajwan Al-Dahi, Rayan Buhaimeed, Zeina Al-Hais, Sarah Al-Awadhi, Saud Al-Subaie, Salman Fadel, Abdul Latif Al-Nasser, Ali Dhiyab, Ali Jarraq, Ghadeer Akrouf, Rakan Al-Dhafiri, Muhammad Jarraq, Muhammad Al-Mufreh, Nasser Ali, Hala Al-Rashidi, and Yousef Ali.

The students are accompanied by a delegation from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, headed by Dr. Abrar Al-Mousa, Director of the Research Capacity Building Program in the Research and Technology Department, and including Khalidoun Al-Harmi, Nada Al-Fares, Engineer Saleh Al-Duaij, and Lulwa Al-Tuwaijiri.



Group photo of the delegation leaving for South Korea.

KUNA photo

GCC chief: Human trafficking is a scourge threatening humanity

Kuwait keen on fighting inhumane crimes

A tribute to sacrifice and resilience

Kuwait commemorates Martyrs’ Day

KUWAIT CITY, July 30, (KUNA): Martyrs’ Day, which falls on August 2nd each year, is one of the most important and unforgettable days in Kuwaiti society. It symbolizes patience, sacrifice, and resistance during the brutal Iraqi aggression against the State of Kuwait, said Salah Al-Oufan, Director General of the Martyrs’ Honoring Office, in a press statement on Saturday marking the 34th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. This anniversary represents pride and honor for what the people of Kuwait have done and embodies a profound affirmation of the Kuwaiti people’s support for their political leadership, which has guided the development vision carried forward by the honorable Al-Sabah family for decades, he added.

Al-Oufan also noted that the books and documents written about this difficult pe-



Salah Al-Oufan, Director General of the Office of Honoring Martyrs and Their Families.

KUNA photo

riod require decades to fully comprehend the great sacrifices made during that stage of Kuwaiti history. The Kuwaiti people have consistently demonstrated their ability to face challenges and achieve their ambitions and aspirations.

He stated that the historical epic represented by the sons of Kuwait for the sake of the homeland serves as a legacy for future generations and a continuous hope for a better future under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his loyal Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

He emphasized that Kuwait’s righteous martyrs, the heroes of the Kuwaiti resistance, recorded unique and honorable positions in the nation’s history and the struggle of its people. The martyrs exemplified the Kuwaiti people’s determination to preserve the security, independence, and unity of their homeland at every stage of history, demonstrating their adherence to the noble values of martyrdom for the sake of God and defending the land and honor.

JOINT OPERATIONS

WAFRA

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC) - KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY

Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of material.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Blanket Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from **31 July 2024** up to **2 September 2024** for a non-refundable fee mentioned against tender.

Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tender will be on **Monday, 9 September 2024 @ 09:00 AM.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	CONTRACT PERIOD	FEES (IN KD)
1	BPT # 255 / 24	Blanket Purchase Tender For MISC. Electrical Items	3 YRS	35
2	BPT # 256 / 24	Blanket Purchase Tender For M/S Houttuin B. V. Items	3 YRS	50
3	BPT # 258 / 24	Blanket Purchase Tender For M/S Sulzer Pumps LTD	3 YRS	50
4	BPT # 262 / 24	Blanket Purchase Tender For IT Spares & Accessories	3 YRS	15

Notes:

Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please send request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail CBMS@chevron.com or MYDG@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact:

Telephone No.: **23983639** - Ext : **3042 - 2569**

World News Roundup

Europe

Interpol arrests 206

Spain PM won't testify in wife corruption case

MADRID, July 30, (Agencies): Spanish Prime Minister **Pedro Sánchez** on Tuesday opted not to testify before a judge at the presidential complex as part of the investigation into corruption allegations against his wife, lawyers said.

Sánchez, one of Europe's longest serving socialist leaders, is not obliged to testify against his wife under Spanish law.

The questioning lasted just minutes as the premier exercised his right not to testify, lawyers from both sides of the case told reporters.

A legal activist group called Manos Limpias, or "Clean Hands," alleged that Sánchez's wife, Begoña Gómez, used her position to influence business deals. Many of the group's previous cases have been linked to right-wing causes targeting leftist politicians, most of them never succeed.

Judge Carlos Peinado, who refused Sánchez's request to submit a written testimony, was the first to enter La Moncloa, the prime minister's residence in Madrid, and take a statement from a sitting prime minister. A public prosecutor was also present.

Sánchez has constantly said the case was a "smear campaign" aimed at damaging the left coalition government led by his Spanish Socialist Workers' Party.

Spain's Public Prosecutors' office recommended the probe be thrown out, but a provincial court ruled that the lower-court judge could continue the investigation. Judge Peinado will either throw out the allegations or recommend that the case go to trial.

After the probe was launched, Sánchez stunned the nation by saying in an April open letter published on social media that he would contemplate stepping down for what he said was the "attack without precedent" against his wife. After five days of silence, Sánchez said he had decided to remain in office.

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Metro France issues orange alert: The French Meteorological Service (Meteo France) has issued an orange alert for thunderstorms across several regions of France, which was the third of four warning levels.

Some 45 departments were placed on alert for the risk of heatwaves, Meteo France warned that the intense heat, which began last Sunday in the south, was gradually moving northward, bringing with it the threat of severe thunderstorms.

According to Meteo France, these storms may be accompanied by heavy rainfall, hail, and strong winds.

This weather alert comes as Paris hosts the 2024 Olympic Games, which officially commenced last Friday under persistent rain.

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Interpol arrests 206 people: Interpol says more than 200 people have been arrested and some \$1.6 billion worth of illegal drugs and precursor chemicals seized as part of a two-month operation against narcotics trafficking across Europe, North America and Africa.

The international police organization, based in Lyon, France, said Operation Lionfish Hurricane in April and May led to the seizure of 615 tons of illegal drugs and chemicals.

In addition, the operation led to the arrest of 206 people and the seizure of 65 stolen cars, some 30,000 commercial-grade detonators diverted from military or commercial mining, and a "narco-sub" - a homemade semi-submersible vessel that's used to transport cocaine through South American waterways and across the Atlantic - in the jungle of Guyana, Interpol said.

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Bear killed for attacking hiker: Despite protests by animal rights activists, an alpine Italian province on Tuesday confirmed the killing of a female bear believed responsible for an attack on a French hiker earlier this month.

Activists said the killing of the bear identified as Kjl leaves her three cubs in "serious difficulty to survive." The International Organization for Animal Protection said the order was issued overnight, making it impossible to seek a legal stay.

"OPIA Italia is disconcerted at the culling of Kjl, which we tried to save with two legal actions," said Claudia Taccani, a lawyer for the organization, noting that a judge had suspended two previous kill orders to examine other remedies. "Unfortunately, this was not done."

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Evacuations ordered in Greece wildfire: Authorities on Monday ordered multiple evacuations due to a wildfire on the island of Evia in southern Greece, with conditions worsening after nightfall when firefighting planes and helicopters were unable to operate.

The Fire Service said evacuations were ordered in four mountainous areas in the south of the island, located about 90 kilometers (55 miles) northeast of Athens. Several hundred firefighters and volunteers were deployed.

Evia was struck by massive wildfires in 2021 and also suffered extensive damage last summer. Monday's fire followed successive heat waves across southern Europe in recent weeks.

"We are in the heart of the fire season and the conditions according to the experts will become more difficult over the next few (weeks)," Fire Service spokesman Vassilis Vathrakogiannis said.

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Hungary, Poland in diplomatic spat: A diplomatic spat has erupted between Poland and Hungary that lays bare the deep tensions within Europe over how to deal with Russia when it is waging war on Ukraine.

Poland, like Germany, France and most other European nations, is a staunch ally of Ukraine while Hungary's populist Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is widely considered to have the warmest relations with the Kremlin among all EU leaders.

The Polish government has been openly critical of Hungary for its stance. The spat erupted when Orbán lashed out at Poland over the weekend.

"The Poles are pursuing the most sanctimonious and the most hypocritical policy in the whole of Europe.

They are lecturing us morally, criticizing us for our economic relations with Russia, and at the same time they are doing business with the Russians and buying oil indirectly, and running the Polish economy with it," Orbán said.



US President Joe Biden speaks at an event commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act on July 29 at the LBJ Presidential Library in Austin, Texas. (AP)

Politics

Cooper opted out of Kamala VP vetting

Harris keeps calling Trump, Vance 'weird'

WASHINGTON, July 30, (AP): US Vice President Kamala Harris and her Democratic allies are emphasizing a new line of criticism against Republicans - branding Donald Trump and his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, as "weird."

Democrats are applying the label with gusto in interviews and online, notably to Vance's comments on abortion and his previous suggestion that political leaders who didn't have biological children "don't really have a direct stake" in the country.

The "weird" message appears to have given Democrats a narrative advantage that it rarely had when President Joe Biden was still running for reelection. Trump's campaign, which so often shapes political discussions with the former president's pronouncements, has spent days trying to flip the script by highlighting things about Democrats it says are weird.

"I don't know who came up with the message, but I salute them," said David Karpf, a strategic communication professor at George Washington University.

Karpf said labeling Republican comments as "weird" is the sort of concise take that resonates quickly with Harris supporters. Plus, Karpf noted, "it frustrates opponents, leading them to further amplify it through off-balance responses."

"So far, at least, Trump-Vance has been incapable of finding an effective response," Karpf said.

Minnesota Gov Tim Walz, a Democrat who is on Harris' short list for vice president, called Trump and Vance "just weird" last week in an MSNBC interview, which the Democratic Governors Association - of which Walz is chair - amplified in a post on X. Walz reiterated the characterization Sunday on CNN, referencing Trump's repeated mentions of the fictional serial killer Hannibal Lecter from the film "Silence of the Lambs" in stump speeches.

Also:

WASHINGTON: North Carolina Gov Roy Cooper opted not to be a candi-

diate in Vice President **Kamala Harris'** running mate search in part due to concerns that his Republican lieutenant governor would try to assume control if he left the state to campaign as part of the Democratic ticket, according to three people familiar with the matter.

Cooper confirmed in a statement Monday night that he would not be a candidate to be Harris' vice president, saying he was "honored" to be considered but "this just wasn't the right time for North Carolina and for me to potentially be on a national ticket." The governor, 67, withdrew from contention well before Harris' vetting process began and never submitted the requisite material, according to two of the people. All three spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive search process.

Harris' search is ongoing and her teams of lawyers and political aides are still reviewing information on a

The report is the US government's first to delve into a tech industry debate between developers such as ChatGPT-maker OpenAI who advocates closing off their models' inner workings to guard against misuse, and others, such as Meta Platforms CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who has lobbied for a more open approach they say favors innovation.

"A year ago, there was a strong narrative about risk and long-term concerns about AI systems being too powerful," said Davidson, administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. "We continue to have concerns about AI safety, but this report reflects a more balanced view that shows that there are real benefits in the openness of these technologies."

narrowing list of potential candidates.

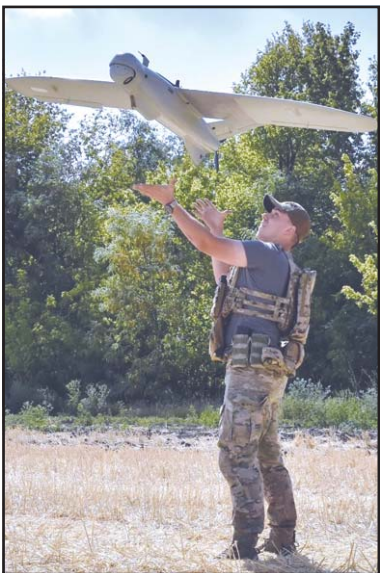
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AUSTIN, Texas: No longer on the campaign trail, US President Joe Biden on Monday delivered a speech at the LBJ Presidential Library designed to help cement his legacy.

Slightly more than a week after dropping out of this year's election, Biden marked the 60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act by speaking out for the rule of law and democratic principles. All the while, he warned about the threat he sees if Republican Donald Trump returns to the White House.

"No one is above the law," Biden said.

Biden followed his denunciations of Trump with a mix of nostalgia for his early days in politics during the era of Martin Luther King Jr., John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Baines Johnson.



A soldier of Ukraine's National Guard 15th Brigade launches a reconnaissance drone Leleka to determine Russian positions near the front line in Zaporizhzhia region, Ukraine on July 29. Russian forces have overrun two front-line villages in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, a Ukrainian army sergeant said Monday, after relentless assaults that are part of a Kremlin summer push to overwhelm battlefield defenses there. (AP)



Wells



Creighton

America

Senators grill utility execs: The top executive of Houston's power utility told lawmakers Monday the company would lose momentum on changes after Hurricane Beryl if he resigned over the prolonged and deadly power outages that followed the storm plowing this month onto the Texas coast.

"I take personal accountability for not meeting our customer's expectations during Hurricane Beryl," **Jason Wells**, CenterPoint Energy's chief executive officer, told a panel of state senators in the Texas Capitol. CenterPoint will launch an outage tracker on Thursday to help prepare customers for the next storm and hire a chief communications officer to improve their messaging, Wells said.

"Our constituents deserve answers," Republican state Sen **Brandon Creighton** said, naming some of his constituents who died in the storm. (AP)

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Woman killed in NY shooting: A woman was killed and two people were wounded early Monday in a shooting near a New York City migrant shelter as a crowd gathered for the results of Venezuela's presidential election, police said.

A gunman fired on the gathering in a park on Randall's Island around 3:30 a.m. At least two of the people who were shot - the woman who died and another woman who was injured - were believed to have been living at the shelter, NYPD Chief of Patrol John Chell said.

The suspected shooter, identified by police as a man upset about a prior robbery, opened fire from about 100 feet (30.5 meters) away and fled on a moped, Chell said. No arrests have been made.(AP)

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Child dies from fall in Kansas: A 3-year-old child died Monday after falling from a Missouri apartment window eight stories above the ground.

Battalion Chief Eric Michel told the

Kansas City Star that the boy fell around 10 a.m. at Independence Towers, an apartment building in the Kansas City suburb of Independence. The boy was taken to a hospital

with critical injuries but died a short time later. His name was not released.

Police are investigating the circumstances that led to the fall, Independence



Russian railroad employees work at a side of the derailment of the passenger train in Kotelnikovo, about 1200 km (745mi) south of Moscow, Volgograd region, Russia, on July 29. Some 140 people sustained injuries when a train with over 800 passengers on board collided with a truck and eight of its carriages were derailed as the result, according to Russian Railways and local authorities. (AP)

Police Officer Kelley Rupert said.

Resident Elliot West told the Star that people in the building had their windows open because central air conditioning hasn't been working throughout the summer. Weather on Monday was humid with a temperature in the mid-90s. (AP)

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Rep Lee fondly remembered: Residents who stood in line on Monday to pay their respects to longtime US Rep Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas as her body lay in state in Houston's City Hall remembered her as an advocate for human rights and her community.

"I don't know of another politician that worked as hard as Sheila Jackson Lee did for our community, and I will be forever grateful to her for everything she did for our community," said Phyllis Moss, 62, a Houston resident who was among the more than 100 people who stood in line Monday morning to enter City Hall as the building was opened to the public.

Following a trip to Austin earlier in the day, President Joe Biden stopped in Houston on Monday evening and paid his respects to Jackson Lee.

Biden placed a bouquet of flowers beside Jackson Lee's flag-draped casket, briefly prayed over it and then put his hand on the casket before spending some time visiting with her husband and two children. (AP)

Lat/Am

Mexico gunfire kills boy

Musk calls Venezuela president a ‘dictator’

NEW YORK, July 30, (Agencies): Add Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro to the growing list of foreign leaders with whom tech billionaire **Elon Musk** has picked a fight.

Following the results of Venezuela’s presidential election, in which Maduro and his opponents each claimed victory, the owner of X took to the social media platform to accuse the self-proclaimed socialist leader of “major election fraud.”

“Shame on Dictator Maduro,” Musk said Monday. Maduro in turn trashed Musk as “the archenemy of Venezuela’s peace.”

Officials delayed the release of detailed vote tallies from Sunday’s election after proclaiming Maduro the winner with 51% of the vote, compared with 44% for retired diplomat Edmundo González. The competing claims set up a high-stakes standoff.

After failing to oust Maduro during three rounds of demonstrations since 2014, the opposition put its faith in the ballot box. The elections were among the most peaceful in recent memory, reflecting hopes that Venezuela could avoid bloodshed and end 25 years of single-party rule.

Musk also retweeted a comment on X by his “friend” Argentine President Javier Milei. “The numbers announced a landslide opposition by the victory and the world is waiting for the government to acknowledge defeat after years of socialism, misery, decadence and death,” Milei said.

Respond

Maduro was swift to respond to Musk’s social media posts, calling the billionaire a threat to Venezuela. “He is the representation of the fascist ideology, anti-natural, anti-society,” Maduro said.

“Elon Musk is desperate, control yourself,” he warned. “Whoever gets involved with me dries out.”

This is not Musk’s first confrontation with foreign governments. Earlier this year, the self-proclaimed “free speech absolutist” clashed with a Brazilian supreme court justice over free speech, far-right accounts and purported misinformation on X, formerly Twitter. Musk bought Twitter back in 2022, upending many of the social platform’s policies and laying off the majority of its workforce.

Meanwhile, as thousands of people demonstrated across Venezuela, opposition candidate González announced Monday that his campaign has the proof it needs to show he won the country’s disputed election in which electoral authorities named Maduro the victor.

González and opposition leader Maria Corina Machado told reporters they have obtained more than 70% of tally sheets from Sunday’s election, and they show González with more than double Maduro’s votes. Both called on people, some of whom protested in the hours after Maduro was declared winner, to remain calm.

Demonstrate

“I speak to you with the calmness of the truth,” González said as dozens of supporters cheered outside campaign headquarters in the capital, Caracas. “We have in our hands the tally sheets that demonstrate our categorical and mathematically irreversible victory.”

