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Opinion

Flimsy justifications in power imbroglio

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

GEOGRAPHICALLY, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are situated in a region of extreme temperatures. It is therefore crucial for these countries to work on developing their electricity and water sectors to prevent crises.

Unfortunately, Kuwait is the only exception, as its infrastructure has remained stagnant for decades.



Al-Jarallah

In some GCC countries, projects related to electricity, water and services are initiated prior to building cities, as they have robust development visions.

On the other hand, in Kuwait, visions usually end up on shelves in order to avoid the headache of executing them.

We therefore have ministries with grand titles, like the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, that unfortunately fall short of their promises.

Despite their impressive titles, these ministries have been grappling with major crises since the 1960s and are facing numerous obstacles. The situation has reached such an extent that in 2024, we continue to see water tanks placed in front of the homes of many Kuwaitis.

As for renewable energy, it remains more of a "show-off" title. Projects are announced but rarely materialize. It is like waiting for a unicorn to appear.

If this is the case, we can only expect flimsy justifications for the failure to address the ongoing electricity and water crisis.

The failure of proposed solutions was revealed during this summer season. Despite this, the Council of Ministers and ministry officials persist with assurances that "All is well" - a phrase straight from the "Kuwait is different" playbook. This reflects the naive beliefs nested in a significant percentage of officials.

Indeed, only Kuwait and Lebanon face such severe electricity and water crises. While the reasons for Lebanon's failure are well-known, Kuwait lacks any justifications beyond sterile ideas, poor planning, and misplaced priorities, similar to the recent trend of ineffective and haphazard decisions.

Even the poorest countries worldwide have continuous electricity supply throughout the year, as they have robust plans for dealing with emergencies so that they can avoid relying on chance. Similarly, nations larger than Kuwait, in both area and population, do not face similar issues.

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Social media craze traps 'naive' users

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: As the security services intensify their efforts against fake websites engaged in electronic fraud, Lieutenant Colonel Ammar Al-Sarraf, the acting head of the Support Services Department in the Anti-Cybercrime Department, has warned saying social media advertisements are the primary source of fraud in Kuwait.

Al-Sarraf noted that "there are seasons of fraud and deception," citing periods when demand for domestic workers surges, leading to an increase in scams and fraudulent activities under the name of Al-Durra Company.

During a television interview recently, Al-Sarraf revealed that fraudsters obtain phone numbers through fraudulent websites by exploiting the authentication services.

Impersonating Al-Durra Company, these criminals send links asking victims to fill out forms and register their civil ID numbers. Once the authentication code is obtained from the telecommunications company, the fraudster uses it to purchase a phone number in the victim's name and subsequently gains access to their bank accounts.

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Day by Day

INFRASTRUCTURE in countries around the world is often handed over to the private sector under frameworks like Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) agreements.

So, what is stopping us from outsourcing water, electricity, education, healthcare, and other costly public services to large corporations, with the government serving as the regulator to ensure fairness for citizens?

We are in a new era that requires swift decision-making. The Kuwaiti people will undoubtedly welcome these changes, just as they celebrated the dissolution of the National Assembly that hindered development.

They will rejoice in the awaited administrative revolution that will finally put an end to the chaos we've endured for many years.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Kuwait names 17th female minister, sets record in political history

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28, (KUNA): An Amiri decree was issued appointing Nora Al-Fassam as Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs, making her the 17th female Kuwaiti minister.

This marks a significant milestone in Kuwait's history, reflecting the leadership's recognition of the pivotal role Kuwaiti women play in driving the nation's development.

Over the past decade, Kuwaiti women have risen to prominent leadership positions, serving as ministers, university presidents, ambassadors, and even elected members of the National Assembly, making their influence extend beyond the public sector, with many holding significant roles in the private sector at both local and international levels.



Al-Fassam

Dr. Massouma Al-Mubarak made history as the first Kuwaiti female minister when she was appointed as Minister of Planning and Minister of Administrative Development on June 14, 2005.

She continued to serve in various capacities, including Minister of Communications in 2006 and Minister of Health in 2007.

Kuwait's first government to include two female ministers was formed on March 25, 2007, with Nouria al-Sabeh as Minister of Education and Higher Education, alongside Dr. Al-Mubarak as Minister of Health.

Since then, Kuwaiti women have continued to play active and impactful roles, achieving significant accomplishments across various ministries, and their contributions have left a lasting impact on the country's legislative, political, and social frameworks.

On May 28, 2008, Dr. Moudhi Al-Humoud was appointed as Minister of State for Housing Affairs, with Nouria al-Sabeh continuing as Minister of Education and Higher Education.

Dr. Amani Boursli was appointed as Minister of Commerce

and Industry on May 8, 2011, and on December 13 of the same year, she was appointed as Minister of State for Planning.

Dr. Rola Dashti was appointed as Minister of State for Planning and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs on July 19, 2012, and later took on additional roles, including Minister of Social Affairs in 2013.

Hind Al-Sabeh served as Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs from December 2016, with Dr. Jenan Bushehri following as Minister of State for Housing Affairs in December 2017.

On December 17, 2019, three female ministers were appointed for the first time, Mariam Al-Aqeel as Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs, Dr. Rana Al-Fares as Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, and Dr. Ghadeer Asiri as Minister of Social Affairs.

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Double efforts, work as team, lift output, PM tells ministers

Welcome to new members: HH Sheikh Ahmad



KUNA photo

The meeting in progress.

Process for job-seekers in army streamlined

The Joint Central Committee, led by the Assistant Chief of Staff for Administration and Human Resources Major General Faras Adel, held a meeting on Wednesday to establish unified procedures for processing applications from individuals interested in joining military and security services.