Their announcement came after the National Electoral Council, which is loyal to Maduro’s ruling Unites Socialist Party of Venezuela, officially declared him the winner, handing him his third six-year term.

In the capital, the protests were mostly peaceful, but when dozens of riot gear-clad national police officers blocked the caravan, a brawl broke. Police used tear gas to disperse the protesters, some of whom threw stones and other objects at officers who had stationed themselves on a main avenue of an upper-class district.

A man fired a gun as the protesters moved through the city’s financial district. No one suffered a gunshot wound.

In another development, Venezuela called on the governments of Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Peru, Panama, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay to withdraw their diplomatic staff accredited in the country.

The measure, announced in an official statement released by the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry, also calls for withdrawing Venezuelan diplomatic staff accredited to those nations.

Venezuela has accused the governments of those seven countries of “interference” in its internal affairs, especially the presidential elections held Sunday that saw Maduro reelected to a third six-year term.

Those countries are “subordinated to Washington and committed to ... ideological postulates of international fascism,” according to the statement.

Also:

GUATEMALA CITY: Guatemala’s government announced Monday that it has given temporary residency to 207 Mexicans, mostly children, on humanitarian grounds, after they fled across the border last week to escape drug violence.

National Immigration Institute Director **Danilo Rivera** said they will have 30 days of legal status after which they could request asylum if they want.

Officials have registered at least 44 extended families. Domestic and international organizations are supporting the families with donations, Rivera said during a news conference.

Early last week, nearly 600 Mexicans crossed the border into Guatemala, later describing harrowing escapes on foot as drug cartels battled around their communities.

Last week, Catholic Church leaders in southern **Mexico** made their own plea for the Mexican government to protect the communities from cartels, which extract protection payments and use locals as human shields.

Two of Mexico’s most powerful cartels from the northern states of **Sinaloa** and **Jalisco** have been battling for control of smuggling routes in the southern area for more than a year causing multiple displacements.

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MEXICO CITY: Gunmen riding jet skis opened fire at a rival drug dealer on a beach in the resort town of **Cancun**, killing a 12-year-old boy before fleeing, Mexican authorities said.

Prosecutors said in a statement late Sunday that the boy suffered gunshot wounds and was taken to a hospital where he later died.

The boy was a local resident who apparently was lying on a lounge chair on the beach with his family when he was shot.

Prosecutors said the intended targets of the gunmen were rivals engaged in a dispute over drug sales. The boy was apparently hit by stray bullets.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, (center left), walks with Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff General Romeo Brawner during arrival honors for the foreign and defense ministerial meetings at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines on July 30. (AP)

Asia

Taiwan president urges democracies to unite

US to give Philippines \$500m in army aid

MANILA, Philippines, July 30, (AP): Washington’s top diplomat and defense chief announced \$500 million in new military funding Tuesday to boost the Philippines’ external defense and progress on a proposed military intelligence-sharing pact as both allies renewed their concerns over China’s continuing aggressive actions in the region.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, who has fortified Manila’s decades-old treaty alliance with Washington as hostilities between Philippine and Chinese forces flared since last year in the disputed South China Sea.

Marcos hailed “very open” communication lines between Washington and Manila, adding that the two countries’ treaty alliance and key issues in the South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific region “are continuously examined and reexamined so we are agile in terms of our responses.”

Marcos has underscored the need for a US military presence for Asian stability and peace.

After meeting their Philippine counterparts later, Blinken and Austin announced the \$500 million military funding to help modernize the Philippine military and coast guard and boost security collaboration amid shared concerns over China’s assertive actions.

“Both of us share concerns and many other countries in the region share concerns, as well, about some of the actions that the People’s Republic of China has taken, escalatory actions in the South China Sea, the East China Sea and elsewhere,” including “coercive methods,” Blinken said in a joint news conference.

Warning

He and Austin renewed a warning that the US would help defend the Philippines if Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under attack in the Pacific, including in the South China Sea.

“Every peso or dollar spent on hardening Philippine capabilities to defend itself and to deter unlawful aggression will be a plus against any threat actor, whether it be China or anyone,” Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said.

The visit came the week after the Philippines and reached a temporary arrangement to prevent clashes around the Philippine-occupied Second Thomas Shoal like the violent faceoff between their forces on June 17.

Philippine forces transported food and other supplies and a fresh batch of

navy personnel Saturday to Manila’s territorial outpost at the shoal without a confrontation were reported for the first time since last year.

The US along with Japan, Australia, South Korea, New Zealand and Singapore, have welcomed the arrangement to deescalate tensions, Philippine Foreign Secretary Enrique Manalo said.

But the Philippines would continue strengthening its territorial defense with the assistance of the U.S. and other friendly military powers and build new security alliances, Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez said.

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Lai urges democracies to unite: Taiwanese President **Lai Ching-te** welcomed what he called the “largest-ever” delegation of foreign lawmakers to Taiwan and said Tuesday it showed the importance of democracies uniting, even as Beijing pressured members of the delegation not to visit.

“This demonstrates the support and the value various other countries place on Taiwan,” Lai said. “It also sends an important message to democratic countries around the world. Maintaining democracy requires unity, and we must protect democracy together.”

Concerned

Lai made his remarks at a conference in Taipei held by the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, a group of hundreds of lawmakers from dozens of countries concerned about how democracies approach Beijing.

Beijing views the self-governed island democracy of Taiwan as part of its territory and has been upping its threats to annex it by force if necessary. Lai’s party, the Democratic Progressive Party, doesn’t seek independence from China because he believes that Taiwan is already a sovereign nation.

Beijing sees Lai as a separatist and refuses to speak with him. China has ramped up pressure against the island since Lai took office in May, sending ships and planes on a large military drill to show displeasure at his inauguration. That comes after years of Beijing’s pressure on Taiwan - which has been ruled by the DPP for three terms now - on diplomatic, military and economic fronts.

Lai said at the conference that Taiwan would work with other democracies to protect democracy from “the threat of authoritarian expansionism.”

“China’s threat to any country is a threat to the whole world,” Lai told

attendees. China “uses diplomatic kidnapping, economic coercion, internet attacks, and spreading false and fake things to continuously muddle matters and seek to undermine regional peace and stability.”

Lawmakers from at least six countries told the AP earlier this week that Chinese diplomats were pressuring them not to attend the conference. IPAC has long been despised by the Chinese government: Some members have been sanctioned by Beijing, and in 2021 the group was targeted by Chinese state-sponsored hackers, according to a US indictment unsealed earlier this year.

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‘N’Korea-Russia deal risky: Australia’s foreign minister said Tuesday the recent defense deal between North Korea and Russia was “destabilizing” and “risky for the world,” after she visited the tense border village shared by North and South Korea on Tuesday.

In June, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President **Vladimir Putin** signed a pact stipulating mutual military assistance if either country is attacked, deepening worries about the expanding ties between the countries. The US and its partners have steadfastly accused North Korea of supplying much-needed conventional arms to Russia for its war in Ukraine in return for military and economic assistance.

“I also want to say something about the security pact between North Korea and Russia. And say again, this is destabilizing. This is risky for the world and again we say Russia is behaving in ways which are not conducive to peace but are escalatory,” Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong told reporters following a visit to the southern side of the Korean border village of Panmunjom.

Wang condemned North Korea’s extended run of missile tests that she said threaten regional security. “We share great concerns about DPRK’s escalatory reactions, destabilizing actions,” she said, referring to North Korea by the acronym of its official name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Also Tuesday, Wang met South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul in Seoul and agreed to work together with the international community to cope with the North Korean-Russian military partnerships. The two also agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation on economic security, climate change and other areas, according to South Korea’s Foreign Ministry.

cause societal chaos.

He cited the World Economic Forum’s identification of misinformation as a top global risk, advocating for robust mechanisms to validate information and prevent the spread of falsehoods. (Xinhua)

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Pak arrests top leader of party: Pakistan’s police on Monday arrested the deputy chief at a radical Islamist party on the charge of ordering the killing of the chief justice over his alleged support to the minority Ahmadi community, officials said.

Zaheerul Hassan Shah was arrested a day after a video went viral on social media, showing him telling a gathering of his supporters from the Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan that he would personally give 10 million rupees (\$36,000) to anyone who beheads **Qazi Faez Esa**, the Chief Justice at the Supreme Court.

Esa has been the target of criticism by extremists in Pakistan in recent months after he granted bail to an Ahmadi blasphemy suspect.

Pakistan’s Parliament declared Ahmadi non-Muslims in 1974. Since then, they have been repeatedly targeted by Islamic extremists, drawing condemnation from domestic and international human right groups.

A senior police officer, Zaheer Asghar, told reporters that Shah was arrested in Okara, a city in the eastern Punjab province. He said a case has been registered against Shah on charges of threatening to kill Esa and inciting people to violence. (Xinhua)



A police officer transfers a child on a flooded road in Dandong, northeast China’s Liaoning Province on July 28. Torrential rains have left at least seven people dead and three others missing in southeastern China, state media said on July 30, raising the death toll from a tropical storm to 22. (Xinhua)



Esa



Iqbal

Subcontinent

Train derails in India killing 2: Two people were killed and 20 others were injured on Tuesday after 18 carriages derailed a commuter train in Jharkhand’s Seraikela-Kharsawan district.

Press Trust of India (PTI) reported that West Singhbhum Deputy Commissioner Kuldeep Chaudhary said “Two persons were killed and 20 injured as 18 coaches of Howrah-Mumbai Mail derailed near Barabambo,” adding that rescue operations were underway. (KUNA)

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India train stopped after threat: A passenger train was stopped in India’s Punjab state after the local police received a phone call saying a bomb was placed inside the train, confirmed a local police officer on Tuesday.

The train, going from Jammu area to Jodhpur city in the western state of Rajasthan, was stopped in Punjab’s Ferozepur district for a thorough check-up.

“Ferozepur police received information that a train has been stopped at Kasu Begu Railway station. Police have reached the spot and the area has been cordoned off. The passengers have been evacuated. Three bomb disposal squad teams of Punjab Police will be reaching the spot. Dog squad teams have reached the spot,” said a senior police officer to local media. (Xinhua)

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Flash flood kills 14 in Pakistan: Heavy monsoons in northwest Pakistan triggered flash flooding, killing at least 14 people, 11 from the same family, officials said Tuesday.

The rains in Kohat, a district in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, flooded the basement of a house where the family slept, Bilal Faizi, a spokesman for emergency services said, adding they retrieved the bodies of a man, three women, six children, and an 11-month-old baby girl. He said three others died in the districts of Hangu and Bajaur in the same province.

Pakistan has been hit by heavy rains since early July, killing more than 60 people and damaging over 250 homes, mostly in the eastern Punjab and southwestern Baluchistan province.

Authorities warned the rains are likely to cause flash flooding next week in various parts of the country.. (AP)

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‘Data fuels digital revolution’: Data has become a strategic resource as it is the fuel of the digital revolution, rapidly reshaping societies and economies worldwide, Pakistani Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives **Ahsan Iqbal** said.

Addressing a policy dialogue on Monday, Iqbal emphasized the importance of integrating data availability and usage into



Protesters demonstrate against the official election results declaring President Nicolás Maduro’s reelection in Valencia, Venezuela on July 29 the day after the vote. Thousands of people demonstrated across Venezuela, opposition candidate González announced on Monday that his campaign has the proof it needs to show he won the country’s disputed election in which electoral authorities named Maduro the victor. (AP)

Market Movements				30-07-2024			
		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	+57.32	38,525.95	SAUDI	- TASI	-56.75	12,064.65
	- EGX 30	+188.19	29,039.42		- DFMGI	-24.48	4,284.01
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+188.19	29,039.42	PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-42.87	6,606.36
	- EGX 30	+188.19	29,039.42		- KSE 100	-227.09	78,693.50

Business

Bank wins multiple global awards for sustainability efforts

KFH achieves best ESG risk rating among Kuwaiti banks

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer, Khaled Yousef AlShamlan, emphasized that the bank's inclusion in the FTSE4Good Index reflects the growing interest in adopting environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards. In an interview with CNBC Arabia, he added that KFH's inclusion was achieved by meeting all ESG standards and requirements.

AlShamlan pointed out that this achievement was the result of the successful sustainability strategy developed by KFH in 2021. Through this strategy, numerous sustainability initiatives were implemented, elevating KFH to a top-ranked company on these global indices.

He emphasized that investors are increasingly drawn to companies that incorporate sustainability standards into their operations. As a result, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards have become crucial factors in investment decisions. He explained that KFH's inclusion in the FTSE4Good Index strengthens its reputation as a trustworthy institution among investors and aligns with the bank's strategic sustainability objectives.

He explained that this index validates KFH's commitment to building a sustainable future and increasing value for stakeholders. It also underscores KFH's dedication to upholding ethical standards across its operations, various banking activities, and in addressing global sustainability challenges.

AlShamlan added that KFH employs numerous metrics in its operations, such as the Sustainability Index, which evaluates sustainability risks (ESG Risks). He explained that KFH achieved the best ESG risk rating on

this index, with an ESG risk rating of 24.7—the best among Kuwaiti banks. This underscores KFH's strong commitment to sustainability and its significant progress in identifying and mitigating sustainability-related risks.

"KFH achieved excellence in sustainability through a clear strategy developed and directly overseen by the Board of Directors. As a pioneer, KFH established the banking industry's first specialized committee for governance and sustainability at the board level. Additionally, the bank was the first to create an integrated sustainability strategy aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encompassing economic, environmental, social, and governance dimensions. Furthermore, KFH was the first to create a dedicated department for sustainability monitoring. These achievements underscore the paramount importance of sustainability to both the Board of Directors and Executive Management," AlShamlan explained.

He pointed out that KFH releases sustainability reports regularly and has recently launched a Carbon Footprint report, a first-of-its-kind in the local banking industry.

On the financial inclusion front, AlShamlan pointed out that KFH efforts in this field include offering banking services to customers 24/7 from any location through digital applications, attracting different customer segments, focusing on SMEs, in addition to promoting cybersecurity and customers privacy protection. He indicated that these factors reflect KFH's excellence in financial inclusion and sustainability.

He went on to say that KFH offers recycled banking cards. In 2023, half of the cards issued by KFH were made



Khaled AlShamlan

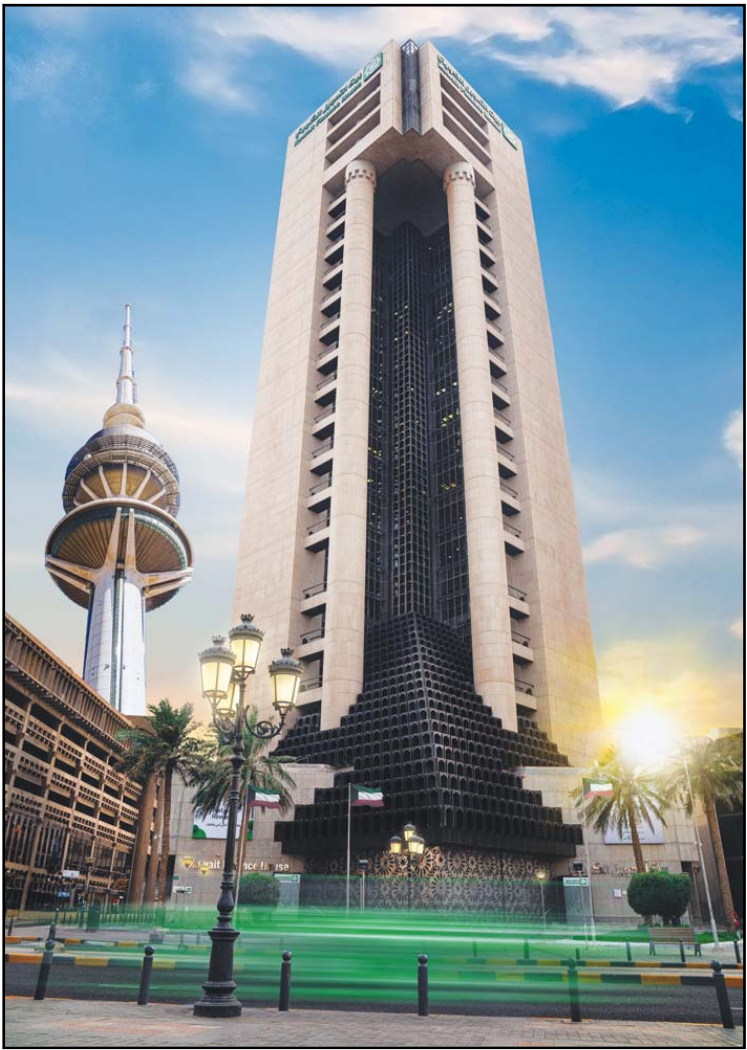
AlShamlan:

- KFH achieves best ESG Risk Rating among Kuwaiti banks
- Inclusion in the FTSE4Good Index aligns with KFH's goals of achieving sustainability and building a sustainable future
- Excellence in sustainability is achieved through a clear strategy developed by the Board of Directors

from recycled materials.

"KFH's global presence that spans 12 countries in addition to providing banking services in the communities in which we operate are all key elements of the financial inclusion plans," added AlShamlan.

He affirmed that KFH's efforts and outstanding performance in the sustainability have earned the bank several global awards, including Kuwait's Best Bank for Sustainable Finance by Global Finance magazine, Kuwait's Best Bank for ESG by Euromoney and Corporate Social Responsibility – Middle East



KFH headquarters

Award from EMEA Finance. KFH is also the first bank in Kuwait to receive the Global Sustainability Assessment System GSAS – Gold Level Certificate for KFH Auto eco-friendly showroom.

AlShamlan also talked about KFH's top initiatives and activities in the sustainability filed such as:

■ Offering Green Financing for housing and consumer products that contribute to the preservation of natural resources and reducing energy consumption.

■ Issuing green Sukuk with plans to issue more sustainability Sukuk in the future.

■ Launching (Keep it Green) campaign as the umbrella of all environmental and sustainability projects and activities.

■ Signing the first of its kind Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to establish stronger alignments with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across KFH.

■ Training KFH's human capital in collaboration with the UNDP and other prestigious global entities, in addition to organizing high-level training programs for KFH's Board members and executive management.

■ Empowering women by signing the Women's Empowerment Principles agreement (WEPs) with the UNDP as the first Islamic bank in Kuwait. Additionally, women at KFH hold leadership positions.

■ Establishing the Middle East's largest KFH Auto showroom which is an eco-friendly building.

■ Participating with the UNDP in different initiatives including signing the Global Takaful Alliance Agreement to provide Takaful insurance to over 100 million farmers worldwide.

321 MENA M&A deals totaling \$49.2 bln

MENA M&A activity sees 1% volume and 12% value increase in H1 2024

DUBAI, July 30: According to the EY MENA M&A Insights H1 2024 report, the MENA region witnessed a slight increase in merger and acquisition (M&A) activity with a total of 321 deals amounting to US\$49.2b. When compared to H1 2023, deal volume this year grew by 1%, while deal value saw arise of 12%.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) were the preferred destinations for investors with 152 deals reaching a total disclosed value of US\$9.8b. They were also among the top MENA bidder countries in terms of deal volume and value, indicating their active participation in the region's M&A landscape.

Sovereign wealth funds (SWFs), such as Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) and Mubadala from the UAE and the Public Investment Fund (PIF) from KSA, continued to lead the deal activity in the region to support their countries' economic strategies.

Brad Watson, EY MENA Strategy and Transactions Leader, says:

"Dealmaking got off to a promising start in 2024 despite oil price fluctuations. We saw a surge in cross-border M&A value as companies made investments to further build synergies, expand market presence, and gain strategic advantages on a global scale. In particular, the first half of the year found the UAE to be a favored investment destination due to its business-friendly regulations and efficient legislative framework. Meanwhile, MENA countries continued to strengthen regional relationships with Asian and European countries, alongside existing ties with the US, enabling them to gain access to larger and growing markets."

During the first six months of 2024, cross-border M&As played a significant role, contributing to 52% of the overall volume and 87% of the value, marking a 15% y-o-y growth in value. Meanwhile, domestic M&A activity accounted for 48% of the total number of deals.

The United States of America (US) remained the preferred target destination for MENA outbound investors with 19 deals amounting to US\$16.6b. With the US-UAE Business Council playing an active role in promoting partnerships, prominent US companies are collaborating with UAE public and private sector stakeholders on various initiatives.

Top 10 M&As concentrated in the GCC region

Ten of the MENA region's highest-valued M&As in the first six months of 2024 were concentrated in the GCC region. The largest transaction took place in February 2024, when Clayton Dubilier & Rice, Stone Point Capital and Mubadala Investment announced their acquisition of Truist Insurance Holdings for US\$12.4b. In March 2024, PAG, Mubadala and ADIA invested US\$8.3b in a 60% stake in the Chinese shopping mall company Zhuhai Wanda Commercial

Management Group. In June 2024, Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (Masdar) agreed to acquire a 67% stake in the Greek company TERNA ENERGY for US\$2.9b.

Insurance and real estate were the most attractive sectors for investors in the first six months of the year, accounting for 47% of the total deal value. KSA led in the lists of target countries as well as bidder countries, with the UAE, Morocco, Bahrain and Egypt featured in both rankings as well.

Domestic deals grow in number

The first half of 2024 saw 155 domestic deals with a combined disclosed value of US\$6.4b, marking a 13% increase in M&A activity. GCC players were involved in 85% of the deals, reflecting a high level of intra-regional M&A activity. There were 94 deals within and between the UAE and KSA, accounting for 61% of the overall domestic M&A deal volume.

The real estate (including hospitality and leisure) sector became the main contributor to deal value with 15 deals amounting to US\$1.3b, driven by increasing tourism, upcoming mega projects and a growing middle-class income. The consumer products and technology sectors witnessed 47 deals in the domestic market, representing 30% of the total volume.

North America and Europe lead in inbound deals

The first six months of 2024 recorded 70 inbound deals with a total disclosed value of US\$6.4b. Europe led in terms of deal volume with 80%, and North America made the highest contribution to deal value at 98%.

The professional firms and services sector reported the highest volume and value with 17 inbound deals worth US\$ 2.0b, 15 of which were completed in the UAE. The technology sector followed with 16 deals worth US\$1.7b, with US-UAE partnerships contributing 38% of the deal volume and 96% of the disclosed deal value. Increasing artificial intelligence-related investments in the UAE are expected to enhance these relationships.

Outbound deals witness lively activity

During H1 2024, outbound activity was the largest contributor to total deal value with 96 deals that amounted to US\$36.3b, marking a 19% increase in value when compared to H1 2023. Insurance and real estate accounted for 57% of the deal value in this space, mainly resulting from two deals involving MENA-based SWFs. The US and China contributed 75% of the total outbound deal value.

Anil Menon, EY MENA Head of M&A and Equity Capital Markets Leader, says:

"M&A, in the recent past, has been the beneficiary of significant tail winds such as low cost of capital. It is heartening to see regional M&A activity remain robust despite the higher cost of capital. The resilience of the regional M&A markets is underpinned by stable oil price and continued infrastructure spending by local governments."

Proposal to move Bitcoin into US strategic reserve boosts prices

Bitcoin soars to \$69,800, near record high

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Bitcoin soared to \$69,800 on Monday, coming close to its record high of \$73,835, driven by a rally initiated over the weekend. This notable increase follows former President Donald Trump's impactful speech at the Bitcoin 2024 conference in Nashville, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Trump's remarks at the conference have sparked significant market enthusiasm. He proposed a dramatic policy shift, suggesting that Bitcoin held by the Justice Department could be moved

into the U.S. strategic reserve. This proposal aligns with recommendations from Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Chairman Gary Gensler and hints at potential upcoming regulatory changes for cryptocurrencies.

The rally in Bitcoin also saw a broader surge in the cryptocurrency market, with Bitcoin breaking the \$70,000 barrier for the first time since early June.

In tandem with Trump's speech, Senator Cynthia Lummis introduced a bill advocating for the creation of a strategic

Bitcoin reserve fund in the U.S. This fund would involve purchasing one million Bitcoins and holding them for 20 years, aiming to reduce the national deficit.

Between July 25 and July 29, 2024, Bitcoin's price experienced considerable volatility. On July 25, it started at approximately \$67,500 but dropped to around \$63,000 by July 26, reflecting bearish market sentiment. Following this decline, Bitcoin began a recovery on July 27, steadily climbing over the subsequent days and regaining its position.

Goal to boost global FDI share to 1.5% by 2028

Turkey announces ambitious 2024-28 investment strategy

ISTANBUL, July 30, (Xinhua): Türkiye on Monday released an ambitious international direct investment strategy, aiming to become a leading destination for international investors through a wide range of incentives for 2024-2028.

The presidential decree, published in the Official Gazette,

highlighted the country's strategic location, robust human resources, and strong supplier infrastructure, offering investors a secure environment to establish and expand their operations.

The strategy aims to increase the country's share of global foreign direct investment to 1.5 percent by 2028.

KOC profits dip to 1.7 bln dinars for fiscal 2023/24

Natural gas burn rate reduced to 0.69%

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Kuwait Oil Company's profits before shareholder deductions dipped to 1.7 billion dinars for fiscal 2023/2024, down from 2.7 billion in the previous year as the total operating costs increased to 2.5 million, compared to 2.3 million during the previous year.

The shareholder's share also decreased to 1.2 billion dinars from 1.9 billion dinars; the revenue dropped to 4.2 billion from 5.08 billion dinars, reflecting a reduction of approximately 880 million dinars.

The CEO Ahmed Al-Eidan said despite the challenges, the company has focused on maintaining and increasing production levels to meet

Kuwait oil price down to \$82.13 pb

KUWAIT CITY, July 30, (KUNA): The price of Kuwait oil went down by USD 1.34 to USD 82.13 per barrel on Monday as opposed to USD 83.47 pb last Friday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

On a global scale the price of Brent crude oil went down by USD 1.35 to USD 79.78 per barrel, the same occurred with the West Texas Intermediate, which also went down by USD 1.35 to USD 75.81 pb.

growing energy demand, saying the company underwent significant structural changes in 2023-2024, introducing a new business model aimed at enhancing operational efficiency, growth, and sustainability in oil and gas production.

In terms of achievements, the company reported a record daily production of approximately 22,140 barrels of oil from the Umm Naqa field, surpassing expected figures. Increased production was also noted in fields such as Al-Sabriya, Bahra and Al-Rawdatain.

Meanwhile, on June 29, the com-

pany achieved a production rate of 618 million standard cubic feet of non-associated gas. The rate of burning natural gas in operations decreased to 0.69%, well below the 0.98% target.

The company is committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2025 and has made strides in reducing emissions.

Al-Eidan also emphasized the company's focus on maintaining high safety standards and reducing accidents. Efforts are also directed toward quality enhancement, cost reduction, and improved work performance.

Dr. Al-Malhem highlights efforts beyond stock market status

CMA focuses on financial access & sustainable economic practices

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Dr. Ahmed Al-Malhem, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Capital Markets Authority (CMA), emphasized that the Authority's efforts extend beyond merely elevating the local stock market to advanced emerging market status, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Instead, he said, the CMA is focusing on ensuring broader access to financial services for all sectors of society, shifting towards more sustainable economic practices and financial systems and developing strategies to advance the Islamic finance sector in Kuwait.

These initiatives are part of the CMA's broader goal of enhancing societal economic development and aligning with New Kuwait Vision 2035.

Dr Al-Malhem outlined the Authority's achievements for the fiscal year 2023/2024, emphasizing its focus on several key strategic areas such as enhancing the structure and functionality of financial markets; strengthening relationships and communication channels with stakeholders; improving internal practices and governance to support the Authority's objectives and targeting initiatives that contribute to broader economic growth.

The key initiatives, he said, include ensuring wider access to financial services for all, transitioning towards more sustainable economic models and financial systems. developing a roadmap to promote Islamic financial products and services and studying mechanisms to support growth and exploring a

new platform for listing and trading shares of medium-sized enterprises.

Al-Malhem emphasized the Authority's commitment to enhancing its internal work environment and governance as critical to achieving these strategic goals and highlighted several key achievements and metrics for the Capital Markets Authority (CMA).

In its annual report the CMA has maintained its top position for four consecutive years among entities with independent budgets under the Audit Bureau's oversight and obtained the ISO 22301 certificate, demonstrating its commitment to business continuity.

Established under Law No. 7 of 2010, the CMA regulates securities activities, ensuring transparency, justice, and efficiency; mandates listed companies to adhere to corporate governance principles and safeguards investors from unfair practices; oversees mergers, acquisitions, disclosures, and provides educational programs on securities activities.

Al-Malhem added, there are 5,958 investment portfolios in Kuwait, with a market value of 13.66 billion dinars (\$44.73 billion) and that these investment portfolios are held by 4,737 clients hold these.

These initiatives and metrics reflect the CMA's ongoing efforts to enhance the efficiency and integrity of Kuwait's financial markets and support economic development in line with the New Kuwait Vision 2035.

the difficult regional environment generated by the conflict in Gaza and Israel and tensions in the Red Sea, as well as domestic policy and structural challenges, call for continued implementation of program commitments," the IMF added.

The IMF called for maintaining a flexible exchange rate regime and a liberalized foreign exchange system to avoid a buildup of external imbalances, in addition to having a data-driven approach by the Central Bank to lower inflation and inflation expectations.

It added that the ongoing fiscal consolidation efforts would help place public debt on a decisive downward path.

Egypt announced last Thursday a 15 percent increase in petrol prices as part of a reform package requested by the IMF.

IMF approves USD 820 mln Egypt loan

CAIRO, July 30, (KUNA): The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed the third review of Egypt's EFF arrangement, which enables Egypt to immediately draw about USD 820 million.

IMF said in a statement on Monday that the macroeconomic conditions in Egypt have started to improve since the approval of the combined first and second reviews of the program in March.

It added that the Inflationary pressures are gradually abating, foreign exchange shortages have been eliminated, and fiscal targets (including related to spending by large infrastructure projects) were met.

"These improvements are beginning to have a positive effect on investor confidence and private sector sentiment, while

Burgan Bank reports net income of KD 21 mln in H1 of '24

Net interest margin also increased to 2.1%

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Burgan Bank (“Burgan” or “the Bank”) announced its financial results for the first half of 2024 (H1’24), for the period ending June 30, 2024.

The Bank reported KD 111million in revenues for H1’24, marking an impressive growth of 19% year-on-year (y-o-y). The increase in revenues was primarily driven by higher Net-Interest Income of KD 71 million, up 17% y-o-y and robustNon-Interest income of KD39 million, up 24% y-o-y. Burgan’s Net interest margin also increased to 2.1% in H1’24 as compared to 1.9% during H1’23 – an improvement of 20bps y-o-y.

Driven by higher revenues, the Bank reported a strong Operating Profit of KD 48million, up 24% y-o-y. The Bank’s cost-to-income ratio also improved by 170bps from 58.3% in H1’23 to 56.6% in H1’24. Its cost of credit – net of recoveries – also remained very low at mere 30bps during H1’24 despite proactive provisioning. Consequently, Burgan posted a Net income of KD 21 million with a very healthy growth of 17% y-o-y.

During H1’24, the Bank delivered strong asset growth of 8% y-o-y, reaching KD 7.6 billion by the end of the period. The Group’s loan book grew by 10% y-o-y and stood at KD 4.4 billion; primarily driven by its Kuwait operations, which increased by 8% y-o-y. Burgan’s deposit base also expanded by 7% y-o-y and stood at KD 4.6 billion by the end of H1’24.

During H1’24, the Bank maintained solid and healthy capital levels. Burgan reported Common Equity Tier 1 ratio (CET1) of 13.0%, Tier 1 capital ratio of 15.4% and Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 19.3%, well above the regulatory requirements and demonstrating sufficient capital buffers to support future growth.

Commenting on thefinancial results, the Bank’s Chairman, Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al-Sabah, said: “Burgan Bank has continued to accelerate its for-



Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Chairman

ward-moving momentum on the heels of a transformational year in 2023. We have maintained a stable financial core and delivered solid financial results, as we continue to be steadfast in our commitment to positioning ourselves as the most modern and progressive bank in Kuwait. Looking ahead, we aim to bolster this momentum by continuing to deliver on key strategic goals. That includes ongoing efforts to elevate, innovate and streamline our overall customer experience. It also includes building on a robust business model that prioritizes enhancing operations by investing in technology and digitalization, elevating our innovation capabilities, developing our human capital, and fulfilling our environmental, social and governance (ESG) commitments.”

The Chairman further added: “As the year progresses, we are well-positioned for further growth and development, as we maintain an effective risk management approach to capitalize on promising growth opportunities. On that account, we are confident in our ability to advance our strategic priorities and objectives, enhance our performance, boost our competitiveness, and maximize shareholder value.”

Meeting the parameters of financial



Tony Daher, Group Chief Executive Officer

strength and stability

Affirming Burgan Bank’s strong financial core and stable standing, the Chairman highlighted that the Bank has maintained high international standards in terms of its creditworthiness. This is evidenced by Capital Intelligence Ratings (CI Ratings) affirming the Bank’s Long-Term Foreign Currency Rating and Short-Term Foreign Currency Rating at ‘A+’ and ‘A1’, respectively, with a stable outlook. Meanwhile, Moody’s Ratings (Moody’s) affirmed the Bank’s long-term foreign currency bank deposit ratings at “Baa1” with a stable outlook.

Moreover, the Bank completed its issuance of KWD 150 million Perpetual Additional Tier 1 Capital Bonds, with demand exceeding expectations and bonds being oversubscribed. The transaction, lauded as a landmark achievement, is the first Perpetual Additional Tier 1 Capital Bond issuance denominated in Kuwaiti Dinar by a bank and ranks among the largest Kuwaiti Dinar issuances.

Commenting on the issuance, the Chairman said: “Today, we stand proud to have set a new benchmark on the local level after successfully completing the largest Kuwaiti Dinar Per-

petual Additional Tier 1 Capital Bond issuance in Kuwait. This notable transaction attracted high investor interest, reaffirming our robust financial standing and demonstrating confidence in our strategic vision.”

Sharpened focus on digital transformation journey

The second quarter of 2024 was shaped by the Bank’s efforts to continue accelerating its dedicated technology evolution and digital transformation strategy. Of particular significance was Burgan becoming one of the earliest Kuwaiti banks to join the GCC cross-border payments system AFAQ, in adherence to the national digital transformation plan guided by the government and the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). Another notable move was the Bank signing a monumental deal with Tata Consultancy Services to upgrade its core banking system by implementing the TCS BaNCST™ suite of products.

Commenting, Mr. Tony Daher, Group Chief Executive Officer at Burgan Bank, said: “The decision to join AFAQ and sign the new deal comes in response to the market’s evolving needs and falls in line with our relentless efforts to adopt the latest state-of-the-art financial technology solutions with the ultimate goal of elevating our customers’ overall banking experience to new heights.”

As delivering digital transformation goes hand in hand with enhancing customer experience through new and upgraded products, Burgan Bank launched its interest-bearing savings account “awal” in Q2’24. Tailored specifically for children up to the age of 14, the account builds on the success of its predecessor, “BuBa” savings account, and aims to instill a savings culture in young customers. The latest launch attests to Burgan’s steadfast efforts to meet the varying banking needs of all its customer segments. Building on this strength point, the Bank was voted the Best Domestic Bank in Kuwait in the “Best Service” category in the 2024 Euromoney Trade Finance Survey, recognizing its unwavering commitment to service excellence and an elevated customer journey.

Employees remain a primary pillar of success

On the human capital front, Burgan Bank continues to bolster its pioneering position in the domestic banking and financial market by offering one of the most desirable workplaces for national talents.

In line with its dedicated human development strategy that forms a keystone of the Bank’s success, Burgan persisted in introducing dynamic employee advancement programs in the second quarter of this year. To illustrate, it launched an exclusive Investment and Wealth Management Academy in collaboration with the world-renowned provider of learning and development solutions Fitch Learning of Fitch Group. The Bank also launched its women empowerment program, “Burgan Lean in Circle”, to address the challenges faced by females in the workplace, featuring monthly meetups, workshops, mentorship programs and networking events.

Concluding his statement, the Chairman said: “Our employees are imperative to our success as a leading financial institution, and continuing to invest in them individually will help propel us closer to achieving our strategic goals. From this standpoint, we are committed to remaining a top employer of choice in the local market by creating a supportive and inclusive workplace where all employees are given equal, ambitious career advancement and learning opportunities all year round.”

It serves to note that the consolidated financials for Burgan include the results of the Group’s operations in Kuwait, as well as its share of results from its subsidiaries, namely: Burgan Bank Turkey, Gulf Bank Algeria, and Tunis International Bank. Through this regional reach, Burgan Bank has one of the largest regional branch networks across Kuwait, Turkey, Algeria, Tunisia and a representative office in the United Arab Emirates.

About Burgan Bank

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is a Kuwait-based conventional bank with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institution sectors. From its earliest days, the Bank has significantly sought to diversify its of-

fering to cater to its growing retail and private banking customer base.

Burgan Bank has majority-owned subsidiaries, collectively known as the “Burgan Bank Group”, in the MENAT region. This Group is supported by one of the largest branch networks across the region and includes: Gulf Bank Algeria – AGB (Algeria), Tunis International Bank – TIB (Tunisia), and Burgan Bank Turkey. Furthermore, Burgan Bank has a presence in the UAE through its corporate office, Burgan Financial Services Limited.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years, through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Moreover, Burgan Bank’s brand has been built on a foundation of real values – trust, commitment, excellence, and progression – which serve as a reminder of the high standards to which the Bank always aspires. In fact, the Bank’s core philosophy of ‘Driven by You’ is the foundation on which its products and services are continuously developed.

The Bank obtained the ISO/IEC 27001:2022 Information Security Management Systems certificate (ISMS), ISO /IEC 27701:2019 Privacy Information Management Systems (PIMS), ISO/IEC 20000-1: 2018 Information Technology Service Management System (ITSMS) and was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS), making it one of the few banks in the GCC and Kuwait to receive such certification for five consecutive times. The Bank also has the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twenty consecutive years. Moreover, in a testament to its dedication to the development of its human capital, Burgan Bank is the first bank in Kuwait to be certified as a Great Place to Work®, earning the distinct honor in 2023.

Burgan Bank is a majority-owned subsidiary of KIPCO (Kuwait Projects Company), one of the largest holding companies in the MENA region.

Mobility improved for Blacks

Income gap between Black, white US residents ‘shrank’

WASHINGTON, July 30, (AP): The income gap between white and Black young adults was narrower for millennials than for Generation X, according to a new study that also found the chasm between white people born to wealthy and poor parents widened between the generations.

By age 27, Black Americans born in 1978 to poor parents ended up earning almost \$13,000 a year less than white Americans born to poor parents. That gap had narrowed to about \$9,500 for those born in 1992, according to the study released last week by researchers at Harvard University and the U.S. Census Bureau.

The shrinking gap between races was due to greater income mobility for poor Black children and drops in mobility for low-income white children, said the study, which showed little change in earnings outcomes for other race and ethnicity groups during this time period.

A key factor was the employment rates of the communities that people lived in as children. Mobility improved for Black individuals where employment rates for Black parents increased. In communities where parental employment rates declined, mobility dropped for white individuals, the study said.

“Outcomes improve ... for children who grow up in communities with increasing parental employment rates, with larger effects for children who move to such communities at younger ages,” said researchers, who used census figures and data from income tax returns to track the changes.

In contrast, the class gap widened for white people between the generations - Gen Xers born from 1965 to 1980 and millennials born from 1981 to 1996.

White Americans born to poor parents in 1978 earned about \$10,300 less than white Americans born to wealthy parents. For those born in 1992, that class gap increased to about \$13,200 because of declining mobility for people born into low-income households and increasing mobility for those born into high-income households, the study said.

There was little change in the class gap between Black Americans born into both low-income and high-income households since they experienced similar improvements in earnings.

This shrinking gap between the races, and growing class gap among white people, also was documented in educational attainment, standardized test scores, marriage rates and mortality, the researchers said.

There also were regional differences.

Black people from low-income families saw the greatest economic mobility in the southeast and industrial Midwest. Economic mobility declined the most for white people from low-income families in the Great Plains and parts of the coasts.

The researchers suggested that policymakers could encourage mobility by investing in schools or youth mentorship programs when a community is hit with economic shocks such as a plant closure and by increasing connections between different racial and economic groups by changing zoning restrictions or school district boundaries.

“Importantly, social communities are shaped not just by where people live but by race and class within neighborhoods,” the researchers said. “One approach to increasing opportunity is therefore to increase connections between communities.”

Milei renews his vow to scrap export taxes

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, July 30, (AP): Addressing crowds of struggling farmers in flat caps and home-knit sweaters who helped vault him to power but have grown increasingly impatient with his progress, President Javier Milei on Sunday vowed to scrap export taxes and rescue Argentina’s key agricultural industry.

The country’s powerful agricultural producers say they’re willing to give the libertarian more time to deliver on his free-market promises. But many farmers are disillusioned that seven months into Milei’s presidency, they remain hobbled by labyrinthine currency controls, crushing export taxes and an uncompetitive exchange rate.

“We said we were going to lift the restrictions and every day we do,” Milei said at Argentina’s annual La Rural convention, where for one week the huge Buenos Aires exposition ground becomes one vast farmyard teeming with sleepy cows and whinnying horses. “No one is as eager as we, and me in particular, are to get out of this disastrous model where the state, through withholdings and restrictions, expropriates 70% of

what the countryside produces.”

The crowds whooped and cheered. As the farmers told it, that model of budget-busting populism confiscated their wealth for redistribution among the unproductive masses and devastated the lush grain belt that made Argentina among the world’s richest economies a century ago.

Today, Argentina remains one of the biggest livestock and grain producers but its more dubious distinctions include being beset with one of the world’s highest debt burdens and highest annual inflation rates.

Successive left-leaning Peronist administrations in recent decades took an estimated \$200 billion from the agricultural sector into state coffers, banning meat exports to stem inflation and levying sky-high export taxes on agricultural commodities to pay for bloated budgets. So far under Milei, Argentina’s agricultural industry – which accounts for some 20% of the country’s gross domestic product – is “hopeful but realistic,” said Nicolás Pino, head of the Argentine Rural Society, the country’s agribusiness lobby.

FRANKFURT, Germany, July 30, (AP): Europe’s economy enjoyed modest growth in the April-June quarter even as the U.S. outperformed expectations, highlighting a persistent transatlantic growth gap with Germany, the leading European economy, remaining in the dumps and as hesitant consumers save more, rather than spend on new houses or cars.

Gross domestic product, the total output of goods and services, rose 0.3% in the second quarter in the 20 countries that use the euro currency, according to official figures released Tuesday by European Union statistics agency Eurostat. Germany, the largest eurozone economy, slid back into contraction, recording a 0.1% fall in output.

Tuesday’s figures follow a similar 0.3% performance from the Jan.-March quarter, the first significant growth after more than a year of stagnation just above, at, or below zero.

By contrast, the U.S. economy grew 0.7% in the second quarter from the first quarter, or 2.8% on an annualized basis. U.S. consumers are spending freely, while government spending from larger budget deficits and subsidies for business investment, in renewable energy under the Inflation Reduction Act and in semi-conductor production and infrastructure, are also contributing to U.S. growth.

Those two trends are reversed in Europe where consumers are saving at record levels and governments have started restricting spending to reduce budget deficits.

“The outperformance of the U.S. is largely due to strong private consumption and domestic investment,” said Thomas Obst, senior economist at the German Economic Institute in Cologne. “Fiscal policy support was higher in the U.S. than in other advanced economies, overall spending 25% of GDP.” Meanwhile, higher interest rates have had less impact on lending and the economy than in Europe, he said.

The lukewarm growth figure from the first half of this year follows five straight quarters of essentially zero growth caused by an outburst of inflation that robbed consumers of purchasing power. Energy prices soared after Russia cut off most supplies of natural gas in 2022 over the invasion of Ukraine, and as the global economy rebounded from the pandemic, straining supplies of parts and raw materials.

Those headwinds have eased, but Europe faces lingering effects as new labor agreements restore real wages with a lag and government support payments and tax breaks, aimed at easing, the energy crisis are phased out. Governments have shifted to trimming deficits that swelled during the energy crunch.

Higher interest rates from the European Central Bank have helped bring inflation down from 10.6% in October 2022 to 2.5% in June - but have also held back construction activity and quashed a years-long rally in house prices. New car sales were up 4.3% in the first half of the year from the same period last year but remain some 18%



Steam rises from the coal-fired power plant in Neurath, Germany, on June 8, 2023. European Union statistics agency Eurostat releases official figures Tuesday on second-quarter economic growth. (AP)

China’s top leaders vow to support consumers and improve confidence in its slowing economy

BANGKOK, July 30, (AP): China’s powerful Politburo has endorsed the ruling Communist Party’s long-term strategy for growing the economy by encouraging more consumer spending and weeding out unproductive companies to promote “survival of the fittest.”

A statement issued after the meeting of the 24 highest leaders of the party warned that coming months would be tough, perhaps alluding to mounting global uncertainties ahead of the U.S. presidential election in November.

“There are still many risks and hidden dangers in key areas,” it said, adding that the tasks for reform and stability in the second half of the year were “very heavy.”

The Politburo promised unspecified measures to restore confidence in financial markets and boost government spending, echoing priorities laid out by a wider meeting of senior party members earlier in July. After that gathering, China’s central bank reduced several key interest rates and the government doubled subsidies for electric vehicles bought to replace older cars as part of the effort to spur growth.

The Politburo’s calls to look after low- and middle-income groups reflect pledges to build a stronger social safety net to enable families to spend more instead of socking money away

to provide for health care, education and elder care. But it provided no specifics on how it will do that.

“This sounds promising on paper. But the lack of any specifics means it is unclear what it will entail in practice,” Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said in a commentary.

The party’s plans for how to improve China’s fiscal policies at a time of burgeoning local government debt were “short on new ideas,” he said.

Instead, the emphasis is on moving faster to implement policies such as the government’s campaign to convince families to trade in old cars and appliances and redecorate their homes that includes tax incentives and subsidies for purchases that align with improved efficiency and reducing use of polluting fossil fuels.

China’s economy grew at a 4.7% annual rate in the last quarter after expanding 5.3% in the first three months of the year. Some economists say the official data overstate the rate of growth, masking long-term weaknesses that require broad reforms to rebalance the economy away from a heavy reliance on construction and export manufacturing.

Under leader Xi Jinping, China has prioritized developing industries using advanced technologies such as electric vehicles and renewable energy, a strat-

egy that has made the country a leader in some areas but also led to oversupplies that are now squeezing some manufacturers, such as makers of solar panels.

The Politburo’s statement vowed support for “gazelle enterprises and unicorn enterprises,” referring to new, fast-growing companies and high-tech start-ups. It warned against “vicious competition” but also said China should improve mechanisms to ensure “survival of the fittest” and eliminate “backward and inefficient production capacity.”

The party has promised to help resolve a crisis in the property sector, in part by encouraging purchases of apartments to provide affordable housing and to adapt monetary policy to help spur spending and investment.

But the document issued Tuesday also highlighted longstanding concerns. The countryside and farmers need more support to “ensure that the rural population does not return to poverty on a large scale,” it said.

It also condemned what analysts have said is widespread resistance to fresh initiatives, saying that “formalism and bureaucracy are stubborn diseases and must be corrected” and warning that economic disputes should not be resolved by “administrative and criminal means.”

below pre-pandemic levels.

Another factor is the European consumers’ unusually high level of precautionary savings, which reached 15.4% in the first three months of the year, a record high excluding the pan-

dem years. Reasons for setting aside more money could be the chance to earn higher interest rates by saving, feeling poorer due to lower house prices, and fears about the future, despite low unemployment of 6.4%

The high savings rate and consumer surveys indicate that “intentions to make major purchases are extremely low,” said Jack Allen-Reynolds, deputy chief eurozone economist at Capital Economics.

‘Celebrity meet and greet with Kyle Hebert’

ABK steps into pop culture scene as silver sponsor at Geekcon '24

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is thrilled to announce its participation as a silver sponsor at Geekcon 2024. Geekcon, an ultimate pop culture convention, serves as a vibrant hub for enthusiasts to meet and celebrate their passion for entertainment and pop culture. The event took place from 25 to 27 July at the Kuwait International Fairground – located in Mishref - Hall A4

“Geekcon is more than just a convention; it’s a platform where diverse communities unite to revel in the realm of pop culture,” said Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK. ABK engaged with thousands of attendees, particularly the youth, through its innovative A+ Student account booth.

“Our presence at Geekcon underscores our commitment to connecting with the dynamic youth demographic and introducing them to the exclusive benefits of our A+ Student account,” added Marafi. The ABK booth at Geekcon buzzed with excitement as attendees engaged into various activities, interactive games, and engaging experiences. Numerous visitors also had the opportunity to win vouchers, courtesy of ABK’s collaboration with Talabat and Trolly, along with other delightful surprises.

Moreover, as a token of appreciation



Johair Marafi



High turnout at the bank's booth.



Bank employees during the event.

Focus on preventive measures and reporting addiction cases

Warba Bank launches awareness campaign to combat drug abuse in collaboration with Mol

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: As part of its initiatives on social media platforms, Warba Bank announced the launch of a dedicated awareness campaign to combat drug abuse. The campaign aims to highlight the severe consequences of drug abuse and emphasise the importance of awareness in combating this curse. It initiated in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior’s General Department of Anti-Drug Trafficking and General Department of Security Media. The campaign will focus on the legal penalties associated with drug abuse as well as its familial and health impacts.

Ayman Salem Al-Mutairi, Director Marketing & Corporate Communication at Warba Bank, emphasised that this campaign is part of the bank’s strategic plan for sustainable community development. He noted that the campaign seeks to educate the public about the dangers of drugs and promote preventive measures. Additionally, the campaign will cover key topics such as the risks of carrying prohibited substances while traveling, the importance of reporting addiction cases for treatment, and maintaining the confidentiality of informants.



Photo from the campaign.

Al-Mutairi added that Warba Bank is actively involved in various social contributions and initiatives that are consistent with its strategic plan for sustainable development. The bank collaborates with official bodies and institutions to provide support for initiatives that benefit all segments of society.

Furthermore, Al-Mutairi highlighted Warba Bank’s commitment to community service and cooperation with official bodies, particularly in enhancing the economic and developmental landscape. He affirmed that Warba’s strategy is not limited to excellence in banking services but extends to fostering sustainable community development.

In conclusion, Al-Mutairi reiterated

that Warba Bank’s successful journey in sustainable community development encompasses various social activities and initiatives in health, education, youth, environment, and support for people with special needs. These activities have earned recognition from prestigious local and international organizations.

Lieutenant Colonel Turki Al-Baidan from the General Department of Security Media highlighted that the Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with state institutions and civil society organizations, continues to implement awareness campaigns aimed at combating and preventing drug abuse with the ultimate goal of protecting the community and increasing awareness at all levels.

It is worth mentioning that Warba Bank is one of the banks that achieved great successes in a short period of time, as it occupied a leading position in the field of digital Islamic banking services for individuals, and it’s one of the most local banks with numbers of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent elements that make the bank close to all members of society.

Campaign runs until September 19, 2024

Spend and win up to KD 20,000 with Gulf Bank credit and prepaid cards

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Gulf Bank has launched the summer campaign to reward all credit and prepaid cardholders. This campaign allows customers the chance to win amazing cash prizes up to KD 20,000 for their purchases and expenditures during the summer, both locally and internationally.

The campaign runs until September 19, 2024, with winners selected in two draws: one grand prize winner of KD 20,000, 25 winners of KD 1,000 each, and 24 winners of KD 500 each.

All individual Gulf Bank credit and prepaid cardholders are eligible to participate. Customers earn one chance to enter the draw for every KD 10 spent in Kuwait, and three chances for every KD 10 spent internationally during the campaign.

Additionally, transactions made using digital wallets such as Google Pay,



Gulf Bank cards lineup.

Apple Pay, and Samsung Pay earn double chances. A minimum spend of KD 100 during the campaign period is

required to qualify for the draw. Gulf Bank is dedicated to rewarding its customers and meeting their aspira-

tions by providing exceptional services and products, and an outstanding customer experience. Additionally, Gulf Bank’s credit cards offer numerous benefits, including discounts and offers across various sectors such as restaurants, hotels, travel and tourism, entertainment, health and beauty, car rentals, and more.

Gulf Bank’s vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee’s role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

تحت رعاية مراقبة الجاليات والتعرف بالإسلام بإدارة العلاقات الخارجية وزارة الأوقاف الشؤون الإسلامية

INDIAN MUSLIM ASSOCIATION - KUWAIT (IMA) In association with AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY PROFESSIONALS (Kuwait Chapter) is organizing a crucial awareness event in light of the recent increase in fire-related incidents in Kuwait

FIRE SAFETY AWARENESS WEBINAR

Recent Fire Incidents in Kuwait & Lesson Learnt MR. ASHOK GARLAPATHI CSP, QEP, CFIOASH, FASSP

How to Prevent Residential Fires DR. IBRAHIM EL-MAHDY OHSE & MEDICAL DIRECTOR -KOC, NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES MENTOR - ASSP KUWAIT CHAPTER

Saturday, 03 Aug 24 6:00 PM Via ZOOM Meeting ID: 818 9373 8877 Passcode: 232985

In coordination with

UNITED TELUGU FORUM LIFE AGAIN FOUNDATION

IMA Fire Safety Webinar poster.

IMA Kuwait hosts online Webinar on residential fire and safety hazards

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Indian Muslim Association (IMA) Kuwait is pleased to announce an Online Awareness Webinar on Residential Fire & Safety Hazards co-hosted by American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) – Kuwait Chapter, in coordination with Mogaveera Association

Kuwait, Maurya Kala Parisar – Kuwait, Life Again Foundation & United Telugu Forum – Kuwait.

In light of the recent fire incidents in residential areas across Kuwait, the event aims educating the public on essential fire safety measures and prevention strategies.

ASSP Kuwait Chapter launches GCC HSE Excellence Award '24 patronized by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and its subsidiaries

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: The American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) – Kuwait Chapter Core Committee is thrilled to announce the launch of the ASSP GCC HSE Excellence Award 2024, recognizing excellence in health, safety, and environmental practices across the Gulf Region.

“This award showcases the dedication and hard work of companies striving to maintain high standards in health, safety, and environmental practices. It is an honor to lead an initiative that promotes excellence and innovation in our field,” stated Eng. Fadel Ali, Chairman of ASSP Kuwait Chapter.

The ASSP GCC HSE Excellence Award aims to recognize leadership, excellence, and exceptional performance in Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) within private sector companies across the Gulf Region. Instituted by the ASSP Kuwait Chapter in 2009, this award honors organizations that have excelled in managing Occupational Health, Safety, and Environment across five categories: Engineering & Construction, Manufacturing, Oil & Gas, Facility & Maintenance, and various Sector.

“We are excited to see the innovative solutions and exceptional safety records from participating companies. This award is a platform to showcase best practices and inspire others in the region to elevate their HSE standards,”



said Mr. Faris Al-Mansouri, Director of ASSP GCC HSE Excellence Award 2024.

Awards will be presented in each category, with distinctions of Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Merit. Additionally, special awards will be given for outstanding achievements in the Management of Driving Safety, Best HSE Initiative,



Best Environmental Excellence, Best Corporate Social Responsibility, and Best Risk Management.

“This award program not only highlights the significant strides made in HSE practices but also encourages continuous improvement and innovation in our industry. It is an honor to be part of an initiative that drives positive change



Photos during the event.

and excellence,” stated Mr. Ahmed Al-Shatti, Deputy Director of ASSP GCC HSE Excellence Award 2024.

The award program is proudly supported by the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and endorsed by international organizations such as the International Association of Drilling Contractors (IADC), the Board of Cer-

tified Safety Professionals (BCSP), and the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF).

We are excited to invite interested partners to participate in our HSE Awards Ceremony through our new Sponsorship and Exhibition Program. This is a great opportunity for your organization to gain significant exposure and

support the cause of HSE excellence,” said Mr. Bader Al-Hadhrani, President of ASSP Kuwait Chapter.

This award is a testament to the ongoing commitment to HSE excellence within the Gulf Region, recognizing companies that mitigate risks and excel in the development and performance of their HSE Management Systems.

Cerrone’s ‘Supernature’ still reigns nearly 50 years on

PARIS, July 30, (AP): As the Eiffel Tower shimmered with laser lights, a tune from the man known as the French Disco King set the stage for the final leg of the Olympics opening ceremony.

As Cerrone’s “Supernature” pulsed through Paris, sports legends like Serena Williams and Rafael Nadal glided down the Seine, with deaf choreographer Shaheem Sanchez grooving to the beat through American Sign Language dance. This 1977 classic proved that disco’s glittering charm still reigns supreme on one of the world’s grandest stages.

For Cerrone, 72, this moment once again proved his cross-generational music has staying power.

“The sounds changed every decade, but for my part I never lose the movement,” the music producer told The Associated Press on Sunday night before he hit the stage as the headliner at DiscOlympics, which brought out more than 3,000 energetic concertgoers to a riverfront nightclub.

The event paid homage to the roots of dance music and Cerrone, who shaped the disco genre in France in the mid-1970s with jams such as “Supernature,” “Give Me Love” and “Je Suis Music.”

Cerrone said he still has indescribable emotions after watching the opening ceremony segment featuring his song, released nearly a half-century ago. He was surprised when the ceremony’s composer and music director, Victor le Masne, approached him nine months ago. Le Masne proposed updating it with a more symphonic sound, featuring orchestral arrangements.

Cerrone said the creative process was like witnessing a woman en-

during months of pregnancy before giving birth.

“I think it’s my best work of my career,” said the producer, who has released 23 albums and sold more than 30 million records worldwide.

Along with Cerrone, the 12-hour DiscOlympics had several performers such as Agoria, He.She.They., and Kartell. The diverse lineup showcased disco’s evolution into a foundation for subgenres such as hip-hop, house music and electronic dance music.

Disco initially made a splash in the early 1970s in New York City with various musical influences from funk, soul and Latin music. Cerrone, along with other French artists including Dalida and Amanda Lear, were a part of the Euro disco movement in the mid-1970s.

Influences

European artists with disco influences, like Daft Punk and Giorgio Moroder, have found success in the US.

“Everybody knows the real disco has never left,” Cerrone said. “It never stopped. Sometimes it was bigger then lower. ... With the young people, it’s funny. I performed at a big festival. I see 60,000 people in front of me. I stop the music and (they’re singing) ‘Supernature.’ It’s never changed. Sometimes, it’s like that.”

Wael Mechri-Yver, a French-Tunisian musician, said Cerrone is deserving of high recognition, calling him a disco musical savant. After he first heard about the legendary producer’s involvement with the

opening ceremony a few months ago, he reached out to Cerrone’s manager about being a headliner at DiscOlympics.

“He’s the father of disco. He’s the king of disco music,” said Mechri-Yver, who performs under the stage name WAÏ. His culture collective company BABËL and Silencio hosted the DiscOlympics.

When Mechri-Yver heard Cerrone’s song during opening ceremony, he knew it was perfect timing for his event.

“Disco is coming back really strong and we really want to be the champion of that music,” said Mechri-Yver. Along with Kosmo Kint and Cerrone’s son Greg Cerrone, Mechri-Yver recorded the song “Are You Ready,” which was performed for the first time publicly Sunday and received a favorable response from the crowd.

“It’s very joyful, celebratory, inclusive, grateful music that is about giving praise to the Lord, giving praise to nature. That’s why ‘Supernature’ was such an incredible performance. The Eiffel Tower lit up. The whole world started to sing. It was absolutely beautiful,” Mechri-Yver said.

DiscOlympics attendee Alexia Charles was extremely pumped up about the event. The Parisian, who’s in her mid-30s, rarely frequents the nightclub scene but felt compelled to see Cerrone perform - especially after the opening ceremony.

“It’s amazing to see,” she said. “You can hear the people screaming for him. That’s a good representation of electro music in France.”

Cerrone said seeing people cheer him on in his 70s fuels him.

Variety



This image released by 20th Century Studios/Marvel Studios shows Hugh Jackman as Wolverine/Logan in a scene from ‘Deadpool & Wolverine.’ ‘Deadpool & Wolverine’ had a better Sunday than anticipated. The comic book film earned \$211 million in its first weekend in North American theaters, Disney said Monday. (AP)

Music

Ice Spice flexes her flow on brief debut album, ‘Y2K!’

‘Cellophane Memories’ evokes Twin Peaks

LOS ANGELES, July 30, (AP): If you listen to Chrystabell & David Lynch’s new album, there’s a good chance that it will make you dream.

Not that “**Cellophane Memories**,” the latest collaboration between the auteur and his “Twin Peaks: The Return” co-star will put you to sleep - although its moody, ethereal sound might help you chill out.

The Oscar-nominated surrealist director behind “Mulholland Drive” and “Blue Velvet” has long stressed the importance of taking time to let your imagination wander, particularly when it comes to creating art.

He and Chrystabell help listeners achieve that state of contemplative wonder with their latest 10-track collaboration. It’s difficult to categorize “Cellophane Memories” within a genre, but it consists of austere lyrics and ambient soundscapes carried by Chrystabell’s hypnotic, reverbed vocals.

Although Lynch is known more widely for filmmaking, this is hardly the director’s first foray into music, nor is it his first project with Chrystabell. The pair have collaborated in various capacities for decades, beginning with the song “Polish Poem,” which was featured on Lynch’s 2006 film, “Inland Empire.”

Produced and written by Lynch and engineered by Chrystabell, the album is Lynch’s first since his long-time creative partner Angelo Badalamenti died in 2022. The late composer contributed to two tracks - “She Knew” and “So Much Love” - which are both carried by Badalamenti’s synthesizer.

The album is a sonic feast that, like so many of Lynch’s films, challenges modern attention spans. Listening to “Cellophane Memories” feels like doing yoga, or perhaps transcendental meditation. The impulse to find additional stimuli in the moment is strong, but the result, if you can stick it out, is a feeling of rejuvenation and boosted creative energy.

Much of the album sounds like it could have come straight from “Twin Peaks”; one wonders if its title is a nod to the series’ ultimate dead girl Laura Palmer being found wrapped in plastic. “Cellophane Memories” even occasionally employs the famil-

iar, backward dialogue effect used in scenes in the red room to turn Chrystabell’s vocals into a kind of haunting instrument - like on the brooding “Reflections in a Blade.”

Hopeful and longing, at times disturbing and even seedy (particularly “The Answers to the Questions,” thanks to its slowed tempo and foregrounded percussion), the album vacillates between light and darkness - themes Lynch has throughout his career been keen to explore. His simpatico relationship with Chrystabell, whose creative use and mixing of her own voice elevates “Cellophane Memories,” is palpable in this record.

Virality, it could be assumed, is a gift and a curse.

Hit big online and channel that momentum into mainstream appeal, then the work comes: How does an artist sustain success? **Ice Spice**, the laidback Bronx rapper born **Isis Naija Gaston** with the too-cool-for-school, lackadaisical flow and the bright orange curls now iron straight, knows a thing or two about the topic.

First came the raunchy “Munch (Feelin’ U),” with its delightful dismissal of “You thought I was feeling you?” (the song inspired the name of her fanbase, who are called Munchkins). Then there was the effortless, SpongeBob SquarePants-referencing “Bikini Bottom.”

Her 2023 debut EP, “Like...?” produced by her long-time collaborator RiotUSA, only further confirmed her talents; “Boy’s a Liar, Pt. 2” with UK hyperpop-garage producer-artist PinkPantheress became the song of the summer.

Hell, even Taylor Swift tapped her for a remix of her hit “Karma.” Ice Spice, in two short years, has become a four-time Grammy nominee - and one of the most divisive names in mainstream rap - before she even released an album.

“Y2K!” is Ice Spice’s first full-length project, but don’t expect an introduction. (The title functions in that way, sort of: Ice Spice was born on Jan. 1,

2000, perhaps emblematic of her aesthetic ideology and prescience for her future, social media-indebted success. It is hard to think of another MC that better encapsulates the current moment.) At the core of “Y2K!” are her immediately quotable - and let’s be honest here, meme-able - booty-shaking bars, ripe for internet consumption. And so are the cheeky hooks that made her household name.

A few songs directly recall the Ice Spice listeners have grown to know: Like “Think U the S-- (Fart),” which leans into her characteristic playfulness while maintaining her necessary bravado. “Think you the s--?” Ice Spice recites in the chorus. “You not even the fart.” Or “Gimme A Light,” which samples **Sean Paul**’s dancehall classic “Gimme the Light.”

Across the release’s 23-minute run time, drill is still a priority, as she mentions on “Gimme A Light”: “Let’s talk drill / Who bigger than she?” she posits. Brevity is also a strong suit of Ice Spice’s - she understands modern attention spans and she cuts the fat across the album.

Previously released single “Phat Butt” might’ve been the clearest tease of some new sonic explorations in the world of Ice Spice, still one indebted to **Nicki Minaj**. She launches into a quick nod to Minaj’s “Beez in the Trap” in the intro (“Uh, Man”) and works in a sample of the 2005 hit “I Think They Like Me” by rap group Dem Franchize Boyz with **Jermaine Dupri**, **Da Brat** and **Bow Wow**. Closer “TTYL” sees Ice Spice raising her voice for a rare rap-rock kiss-off. Standout “BB Belt” is bed-squeaking Jersey Club.

The 10-track release uses collaborations sparingly: the self-referential, trap “Oh Shhh...” with Travis Scott, nods back to “Deli” in certain lyrics, the hard-hitting “Bitch I’m Packin’” with Gunna, and the infidelity-revenge anthem “Did It First,” brings the hottest contemporary rapper, Central Cee.

Across “Y2K!”, Ice Spice flexes her lackadaisical flow and traverses new territory, pushing her voice in subtle moments - if only there were more. If anything, this is the New York rapper further manicuring her distinctiveness, offering listeners a hot, short and sweet album.

Music

LOS ANGELES: “Deadpool & Wolverine” had a better Sunday than anticipated. The comic book film earned \$211 million in its first weekend in North American theaters, Disney said Monday.

That’s \$6 million more than was estimated on Sunday, putting “Deadpool & Wolverine” in a different league. It had already broken the record for an R-rated movie. But the **Shawn Levy**-directed film starring **Ryan Reynolds** and **Hugh Jackman** now boasts the sixth highest opening weekend of all time, surpassing “Jurassic World” which opened to \$208.8 million in 2015.

The Walt Disney Co. can now claim five of the six biggest box office openings ever, not accounting for inflation, including two “Avengers” movies, “Endgame” and “Infinity War,” and two “Star Wars” films, “The Force Awakens” and “The Last Jedi.” The only outlier is the second-place holder “Spider-Man: No Way Home,” which was released by Sony and produced by Marvel Studios.

“Deadpool & Wolverine’s” overperformance also boosted its global number to \$444.3 million, surpassing “Avatar: The Way of Water.” (AP)

□ □ □

BEIJING: Chinese comedy “Successor” remained on top of the daily box office chart on the Chinese mainland with a daily earning of 62.36 million yuan (about 8.74 million U.S. dollars) on Monday, according to the China Movie Data Information Network.

Featuring comedy stars **Shen Teng** and **Ma Li** and directed by **Yan Fei** and **Peng Damo**, the film tells the story of a wealthy couple who deliberately fakes a challenging environment for their son in order to foster his personal growth.

Contributing over 48 percent of the total box office revenue on Monday, the film saw its accumulated sales exceed 2.3 billion yuan.

It was followed by American action movie “Deadpool & Wolverine,” which raked in 25.45 million yuan on its fourth day of screening.

Crime thriller “A Place Called Silence” came in third with 10.79 million yuan of box office sales on the day.

The total box office revenue of

the Chinese mainland on Monday stood at about 128.79 million yuan. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

LONDON: A former BBC presenter has been charged with three counts of making indecent images of children, London’s Metropolitan Police Service said.



Edwards



Reynolds

Huw Edwards, 62, was one of the BBC’s most prominent figures before he was suspended in July 2023 and later resigned for health reasons.

Edwards had been the lead anchor on the BBC’s nighttime news and led BBC coverage of the funeral of **Queen Elizabeth II** in 2022. He had been among

the broadcaster’s best-paid stars, with an annual salary of at least 435,000 pounds (\$565,000).

The charges relate to offenses that allegedly took place between December 2020 and April 2022 and involved images shared on WhatsApp, police said. Edwards was charged on June 26 following authorization from the Crown

Prosecution Service and is scheduled to appear at Westminster Magistrate’s Court on Wednesday.

“Media and the public are strongly reminded that this is an active case,” police said in a statement. “Nothing should be published, including on social media, which could prejudice future court proceedings.” (AP)

People & Places

People

‘Rust’ trial

Swift ‘in shock’ after 2 kids died in attack

LONDON, July 30, (AP): **Taylor Swift** says she is “completely in shock” after two children died in a stabbing attack in a dance and yoga class themed on the singer.

The star said on Instagram on Tuesday she is still taking in “the horror” of the event, adding: “These were just little kids at a dance class.”

A 17-year-old boy was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder and is being questioned by police over the attack in Southport in northwest England.

Police were questioning a suspect and working Tuesday to understand what motivated a 17-year-old boy to attack children at a summer vacation dance and yoga class, leaving two dead and six in critical condition.

A total of nine children and two adults were hurt in the rampage in Southport, northwest England. Both adults and six of the children were in critical condition in local hospitals.

“We believe the adults who were injured were bravely trying to protect the children who were being attacked,” Merseyside Police Chief Constable Serena Kennedy said.

Local people left flowers and stuffed animals in tribute at a police cordon on the street lined with brick houses in the seaside resort near Liverpool - nicknamed “sunny Southport” - whose beach and pier attract vacationers from across northwest England.

Witnesses described scenes “from a horror movie” as bloodied children ran from the attack just before noon on Monday. The suspect was arrested soon after on suspicion of murder and attempted murder. Police said he was born in Cardiff, Wales and had lived for years in a village about 3 miles (5 kilometers) from Southport. He has not yet been charged.

Police said detectives are not treating Monday’s attack as terror-related and they are not looking for any other suspects.

Screams

It is the latest shocking attack in a country where a recent rise in knife crime has stoked anxieties and led to calls for the government to do more to clamp down on bladed weapons.

Witnesses described hearing screams and seeing children covered in blood emerging from the Hart Space, a community center that hosts everything from pregnancy workshops and meditation sessions to women’s boot camps.

The attack happened during a Taylor Swift-themed yoga and dance workshop for children aged about 6 to 11.

“They were in the road, running from the nursery,” said Bare Varathan, who owns a shop nearby. “They had been stabbed, here, here, here, everywhere,” he said, indicating the neck, back and chest.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer called the attack “horrendous and deeply shocking.” King Charles III sent his “condolences, prayers and deepest sympathies” to those affected by the “utterly horrific incident.”

Prince William and his wife Catherine said that “as parents, we cannot begin to imagine what the families, friends and loved ones of those killed and injured in Southport today are going through.”

Colin Parry, who owns a nearby auto body shop, told The Guardian that the suspect arrived by taxi.

“He came down our driveway in a taxi and didn’t pay for the taxi, so I confronted him at that point,” Parry was quoted as saying. “He was quite aggressive, he said, ‘What are you gonna do about it?’”

Parry said most of the victims appeared to be young girls.

“The mothers are coming here now and screaming,” Parry said. “It is like a scene from a horror movie. ... It’s like something from America, not like sunny Southport.”

Britain’s worst attack on children occurred in 1996, when 43-year-old Thomas Hamilton shot 16 kindergarteners and their teacher dead in a school gymnasium in Dunblane, Scotland. The UK subsequently banned the private ownership of almost all handguns.

Mass shootings and killings with firearms are rare in Britain, where knives were used in about 40% of homicides in the year to March 2023.

Also:

SANTA FE, N.M.: A special prosecutor is opposing a request by a former movie armorer that she be released from prison while seeking a new trial and appeal of her involuntary manslaughter conviction in a 2021 shooting on the set of the film “Rust.”

Kari Morrissey wrote in a response brief filed Friday that **Hannah Gutierrez-Reed**’s motion for release “is premature given that the court has yet to receive completed briefing on the defendant’s motion for new trial, hear arguments on the defendant’s motion and rule on the motion in defendant’s favor.”

Lawyers for Gutierrez-Reed have argued her case should be reconsidered because prosecutors failed to share evidence that might have been exculpatory.

Gutierrez-Reed wants a judge to dismiss her conviction or convene a new trial in the shooting death of cinematographer **Halyna Hutchins** by actor **Alec Baldwin**.

Baldwin, the lead actor and co-producer for “Rust,” was pointing a gun at Hutchins during a rehearsal on a movie set outside Santa Fe in October 2021 when the revolver went off, killing Hutchins and wounding director **Joel Souza**.

Gutierrez-Reed already has an appeal pending in a higher court on the involuntary manslaughter conviction. She was convicted by a jury in March in a trial overseen by Judge **Mary Marlowe Sommer**, who later assigned the maximum 18-month penalty.

Baldwin’s trial ended July 12 when Marlowe Sommer dismissed the case based on misconduct of police and prosecutors over the withholding of evidence from the defense.

PASADENA, Calif.: Former longtime “General Hospital” actor **Haley Pullos** was sentenced to five years of probation Monday after pleading guilty to felony drunken driving and serving three months in jail.

Pullos, 26, was also sentenced in a Los Angeles County court in Pasadena to 200 hours of community service. The judge ordered her to complete a nine-month alcohol treatment program and to pay more than \$8,000 in restitution to the other driver in the crash that authorities said she caused when she drove the wrong way on freeway lanes in April of 2023.

Pullos began appearing on “General Hospital” as a child, playing **Molly Lansing-Davis** on nearly 500 episodes of the ABC soap opera from 2009 to 2023. She left the show after the collision and has not returned.



This image released by Disney Theatricals shows Michael James Scott as Genie, (background left), and Adi Roy as Aladdin, (background right), with the cast during a performance of the musical ‘Aladdin.’ (AP)



Saleka, (left), and Josh Hartnett pose for photographers upon arrival at the screening of the film ‘Trap’ in London, Monday, July 29. (AP)



Lee



Moore

Variety

NEW YORK: **Lorrie Moore**, **Attica Locke** and **Edwidge Danticat** will be among hundreds of writers attending this September’s Brooklyn Book Festival, for years one of the literary world’s most anticipated gatherings.

Others expected range from poets **Jenny Xie** and **Terrance Hayes** to detective novelist **George Pelecanos** and children’s author **R.L. Stine**. Cartoonist **Roz Chast** will receive the festival’s annual BoBi (Best of Brooklyn) award, given to those who best exemplify the spirit of the New York City borough. Previous BoBi winners include **Lynn Nottage**, **Colson Whitehead** and **Paul Auster**.

The festival runs from Sept. 22-30, with events including a day dedicated to children’s literature and a “Literary Marketplace” featuring more than 200 publishers.

“The Brooklyn Book Festival has gone from a small one day event to a 9-day international celebration of authors that welcomes readers from across the city and region. We bring authors together for unique conversations about books and contemporary issues, almost like you were enjoying their conversation at the kitchen table,” festival producer **Liz Koch** said in a statement Wednesday. (AP)

HONG KONG: With straight bangs, a pair of gold-rimmed glasses, and a soft voice, **Rebecca Lee** looks more like a teacher than an explorer.

The 80-year-old has many identities: photographer, polar researcher, graphic designer, and most importantly, Hong Kong’s first female explorer to have set foot on the earth’s three extremes -- the North Pole, the South Pole and Mount Qomolangma.

Now, having hung up her explorer boots, Lee is ready for the next expedition, one that would last a lifetime: environmental protection and education.

From a young age, Lee was intrigued by adventures. Books such as “Robinson Crusoe” and “Around the World in Eighty Days” were her favorites. By 1985, when China established its first scientific research station in Antarctica, she had visited over 100 cities worldwide.

Back then, as a graphic designer, Lee was part of the team planning for an exhibition on China’s Antarctic expedition in Hong Kong. Intrigued by the unique continent, she applied to become a photographer to film China’s second Antarctic expedition that year.

Books

‘Loving Sylvia Plath’: A fresh take by Van Duyne

1950s murder mystery in ‘Briar Club’

NEW YORK, July 30, (AP): If you’ve never read a Kate Quinn novel, there’s no time like the present. Or like the 1950s in Washington, D.C. That’s the setting for Quinn’s “**The Briar Club**,” which is a murder mystery wrapped up in the stories of multiple women who rent rooms at a boarding house during the height of Sen. Joseph McCarthy’s Red Scare.

The characters are all interesting, but too numerous to sketch in this short review. Each gives Quinn an opportunity to comment on some aspect of the decade – from the development of the birth control pill, to organized crime corrupting the D.C. police force, to the demise of a professional women’s softball league after World War II. All the women’s stories serve the novel’s greater plot, which opens with a murder in the house on Thanksgiving Day in 1954. It then flips backward and forward in time, crashing the characters together and creating plenty of suspects before ending with a delightful twist.

At the center of the plot is Grace March, who moves into the third-floor attic of the Briarwood boarding house and, over the objections of the stern landlady, Mrs. Nilsson, begins to make the place a real home. She paints flowers and vines on her ceiling that eventually creep down the staircase and are a metaphor for the role Grace plays in the boarder’s lives. She starts a Thursday night Supper Club, inviting everyone to bring a dish to warm up on her hot plate and share.

Quinn tosses in a couple cute wrinkles that make the book even more fun. One is the inclusion of actual recipes for the dishes and drinks the women bring to supper club. In promotional interviews in advance of the novel’s release, Quinn admitted that her husband actually prepared all the food and drink for her to taste prior to publication. Also unique to the novel – short chapters written from the point of view of the house itself. As a detective moves to split up the the women for interrogation following the Thanksgiving day murder, Quinn writes: “He moves into the kitchen, at once the ob-

ject of all eyes, and just to be spiteful the house rucks the edge of the carpet so he trips.”

It all makes for a delightful read. Quinn creates characters readers will care about and root for, while also managing to keep them guessing until the very end about who murdered whom in Briarwood House.

A popular form of writing nowadays is one that involves reexamining the lives of people, often members of marginalized groups, who have otherwise been flattened or short-changed by history.

How has society’s assumptions or prejudices informed how a person is remembered, many authors are asking, and what information is available to us that may tell a more complete story?

These are the questions **Emily Van Duyne**, an associate professor at Stockton University, asks in “**Loving Sylvia Plath: A Reclamation**.”

In the wake of Plath’s death by suicide, her husband and fellow writer Ted Hughes constructed a narrative that he was the “stabilizing factor” in his wife’s life but that, in the end, even he couldn’t save her. But Van Duyne rejects any notion that Plath was a bad mother or merely a morbid poet. She maintains Plath ought to be remembered as a complicated woman, a formidable writer – one who outshined Hughes – and almost certainly a victim of domestic abuse.

This book is not, for the most part, a hermeneutic study or close reading of Plath’s writings. Rather, Van Duyne’s source material for this reclaimed portrait of Plath are her circumstances.

Van Duyne seeks to subvert Hughes’ narrative of Plath’s life and what drove her to end it. In the wake of #MeToo and cultural conversations about believing women, Van Duyne argues Plath’s story ought to be given a fresh look.

Those wanting a primer on reading Plath or a comprehensive biography should look elsewhere to the plethora of extant literature on the enigmatic literary giant. But “Loving Sylvia Plath:

A Reclamation” should be seen as supplementary material for those seeking to better understand the circumstances surrounding her final years.

Actor and producer **Griffin Dunne** grew up in New York and Los Angeles with the glitterati all around. His father, **Dominick Dunne**, a television executive and film producer when Dunne was young, liked to hobnob with the rich and famous. His uncle, journalist and screenwriter **John Gregory Dunne**, married writer **Joan Didion** and they became an L.A. power couple.

Growing up in the 1960s and early 1970s, he attended seemingly endless parties with **Sean Connery**, **Warren Beatty** and many others, even **Judy Garland**. Celebrity hobnobbing continued when Dunne moved to New York to try to make it as an actor. For his 27th birthday, **Susan Sarandon** brought him premium LSD from Timothy Leary. He roomed with his best friend **Carrie Fisher** until she hit it big with “Star Wars.”

But tragedy was always brewing close under the surface of Dunne’s seemingly idyllic life. Even as he began to make a name for himself as a producer and then an actor in movies like “An American Werewolf in London” and **Martin Scorsese**’s “After Hours,” his mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, his brother battled mental illness and his father decamped to rural Oregon to fight his substance abuse issues.

But the biggest tragedy came in 1982 when his sister, Dominique Dunne, herself an up-and-coming actress with a role in “Poltergeist,” was murdered on her front lawn by an abusive ex-boyfriend. Dunne’s family attended the trial every day, which ended in a light sentence for Dunne’s killer. Griffin’s father later chronicled the trial for Vanity Fair, kicking off his second career as a writer and novelist.

With a breezy style, Dunne chronicles how his family got through good times and bad – despite interfamily spats – by coming together as a family when it counted.

The first time she set foot on Antarctica, she was stunned.

“The research station was red - bright, glorious Chinese red - in a vast blanket of white. Snow and ice were everywhere,” she recalled.

“I felt as excited as a bride arriving at a distant new home,” she recalled. “I vowed

in my heart that I would never let this land down,” she said.

Over the ensuing decades, she returned to the continent seven times, visited the Arctic ten times, and left her footprint in areas of the Mount Qomolangma four times.

During the trips, she developed intimacy

with nature, and felt for herself how climate change is causing damage to it.

“You can even swim in the Arctic during the summer,” she said.

Her expeditions have led her to reflect on the impact of human activities on nature. In order to enhance public awareness of environmental issues, she organized lectures and initiated the establishment of the Polar Museum Foundation, hoping to inspire young people to appreciate nature and contribute to environmental protection.

In 2013, thanks to Lee’s efforts, the Museum of Climate Change was established. The city’s first ever museum dedicated to climate change displayed a collection of artefacts from Lee’s expeditions, including thousands of pictures and hundreds of hours of video footage.

“I’m in the final phase of my life. It’s time to give all I have to my students and the public. I’m in a great position to do so too -- I have passion; I have connections with scientists; and the Chinese government supports my efforts in popularizing Polar sciences. I’m also a designer by profession, good at packaging science in art,” she said.

If Lee’s life is about connecting the dots, the arrival of China’s first domestically made polar icebreaker Xuelong 2 to Hong Kong was another important mark.

In April this year, the vessel made a stop in Hong Kong during its homebound voyage after China’s 40th Antarctic expedition. (Xinhua)



Models present creations of Jayanti Reddy during the FDCI India Couture Week in New Delhi, on July 29. (Xinhua)

Overcrowded camps and poor sanitation fuel dermatology crisis

Lice, scabies, rashes: Skin diseases ravage Gaza’s children

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip, July 30, (AP): A steady stream of miserable children and worried parents flowed into the dermatology office at Nasser Hospital in central Gaza.

A toddler with a blue hair bow sobbed as her mother showed how the red and white spots covering her face have spread to her neck and chest. Another woman lifted her little boy’s clothes to reveal the rashes on his back, butt, thighs and stomach. On his wrists, he had open sores from scratching. A father stood his daughter on the desk so the doctor could examine the lesions on her calves.

Skin diseases are running rampant in Gaza, health officials say. The cause, they say, is the appalling conditions in overcrowded tent camps housing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians driven from their homes, along with the summer heat and the collapse of sanitation that has left pools of open sewage amid 10 months of Israel’s bombardment and offensives in the territory.

Doctors are wrestling with more than 103,000 cases of lice and scabies and 65,000 cases of skin rashes, according to the World Health Organization. In Gaza’s population of some 2.3 million, more than 1 million cases of acute respiratory infections have been recorded since the war began, along with more than half a million of acute diarrhea and more than 100,000 cases of jaundice, according to the United Nations Development Program.

Cleanliness is impossible in the ramshackle tents, basically wood frames hung with blankets or plastic

sheets, crammed side by side over wide stretches, Palestinians say.

Water

“There’s no shampoo, no soap,” said Munira al-Nahhal, living in a tent in the dunes outside the southern city of Khan Younis. “The water is dirty. Everything is sand and insects and garbage.”

Her family’s tent was crammed with her grandchildren, many of whom had rashes. One little boy stood scratching the red patches on his belly. “One child gets it, and it spreads to all of them,” al-Nahhal said.

Palestinians in the camp said clean water was almost impossible to get. Some wash their children in salt water from the nearby Mediterranean. People have to wear the same clothes day after day until they’re able to wash them, then they wear them again immediately. Flies are everywhere. Children play in garbage-strewn sand.

“First it was spots on her face. Then it spread to her stomach and arms, all over her forehead. And it hurts. It itches. And there’s no treatment. Or if there is we can’t afford it,” said Shaima Marshoud, sitting next to her little daughter in a cinder block structure they’d settled in among the tents.

More than 1.8 million of Gaza’s 2.3 million people have been driven from their homes, often moving multiple times over the past months to get away from Israeli ground assaults or bombardment. The vast majority are now crowded into a 50-square-kilometer (20-square-mile) area of dunes and fields on the coast with almost no sewage system and little water.

The distribution of humanitarian supplies, including soap, shampoo and medicines, has slowed to a trickle, U.N. officials say, because Israeli military operations and general lawlessness in Gaza make it too dangerous for relief trucks to move.

Israel launched its campaign vowing to destroy Hamas after its Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel, in which some 1,200 people were killed and 350 abducted. Israel’s assault has killed more than 39,000 people, according to Gaza health authorities.

“The solid waste management system has collapsed,” said Chitose Noguchi, the deputy special representative of the UN Development Program’s Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People.

In a report released Tuesday, the UNDP said Gaza’s two pre-war landfills were unreachable amid the fighting and it had set up 10 temporary sites. But Noguchi said there were more than 140 informal dumping sites that have cropped up. Some of them are giant pools of human waste and garbage.

“People are having tents and living next to dumping sites, which is really, really critical situation in terms of the health crisis,” Noguchi said.

Nassim Basala, a dermatologist at Nasser Hospital, said they get 300 to 500 people a day coming in with skin diseases. After the most recent Israeli evacuation orders, more people have crowded into agricultural fields outside the city of Khan Younis, where insects are rife in the summer.



Displaced child Mohammed Abu Obaid, who suffers from skin disease, shows scars on his skin, at a makeshift tent camp in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip, Monday, July 29. Skin diseases are running rampant in Gaza, health officials say, from appalling conditions in overcrowded tent camps housing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians driven from their homes. (AP)

Noninvasive screening

US approves blood test for screening of colon cancer

WASHINGTON, July 30, (AP): US health regulators on Monday approved a first-of-its-kind blood test for colon cancer, offering a new way of screening for a leading cause of cancer deaths.

Test manufacturer Guardant said the Food and Drug Administration approved its Shield test for screening in adults 45 and older who have an average risk of colon cancer. The test isn’t a replacement for colonoscopies, but provides a noninvasive approach to screening.

Doctors can already order Shield for patients as a laboratory test with an out-of-pocket price of \$895. But FDA approval is expected to increase coverage by private and government insurance.

The test looks for DNA fragments shed by tumor cells and precancerous growths. In a study published in March, the test caught 83% of the cancers but very few of the precancerous growths found by colonoscopy, the gold standard for colon cancer screening. The test missed 17% of cancers, performance that is on par with stool-based tests.

Besides spotting tumors, colonoscopies can prevent the disease by removing precancerous growths called polyps.

But some people avoid the exam because of the hassle of getting time off work or the day-ahead preparation that involves drinking a strong laxative to empty the bowels. In the US, screening is recommended for healthy adults ages 45 to 75 at average risk for colon cancer.

Physicians will be able to run the Shield test after taking a simple blood draw, Guardant said in a statement. The company plans to launch its product “in the near future.”

The annual rate of US colon cancer screening is nearly 60%, well short of the 80% of age-eligible adults goal set by the American Cancer Society and other groups.

‘Eel death’
Bubonic plague ‘hits’ Mongolia

ULAN BATOR, July 30, (Agencies): A suspected bubonic plague case has been reported in the western Mongolian province of Govi-Altai, according to local media on Tuesday.

The individual from the Taishir soum (administrative subdivision) in the province has been recently hospitalized after consuming marmot meat. In response, at least 13 people who were in close contact with the patient are being isolated, and the soum has been placed under quarantine.

Although hunting marmots is illegal in Mongolia, many Mongolians regard the rodent as a delicacy and ignore the law.

The National Center for Zoonotic Diseases has indicated that 17 out of Mongolia’s 21 provinces are at risk of bubonic plague infection.

Bubonic plague, a bacterial disease spread mostly by fleas on wild rodents and other animals, can kill an adult in less than 24 hours if not treated in time, according to the World Health Organization.

Ruminants plague: Greece has culled approximately 9,000 animals following an outbreak of the small-ruminants plague (PPR). This action was part of efforts to contain the spread of the contagious and deadly viral disease, after inspections of over 230,000 goats and sheep on the mainland over the past week, Greek Agricultural Development and Food Minister Kostas Tsiasaris said on Tuesday.

“We are taking all necessary measures to address the issue,” he told Greek broadcaster ERT, adding that there was no risk to public health.

The agriculture ministry has announced a nationwide ban on the transport of goats and sheep for any reason as a preventive step, as experts were trying to locate the origin of the disease.

The first cases were identified in the region of Thessaly in central Greece last week, where units were placed under quarantine. On Monday a few cases were reported also near Athens and on the Peloponnese peninsula in southern Greece. Breeders said that some animals tested positive were imported from Romania.

Greek authorities also proceeded to ban imports of goats and sheep from Romania until this Friday.

Eel poisoning: One person died and nearly 150 others were sickened after eating grilled eel prepared by a restaurant chain and sold at a department store near Tokyo, officials said. Among those sickened, two required hospitalization.

Keikyu Department Store said 147 customers as of Monday had reported symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhea after eating grilled eel dishes sold in the grocery section of the department store based in Yokohama, near Tokyo, between July 24 and July 25.

Japan has a tradition of eating roasted eel as a tonic for the heat during the hottest days of summer.

A woman in her 90s died after developing symptoms, but her exact cause of death is being further investigated, the Yokohama city health center said. Two other people were hospitalized, but the symptoms of others affected were milder, it added.

The only common denominator among the sickened was the grilled eel, sold separately or as part of box lunches served with rice, prepared by the Tokyo-based restaurant chain Nihonbashi Isesada, and sold at the department store, the health center said.

Innovative heart surgery gains global attention

China develops minimally invasive heart procedure for treating HOCM

WUHAN, July 30, (Xinhua): Chinese researchers have pioneered a beating-heart myectomy system and developed a minimally invasive procedure to treat hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy (HOCM), attracting global attention.

The study was conducted by a research team led by Wei Xiang, a professor at the Tongji Hospital in Wuhan, and was published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

It is estimated that there are about 2 to 5 million patients with HOCM in China, and the global population of such patients stands at approximately 15 to 20 million, posing a serious threat to human health.

Currently, the conventional treatment for HOCM is through open-chest surgery to resect the hypertrophic myocardium. This surgical method is not only highly invasive but also technically challenging, with suboptimal outcomes and high mortality rates in hospitals with less experience.

The novel transapical beating-heart septal myectomy procedure has broken through the limitations of traditional open-chest procedures, allowing for the precise resection of hypertrophic myocardium without the need for chest opening, cessation of the heartbeat, or blood transfusion.

Breakthrough

“In the field of HOCM surgery, we used to follow the world, but now we are keeping pace with it or even leading,” Wei said.

Wei was recently invited to the Mayo Clinic, a world-renowned cardiovascular treatment center in the United States, to discuss this groundbreaking medical breakthrough. Cardiac surgeons from countries and regions such as the United States, Switzerland and Italy have also traveled to China to learn about the technology.

Gut bacteria identified

Chinese experts find how bacteria triggers obesity

BEIJING, July 30, (Xinhua): In daily life, some people can eat voraciously and still appear slim, while others seem to gain weight with every bite and are naturally prone to obesity.

This observation is now backed by a recent finding from Chinese researchers, published in the journal Cell Host & Microbe, which suggests that the underlying cause might be Megamonas, a family of obesity-causing bacteria.

A team of researchers from Ruijin Hospital affiliated with Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine, BGI Research, and the Institute of Intelligent Medical Research under BGI Genomics has identified the potential obesity-causing bacteria and revealed the underlying mechanisms in a large-scale cohort of obese individuals in China, the China Science and Technology Daily reported Monday.

Numerous studies have highlighted the critical roles of gut probiotics in obesity. However, the specific microbes contributing to obesity and the underlying mechanisms remain undetermined.

The research team conducted shotgun metagenomic sequencing on fecal samples from a cohort of 631 obese individuals and 374 normal-weight controls, identifying a Megamonas-dominated cluster of microbes enriched in the obese subjects.

The researchers identified three enterotype-like clusters among the 1,005 samples -- Bacteroides, Prevotella and Megamonas. Individuals enriched with Megamonas exhibited higher Body Mass Index (BMI) and a greater proportion of obesity compared to the other two types.

Further analysis revealed that three species of Megamonas are all positively correlated with body weight, waist circumference, and BMI. Therefore, the research team determined a significant association between Megamonas and obesity.

Based on the findings about obesity-inducing Megamonas, the research team investigated the impact of Megamonas in populations with different genetic risks for obesity.

The study found that in the population with low genetic risk for obesity, the impact of Megamonas on BMI is significantly higher than in the population with high genetic risk.

Furthermore, the differences in gut microbiota between the obese group and the normal control group are more obvious in the population with a low genetic risk for obesity.

According to Wu Chao, the first author of the study and a researcher at Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine, the findings indicate that for populations with a low genetic risk for obesity, the impact of gut microbiota on the occurrence of obesity is greater than for those with a high genetic risk.

Many report mild symptoms

US poison control calls surge with ‘wild mushroom’ boom

MINNEAPOLIS, July 30, (AP): The warm, soggy summer across much of the Midwest has produced a bumper crop of wild mushrooms - and a surge in calls to poison control centers.

At the Minnesota Regional Poison Center, calls from April through July more than tripled over the same period last year, said Samantha Lee, the center’s director. The center took 90 calls for potential exposures over that period, compared to 26 calls for the same months in 2023. Exposures include people who have had actual or suspected contact with potentially poisonous mushrooms and who may or may not develop symptoms, she said.

The cases can include kids who didn’t know what they were doing and foragers who make mistakes, she said. But those numbers don’t include people who are merely curious about whether the mushrooms popping out of their yards are good to eat.

“Fortunately the majority of the time these tend to be mild symptoms,” Lee said. “A lot of these are mushrooms that were in the yard or nearby parks. Many of these cause upset stomachs, vomiting and diarrhea, but every year we do get some cases with serious outcomes.”

The situation appears to be similar throughout wetter areas of the country this spring and summer. Kait Brown, clinical managing director of America’s Poison Centers, said calls were up 26% across all states and territories for April through June.

“There are probably a couple areas in the country that are experiencing large case volumes that could be related to different weather patterns,” Brown said. However, she said her office doesn’t have state-by-state data to pinpoint exactly where.

The Minnesota poison center issued a warning this month that wild mushrooms can be hard for untrained people to identify. Common ones that typically cause milder symptoms include the little brown mushrooms that grow in yards and the small white mushrooms that can form “fairy rings,” Brown said. But some deadly species also grow in the area, including one popularly known as the “death angel” or “destroying angel.” They can cause liver failure.

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Americans to take on Serbia in their 2nd match

Chinese women beat reigning Olympic champs US in volleyball

PARIS, July 30, (AP): The U.S. women's volleyball team had a bad enough start in its Olympic title defense. It managed to keep it from turning into a disaster.

The Americans lost the first two sets to China in a pool play format where total points and sets won can become playoff tiebreakers. So China's eventual five-set victory - both teams scored the same number of points - left the reigning champions with a sense of relief.

"I'm really proud of our fight. You know, it's not easy to go from being down 0-2 to fight neck-and-neck in the fifth like that," setter Jordyn Poulter said. "You either win or you learn. So we have a lot of that we can learn from here, a lot that we can improve and get better at, and we don't want to peak too

early."

They definitely didn't have to worry about that.

"We obviously didn't have the start that we wanted, but the third, fourth and fifth were really promising," blocker Haleigh Washington said. "Going five with a team like China is incredible, and squeezing

VOLLEYBALL

out any point we can get in the pool is going to be really important for us. And so I'm just happy the way that we just fought."

The American women will play their second match of the preliminary round on Wednesday against Serbia, and then meet host France on Sunday in the pool play finale.

The top two teams in each of the three pools and the top two third-place teams will advance to the knockout round, with wins, total points and set and point ratio used as tiebreakers.

"It just highlights how thin the margins are and how we have to take care of some of these little plays," coach Karch Kiraly said. "And I want to give our team a huge amount of credit for fighting back. It is not easy to come back from down 2-0 against a really good China team."

The Americans only lost one match in pool play in Tokyo and did not lose a set in the knockout stage en route to their first-ever gold medal. With eight holdovers from the 2021 champions, they arrived in Paris as the fifth-ranked

team in the world.

But sixth-ranked China won the first two sets handily, 25-20 and 25-19, before the Americans came back to win the third 25-17 and rallied from a 13-10 deficit to tie it 13-all on a challenged ball that barely caught the Chinese end line.

For the first time, the crowd was engaged and chanting "U-S-A!" and at 17-14, China took a timeout to regroup. It was 21-20 for the Americans when they ran off the last four points, getting an ace from Washington to set up set point.

On the winner, Washington's dig set up Andrew Drews' spike.

But China again took the lead in the tiebreaker. The Americans staved off two match points before Zhu Ting's spike went off blocker Andrea Drews for the victory.



Italy's players pose for a photo after winning the Group B men's volleyball match against Egypt at the 2024 Summer Olympics 2024, in Paris, France. (AP)

Canada on track for knockout stage



Greece's Giannis Antetokounmpo, (left), and Spain's Willy Hernangomez reach for a rebound during a men's basketball game at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France. (AP)

Spain beat Greece

VILLENEUVE-D'ASCQ, France, July 30, (AP): RJ Barrett had 24 points and seven rebounds and Canada stayed unbeaten in group play at the Paris Olympics with a 93-83 victory over Australia on Tuesday.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 16 points as Canada improved to 2-0 and remained on track to advance when the tournament field is trimmed from 12 to eight teams and shifts to Paris next week for the knockout stage.

BASKETBALL

Josh Giddey led Australia with 19 points. Dante Exum finished with 15.

Canada plays Spain in its final group-stage matchup. Australia faces Greece next.

The game was tight throughout the first half. But Barrett kept finding seams in Australia's defense, helping his team take its first double-digit lead on a 3-pointer with 5:13 remaining. Canada then pushed it up to 83-72 with about 4

1/2 minutes to play.

Santi Aldama had 19 points and 12 rebounds and Spain defeated Giannis Antetokounmpo and Greece to earn its first victory of the Paris Olympics and remain in contention to advance to the knockout round.

Sergio Llull finished with 13 points. Spain improved to 1-1 in

Group A with one group-stage game left to play against Canada.

Antetokounmpo had 27 points and 11 rebounds.

After losing their opening games on Saturday, Greece and Spain both came out essentially playing for their tournament lives, with the loser facing a must-win scenario on Friday - and likely lots of help - to



Australia's Dante Exum, (left), tries to get by Canada's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander in a men's basketball game at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France. (AP)

have any chance of advancing.

That team is now Greece, which will meet Australia in its final chance to earn a victory before four teams' medal hopes end.

Greece cut what had been a 14-point halftime deficit to a point early in the fourth quarter.

It then tied it at 71 on an emphatic, driving left-handed dunk by Antetokounmpo over Aldama, whom he'd been jostling with throughout the game.

But Aldama responded on the other end with a driving layup and Spain steadied over the next few minutes, scoring the next eight points.

"It's tough with a guy like him to make the defensive play," Aldama said. "You can either make the defensive play or try to block the shot. ... I tried, got posturized, but next play."

Greece pulled back to within 80-77 with 59 seconds left, but Antetokounmpo had a 3-pointer from the top of the key bounce off the rim.

Spain does have a big health concern going forward after Rudy Fernandez left late in the fourth quarter after a collision under the basket and was helped by trainers to the locker room.

Al-Abdulrazzaq makes history

MONACO, July 30: World champion Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq, a member of the Marine Sports Club, achieved an unprecedented global milestone for an Arab athlete by securing second place in the fourth round of the World Championship for Electric Powerboats E1. This event, held in the Principality of Monaco saw fierce competition. Al-Abdulrazzaq not only clinched second place but also recorded the best time in the competition.

Al-Abdulrazzaq dedicated this remarkable achievement to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmadn Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and to all the people of Kuwait.

He expressed his gratitude to the Minister of State for Youth Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, the Public Authority for Sports, the Kuwait Olympic Committee, and the Chair-



Abdulrazzaq celebrates on the podium.

man and members of the Marine Sports Club for their support.

Al-Abdulrazzaq affirmed his determination to achieve more successes in the future as he prepares for the upcoming rounds of the World Championship.

Kuwait Club hosts Al-Salmiya in pre-season friendly ahead of the Zain Premier League

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: Al-Salmiya will visit Kuwait Club on Friday at 7:30 pm for a friendly match, marking the final pre-season fixture for both teams before the new season begins. This match serves as a crucial preparation step for both clubs as they gear up for the Zain Premier League, which kicks off on August 8.

The "Whites" have just returned from their training camp in Turkey, while Al-Salmiya returned from Bosnia last Friday.

SOCCER

Kuwait Club's Montenegrin coach, Nebojsa Jovic, aims to finalize his starting lineup for the league opener against Al-Qadisiya, scheduled for August 8. The team will also travel to Manama on August 2 to face Al-Ahli of Bahrain in a playoff match for the AFC Champions League 2 qualification.

Kuwait Club has bolstered its squad with new signings including Moroccan Amin Abu Al-Fath, Tunisians Yahya Jabrane and Yassin

Al-Khenisi, Bahraini Mohammed Marhoun, and Congolese Arsene Zola "Malik".


On the other side, Al-Salmiya is also focused on preparing for the season under Croatian coach Ante Misha. The team features five foreign players: Tunisian Imad Louati, Moroccan Younes Al-Najjari, Brazilian Alex Lima, Libyan Al-Sanousi Al-Hadi, and Guinean Sang Pierre.

Al-Fahaheel concluded its training camp in Egypt with a 1-0 win over Egyptian team Proxi, with Brazilian William Barros scoring the decisive goal. The team will return this evening.

Khaled Abdel Quddous, Vice President of the Football Department, expressed satisfaction with the camp's outcomes. He noted that the technical staff provided all players with a chance to showcase their abilities before the season begins. Abdel Quddous also praised the Kuwait Football Association's decision to trim the roster to 25 players, calling it a "positive" move that will allow many players to demonstrate their skills in other clubs.



A file photo of Kuwait Club and Al-Salmiya players in action.



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Another Chinese doping controversy pops up

NANTERRE, France, July 30, (AP): Another Chinese doping allegation has flared up at the Paris Games, angering some swimmers who say officials need to enforce drug-testing rules consistently.

The New York Times reported Tuesday that two top Chinese swimmers - including one on this year's Olympic team - tested positive for a banned steroid in 2022 but were eventually cleared to compete by Chinese officials.

The Times cited two people with knowledge of the matter but did not name them.

This is the third incident reported over the last several months by the Times and others in which the Chinese have blamed food contamination for positive drug tests. The World Anti-Doping Agency accepted the results of the Chinese investigations.

"I saw the report this morning," American star Katie Ledecky said on Tuesday. "I think I've made my thoughts clear. It's disappointing." Italian distance swimmer Simona Quadarella said athletes aren't sure the testing system works in many countries.

"I think we need some answers from this situation," she said. "We really don't have confidence, in the situation, in the testing system - in the testing system in other parts of the world." In the most widely reported incident, 11 swimmers named to the Chinese Olympic team were among 23 who tested positive for a banned substance six months before the Tokyo Olympics in 2021. They were allowed to compete and went on to win gold medals in three events. One of those swimmers, Zhang Yufei, has won two bronzes in France, one in the women's 100 butterfly and another as part of the 4x100 freestyle relay.

Chinese swimmers in Paris have pushed back against doping allegations and say they are tested more than athletes from other countries.

Rob Koehler, the general director of the athletes' advocacy body Global Athlete, criticized WADA in an email to The Associated Press.

"This is another devastating blow to the credibility of both WADA and World Aquatics, and to clean sport," he said, referring to the global governing body of swim-

ming. "With this new information, athletes and advocates are resigned to the fact that the guardians of the World Anti-Doping Code are no longer fit for purpose." Koehler worked as a deputy director of WADA until 2018.

In a statement, WADA acknowledged the two Chinese swimmers had tested positive and were provisionally suspended for "trace amounts of a prohibited substance metandienone," a powerful muscle-builder known on the street as D-Bol. The provisional suspension lasted about a year.

WADA said the Chinese anti-doping agency, CHINADA, conducted testing on "hundreds of meat samples from various sources with dozens revealing positive results for metandienone." WADA said CHINADA closed the case late in 2023 "without asserting a violation," which lifted the provisional suspensions.

WADA also said it "is generally concerned about the number of cases that are being closed without sanction when it is not possible to challenge the contamination theory." It pointed out "several" similar cases in the past few months in the United

States. Many U.S. cases, including a highly publicized one involving sprinter Erriyon Knighton, deal with substances such as trenbolone, which, unlike D-Bol, are usually given to promote muscle growth and appetite in livestock.

The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, which handled that case, released a statement from its CEO, Travis Tygart, who is one of the most outspoken critics of WADA.

"It's crushing news to wake up to for all athletes and fans of the Olympic movement that the failures of the global anti-doping system have overshadowed what should be a moment to bring the world together," he said.

One of the two swimmers mentioned in the latest Times report is Tang Muhan, who was on the 4x200 freestyle relay team that won gold and set a world record three years ago in the Tokyo Olympics.

The American team finished second and also broke the previous world mark.

Tang was named to China's Olympic team this year, and she could swim Thursday in the 4x200 relay.

Peaty tests positive for COVID

Less than 24 hours after claiming a swimming silver medal at the Paris Olympics, British star Adam Peaty tested positive for COVID-19.

The British Olympic committee announced Peaty's condition on Monday, saying he first began feeling ill a day earlier ahead of the 100-meter breaststroke final.

The two-time defending Olympic champion in that event, Peaty just missed out on a third straight gold when he touched two-hundredths of a second behind the winner, Italy's Nicolo Martinenghi. Peaty tied for the runner-up spot with American Nic Fink.

"In the hours after the final, his symptoms became worse and he was tested for COVID early on Monday morning," Team GB said in a statement. "He tested positive at that point."

The 29-year-old Peaty hopes to recover in time to take part in the relays, the statement said. The mixed 4x100 medley relay is set for Friday, while the men's 4x100 medley relay will be held Saturday and Sunday.

"As in any case of illness, the situation is being managed appropriately, with all usual precautions being taken to keep the wider delegation healthy," Team GB said. (AP)



United States' Miles Parntain returns a shot against Morocco in a beach volleyball match at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)



Zhang Boheng of team China competes during the parallel bar of the men's team final of artistic gymnastics at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, France. (Xinhua)



Perris Benegas of the United States performs a trick during the cycling BMX freestyle women's park qualification at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)



Canada's Dwight Powell, (below), and Australia's Jock Landale reach for a rebound during a men's basketball game at the 2024 Summer Olympics, in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France. (AP)



Coco Gauff of United States cries after arguing with the umpires during her women's singles third round match against Donna Vekic of Croatia, at the 2024 Summer Olympics, at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris, France. (AP)

Japan surge past China in nail-biter

US end drought with bronze

PARIS, July 30, (AP): The Japanese men's gymnastics team claimed Olympic gold with an epic comeback over its top rival.

With China poised to claim its first Olympic title in 12 years with one rotation to go, Japan surged ahead to win the Paris Olympics men's team competition Monday after an intense and nail-biting duel.

The Japanese, which trailed by more than three points going into the last apparatus, overtook their rivals after China's Su Weide fell twice off the horizontal bar and Xiao Ruoteng underperformed under pressure. Japan won with a small margin of 0.532 points.

Su also botched a landing on vault earlier in the evening. He took the blame for the bitter defeat.

Behind the two powerhouses of men's gymnastics and in the absence of Russia, the Americans earned bronze for their first medal since 2008.

The Chinese had dominated qualifying ahead of Japan, the reigning world champion.

They faced off in the same group, starting their competition on floor exercise. Su's mistake on vault aside, China had been consistent on all apparatuses and took the lead midway through the competition.

GYMNASTICS

In the penultimate rotation, Zhang Boheng posted an impressive 15.100 on the parallel bars and teammate Zou Jingyuan did even better with a rare 16.000.

But Japan always felt it could turn things around. Takaaki Sugino, Shinnosuke Oka and Tokyo Olympics all-around champion Daiki Hashimoto helped the comeback with excellent displays on the horizontal bar, while Sue faltered.

It was Japan's eighth team gold and first since Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

After qualifying in fifth place, the U.S. men ended a 16-year drought to the delight of the dozens of fans waving American flags who chanted "USA! USA!" throughout the evening.

The Americans posted a total of 257.793 points to edge Britain for the bronze. Frederick Richard and Brody Malone were at the top of their game, and every member of the U.S. team contributed. Stephen Nedorosick, the pommel horse specialist, joined his teammates on the final rotation.

Russia, which won gold at the Tokyo Games, did not compete because of its role in the war against Ukraine.

Hashimoto, who had appeared to be dealing with right shoulder discomfort during qualifying, fell midway through his pommel horse routine. He finished better but put on a somber face after his dismount. He briefly put his head in his hands, knowing that his mediocre score would dent his team's hopes of a gold medal.

Hashimoto recovered quickly and delivered an excellent vault. After getting a massage, he then capped his evening with a great routine on the horizontal bar after failing to qualify for the eight-man apparatus final.

After Hashimoto's turn, Zhang had a chance to put China back in charge but his score was not enough.



Athletes of team Japan celebrate after the artistic gymnastics men's team final at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, France. (Xinhua)

Arunovic and Mikec lead Serbia to glory in 10m air pistol mixed team

CHATEAUROUX, France, July 30, (Xinhua): Zorana Arunovic and Damir Mikec came from behind to edge Sevval Ilayda Tarhan and Yusuf Dikec of Türkiye 16-14 in the 10m air pistol mixed team

final to secure Serbia's first gold medal of the Paris Olympics on Tuesday.

The two teams were tied at 14-14, and it all came to the final shot, where Mikec shot for an impressive 10.7 to help Serbia clinch victory.

It is the first Olympic gold for Mikec in five Olympic Games. He won silver in the men's 10m air pistol in Tokyo three years ago.

Despite the narrow defeat, 51-year-old Dikec, also a five-time Olympian, has a reason to celebrate as the silver is his first ever Olympic medal.

SHOOTING

Earlier on Tuesday, Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh of India fended off comeback efforts from Lee Won-ho and Oh Ye-jin of South Korea to win the bronze medal 16-10.

India enjoyed a big 14-6 lead but Lee delivered two 10.8 shots to keep South Korea's hopes alive. However, a 9.5 from Lee and a 9.0 from Oh were far from enough to stop the Indians, as Singh shot for 10.2 and Bhaker for 9.4 to claim the bronze.

This is the second medal for Bhaker at Paris 2024, after the 22-year-old became the first Indian female shooter to win an Olympic medal with a bronze in the women's 10m air pistol.

Jung 'makes' history with 3rd straight win



Gold medal winner Michael Jung from Germany celebrates after winning the equestrian individual competition at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Monday, July 29, 2024, in Versailles, France. (AP)

VERSAILLES, France, July 30, (AP): Michael Jung became the first rider to win the Olympic individual eventing title three times, clinching the fourth Olympic gold medal of his illustrious career.

The 41-year-old German rider won individual eventing at the 2012 and 2016 Games and his other gold was in team eventing in 2012. It was Jung's fifth Olympic medal overall because he also took silver in team eventing at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

EQUESTRIAN

After completing jumping section - the third and final part of eventing - Jung jubilantly punched the air and then kissed his horse Chipmunk on the neck. He then took off his helmet and waved it to the crowd at the sun-baked Palace of Versailles. Other German team members watching from the side of the course jumped up and down with delight, while Jung continued patting Chipmunk.

Jung finished ahead of Australian Christopher Burton on Shadow Man with Britain's Laura Collett taking bronze on London 52, adding to the gold she won earlier Monday for Britain in team eventing.

After being awarded their medals, the riders galloped for several laps to loud applause and cheers from the sun-drenched crowd.

whose performance was especially good since he only started riding Shadow Man in March.

At the post-competition news conference, the riders were asked how they would celebrate. Jung said he would celebrate with his family, while Collett was planning a double whammy to go with her double-medal day.

Cheung defends foil title

France clinch much-anticipated fencing gold

PARIS, July 30, (Xinhua): Hosts France finally clinched a much-anticipated fencing gold at the Paris Olympics as Manon Apithy-Brunet beat compatriot Sara Balzer in the women's sabre individual final. Cheung Ka Long of Hong Kong, China defended his men's foil individual title.

A powerhouse in fencing, France narrowly missed the highest podium on the first two competition days with two silvers in the men's and women's epee individual events.

The French fencers secured the gold medal in advance as world No. 2 Balzer eased past title favorite Olga Kharlan of Ukraine in the semifinal, while world No. 5 Apithy-Brunet beat South Korea's Choi Se-bin.

Balzer scored first, but Apithy-Brunet soon built a three-point advantage and kept it up till the end, winning 15-12. The 28-year-old had previously claimed a team silver and an individual bronze from Tokyo

2020. Kharlan edged Choi 15-14 in the bronze medal match, taking the first medal for Ukraine at Paris 2024.

"I hope some little girl sees me

and, in the future, she will know and want to be an Olympic champion, a five-time Olympic medalist," Kharlan said.

China's Yang Hengyu failed to reach the round of 16 after losing

to Anna Bashta of Azerbaijan 15-9.

In the men's foil individual final, 27-year-old Cheung, who clinched Hong Kong's first-ever Olympic fencing gold in Tokyo, started strongly and held off a late scare, scoring three points in a row en route to a thrilling 15-14 victory over Italy's Filippo Macchi.

FENCING

Cheung becomes the first athlete from Hong Kong to win two Olympic gold medals and the first athlete in this event to win back-to-back golds since 1956. This is Hong Kong's second gold medal in Paris, following Vivian Kong's women's epee individual gold on Saturday.

Nick Itkin of the United States defeated Japan's Kazuki Iimura to pocket the bronze.

China's Mo Ziwei, Chen Haiwei and Xu Jie also took part in the men's foil individual event, but none made the last eight.



South Korea's Choi Sebin, (left), competes with Ukraine's Olga Kharlan in the women's individual Sabre bronze final match during the 2024 Summer Olympics at the Grand Palais in Paris, France. (AP)



France's Manon Apithy Brunet celebrates after defeating France's Sara Balzer in the women's individual Sabre final match at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)



The Acting Director of the Public Authority for Sports, Bashar Abdullah watches Kuwait-Bahrain match with Bagas.

Sports

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Al-Mudhaf and Al-Zubaid bid farewell to Games

Sheikh Fahad highlights strengthening Kuwaiti-Saudi sports relations

PARIS, July 30: The Chairman of the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee, Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser, affirmed that Kuwaiti-Saudi sports relations are strong and growing stronger, thanks to the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, and the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz.

This statement was made to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) following Sheikh Fahad's attendance at a reception held by the Saudi Olympic Committee for its Chairman, Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal, in Paris.

Sheikh Fahad noted the recent development of Saudi sports across various levels and congratulated the Saudi leadership and people on completing the Kingdom's candidacy file to host the 2034 World Cup, which was submitted to FIFA. He highlighted Saudi Arabia's dedication to sports and youth.

He also expressed his wishes for the Saudi delegation participating in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games to achieve success, along with all Gulf



Sheikh Fahad welcomes Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki.

and Arab teams.

During his visit to Paris, Sheikh Fahad also visited the UAE Olympic House and met with Sheikh Rashid Al Nuaimi, Vice President of the UAE Olympic Committee and Head of the UAE delegation. He emphasized the importance of bilateral meetings to strengthen Kuwaiti-Emirati sports relations and commended the UAE's focus on youth and sports development.

The meeting included Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser, Vice President of the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal, and Assistant Secretary-General of the Olympic Committee Ali Al Marri.

Kuwait's shooter Khaled Al-Mudhaf, did not qualify for the final round in the individual trap competition at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. Al-Mudhaf finished 16th out of 30 participants, falling short of the top six spots needed to advance. He

OLYMPICS

scored 120 out of 125 targets.

Al-Mudhaf expressed his disappointment, stating that he gave his best effort but faced strong competition and high scores in the final rounds. He thanked the Kuwaiti audience for their support and vowed to achieve better results in future tournaments.

Kuwaiti swimmer Mohammed Al-Zubaid, aged 16, did not advance past the 100m freestyle heats, finishing sixth in his group and 63rd overall with a time of 52.35 seconds.



Ambassador Al-Jedaie hosts a banquet in honor of the Kuwaiti delegation to the Olympics.

Kuwait's Ambassador to France, Mohammed Al-Jedaie, hosted a dinner in honor of the head of the Kuwaiti delegation to the Paris 2024

Olympics, Sheikh Fahad, along with delegation members, including Vice President of the Olympic Committee Sheikh Mubarak, Assistant Sec-

retary-General Ali Al-Marri, Board member Fatima Hayat, and the national team's technical and administrative staff and athletes.

McIntosh, Popovici usher in 'new era' with golden night



Kristof Milak, of Hungary, competes during a heat in the men's 200-meter butterfly at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Nanterre, France. (AP)

Smith wins women's 100m breaststroke final.

PARIS, July 30, (Xinhua): Teenage swimmers Summer McIntosh and David Popovici lived up to their billing as future stars by winning gold medals in their respective events at the Paris Olympics.

McIntosh blitzed her rivals to win the women's 400m individual medley final in the opening medal race of the evening session at La Defense Arena.

The Canadian led from start to finish to clinch gold in four minutes 27.71 seconds. Kelly Grimes of the United States took silver in 4:33.40 and her compatriot Emma Weyant claimed bronze in 4:34.93.

SWIMMING

"I'm just trying to make team Canada proud and set the tone," McIntosh said. "I couldn't really see anything until the breaststroke, then I knew I was in a comfortable lead going into that last 100m. It was an amazing feeling." The 17-year-old, who holds the world record in the event, said she was not overawed by performing on the Olympic stage.

"It's always just about having fun, as well as pushing my body to its limits," she said of her maiden Olympic title.

"I try to take every event individually, one by one. I try not to get too high or too low," Popovici also secured his first Olympic gold medal by winning the men's 200m freestyle final. The 19-year-old, already a dual world champion, touched the wall in one minute 44.72 seconds, just two hundredths of a second ahead of Britain's Matthew Richards.

Luke Hobson of the United States took bronze in 1:44.79.

Germany's Lukas Martens, who won gold in the men's 400m freestyle on Saturday, led early before fading in the

final 50m to finish sixth.

"I feel amazing," Popovic said. "It's so great to be here. There are many Romanians in the crowd. It's beautiful, it's a dream come true. I don't know how to describe it. It's so simple, yet so beautiful." Popovici has been touted as a future star since winning gold in the 100m freestyle and 200m freestyle at the world championships in Budapest two years ago.

On a night in which five gold medals were decided, South Africa's Tatjana Smith made a late surge to win the women's 100m breaststroke final.



Nicolas Gestin, of France, reacts at the finish line of the men's canoe single finals during the canoe slalom at the 2024 Summer Olympics, in Vaires-sur-Marne, France. Gestin won gold. (AP)

Smith, the silver medalist in the event at the Tokyo 2020 Games, overtook China's Tang Qianting in the final 10 meters to touch the wall in one minute 52.8 seconds. Tang claimed the silver medal in 1:05.54 and Ireland's Mona McSharry took bronze in 1:05.59.

"I am going to keep my phone off," 27-year-old Smith said. "I don't know, I think everyone is so proud. Obviously I think they would have been proud even if I did not win a medal. That's what I am really grateful for, really just the people in my life, they have been so supportive." Italian Thomas Ceccon secured Italy's second swimming gold medal at these Games by winning the men's 100m backstroke final.

Ceccon finished in 52.0 seconds, more than three tenths of a second faster than second-placed Xu Jiayu of China. Veteran Ryan Murphy of the United States took bronze in 52.39.

"I was emotional," Ceccon said. "This is very weird for me. I was even getting emotional before the race, because these are really strong emotions. Being in an Olympic final is not something everyone can say. It's a privilege." In day's final race, Mollie O'Callaghan earned Australia's third gold in the pool at these Games by powering to victory in the women's 200m freestyle final.

O'Callaghan finished in an Olympic record time of one minute 53.27 seconds, more than half a second faster than her compatriot and defending champion Ariarne Titmus, who took silver.

Blues dominate Bahrain in opener

Abdullah pledges full support for Kuwait's 'youth' basketball team

KUWAIT CITY, July 30: The acting director of the Public Authority for Sports, Bashar Abdullah, acknowledged the amateur status of the national youth basketball team and emphasized that their journey is just beginning. He assured the players of unwavering support from the Public Authority for Sports, promising that they will not fall short in providing assistance, given the players' impressive performance and dedication to the team.

Abdullah made these remarks during his speech at the opening of the Asian Youth Basketball Quali-

BASKETBALL

fiers "Gulf Zone," hosted by Kuwait until August 2nd at the Federation Hall in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex.

He stated, "I am committed to attending all Gulf and continental tournaments hosted by Kuwait, in my capacity as a leader and former athlete. We appreciate the Federation's Board of Directors for the excellent organization and the fantastic sports atmosphere witnessed on the first day of the tournament. We also thank the loyal Kuwaiti fans who attended and supported the Blues, contributing to the success of this Gulf sports gathering." Abdullah expressed his hopes for the Blues to continue their winning streak and qualify for the Asian Youth Cup Finals.

Bashar Abdullah highlighted the Authority's dedication to supporting all federations, clarifying that while they do not set strategies or plans for game development, nor



Players vie for the ball during Kuwait and Bahrain match.

form technical bodies, their role is to support the federations. He urged all boards of directors to organize their work with a comprehensive vision and well-studied work plans, facilitating the Authority's mission to provide the required support according to the organizing systems and regulations.

In opening match of the qualifiers, Kuwait triumphed 85-66 over Bahrain. In another first-round match, Saudi Arabia defeated Oman 102-55, earning both the Blue and Green teams their first points, while Bahrain and Oman recorded losses.

Today, two matches will be held in the third round. Bahrain will face Oman at 5:00 PM, followed by a match between Qatar and Saudi Arabia at 7:30 PM. The Kuwaiti national team will rest today, as per the tournament schedule.

Egypt edge Spain to reach quarters

SAINT-ETIENNE, France, July 30, (AP): Ibrahim Adel scored a pair of goals and Egypt advanced to the men's soccer quarterfinals of the Paris Olympics atop its group by beating Spain 2-1 on Tuesday.

Spain had already reached the knockout round and was vying for a first-place finish in Group C but was instead leapfrogged by determined Egypt in Bordeaux.

SOCCER

In the other match of the group, the Dominican Republic played to a 1-1 tie with Uzbekistan, which had already been eliminated. The draw in Paris was not enough to get the Dominican Republic into the next round.

The quarterfinal matchups won't be determined until Wednesday's games are complete. The top two teams in each of the four groups advance.

Adel's first goal came off a cross from Zizo late in the first half. His second came in the 62nd minute, when he worked around Spanish goalkeeper Alejandro Iturbe, who



Egypt's Ahmed Eid, (left), is challenged by Spain's Miguel Gutierrez during a men's Group C soccer match between Spain and Egypt at Bordeaux Stadium, during the 2024 Summer Olympics in Bordeaux, France. (AP)

had come forward to stop him. Samu Omorodion scored for Spain in the final moments of regulation but the comeback fell short.

In the group's other match, Rafael Nunez converted on a penalty early in the second half to put the Dominican Republic in front, but Alisher Odilov tied it in the 58th.