In a press statement, Major General Faras Adel explained that the

meeting, which was held at Ali Al-Sabah Military College, was attended by representatives from the Kuwait Army, Ministry of Interior, National Guard, and Kuwait Fire Force. The goal was to create a streamlined process by setting up a central registration and acceptance center for military colleges and institutes, and to organize and standardize the criteria and conditions across the four military bodies. (KUNA)

Kuwait trade surplus dips 4.7 bln dinars in first four months of '24

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: Kuwait's trade surplus experienced a 3.28 percent decline year-on-year during the first four months of 2024, primarily due to a drop in exports, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The surplus for this period totaled KWD 4.71 billion (\$15.45 billion), down from 4.87 billion dinars (\$15.98 billion) in the same timeframe in 2023.

The exports during these months decreased by 3.88 percent to 8.42 billion dinars from 8.76 billion in early 2023, according to the Central Statistical Administration; meanwhile, imports amounted to 3.71 billion dinars, a 4.38 percent decrease from 3.88 billion dinars in the previous year.

Trade exchange for the period reached 12.13 billion di-

nars, a decline of 4.03 percent from 12.64 billion dinars in the first four months of 2023.

Notably, in April 2024, Kuwait's trade surplus increased by 21.77 percent to 1.51 billion dinars compared to 1.24 billion dinars in April 2023, supported by a 10.23 percent rise in exports to 2.37 billion dinars and a 6.06 percent drop in imports to 860.87 million dinars.

Additionally, trade between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for the first half of 2024 totaled approximately 4.49 billion dinars (\$1.2 billion), reflecting a 21.5 percent decrease compared to the previous year.

Trade exchange between Saudi Arabia and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries surged by 13.4 percent

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CSC announces Sept 15 holiday

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28, (KUNA): The Civil Service Commission (CSC) announced on Wednesday that Sunday, September 15, will be considered an official holiday for all ministries, government agencies, and public institutions in observance of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for the year 1446 AH.

In a post on its official X account, CSC stated that official work will resume on Monday, September 16, adding that agencies and bodies with special work requirements should determine their holiday schedules after taking into account the public interest.

Bushehri reinstates 101 sacked workers

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, Mahmoud Bushehri, has issued two decisions reversing the retirement of 101 employees, effectively canceling the decisions made earlier.

The move follows an earlier administrative decision by the former Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry, Maha Al-Asousi, on April 24.

Al-Asousi had postponed the retirement of certain employees, originally scheduled for August 31, until January 2, allowing them to benefit from the annual bonus awarded to those with an excellent performance rating in their annual evaluation.

The decision primarily affects employees with over 30 years of service who were initially slated for retirement but will now remain in their roles for an extended period.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, chairing the regular weekly Cabinet meeting at Bayan Palace on Tuesday, welcomed the four new members of the Cabinet who were sworn in by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Monday.

They are the Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Abdullah Al-Ajeel Al-Askar; the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullatif Hamed Hamad Al-Meshari; the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Acting Minister of Education Dr. Nader Abdullah Mohammad Al-Jallal; and the Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Noura Suleiman Al-Fassam.

The new ministers took up their portfolios under the Amiri Decree No. 140 (2024) issued on Sunday, August 25.

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Power use climbs in temp increase

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The power consumption index continued to rise on Wednesday reaching 17,441 megawatts, and fluctuated between the orange and red zones throughout the afternoon, due to the high temperature.

Sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy reiterated the call for the public to continue rationalizing electricity consumption, especially in unused areas in homes. They urged everyone to refrain from using electrical appliances that consume high energy during peak hours -- from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. They stressed the need for the judicious use of air conditioners by setting them at 23 degrees; instead of 18 degrees, as such setting leads to high power consumption.

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Dire consequences warned

Israel launches military attack in West Bank, kills 10 militants

AL-FARAA REFUGEE CAMP, West Bank, Aug 28, (Agencies): Israel launched a large-scale military operation in the occupied West Bank overnight and into Wednesday, with its forces killing 10 Palestinian militants and sealing off the volatile city of Jenin.

Israel has carried out near-daily raids in the West Bank since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack out of Gaza triggered the ongoing war there. Israel says it is rooting out militants to prevent attacks on its



Abbas

citizens, while Palestinians in the West Bank fear it intends to broaden the war and forcibly displace more of them.

Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said "large forces" had entered Jenin, long a militant stronghold, as well as Tulikarem and the Al-Faraa refugee camp dating back to the 1948 Mideast war, all in the northern West Bank.

He said Israeli forces killed nine militants, including three in an airstrike in Tulikarem and four in an airstrike in Al-Faraa. He said another five suspected militants were arrested, and that the raids were the first stage of an even larger operation.

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Decrease seen in rate of fake calls this year

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) revealed a drop in the rate of fake calls this year.

In a post on its X account, the authority stated that it has intensified efforts, with the cooperation of telecommunications companies in the country, to combat the phenomenon of fake calls in the state. These efforts have succeeded in significantly and noticeably reducing the number of fake calls.

CITRA affirmed that it will continue to work on developing more effective strategies and solutions to address these challenges and ensure a safe communications environment for all.

Last month, CITRA had launched the "Kashif" service for legal entities, which displays the name and number of the caller to the recipient of the call. This service is aimed to reduce calls from unknown sources.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: The State of Kuwait strongly denounced the terrorist attacks that took place in the Baluchistan province in southwestern Pakistan, which claimed the lives of dozens of innocent people.

In a statement Wednesday, the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry expressed the position of Kuwait rejecting violence and terrorism in all its forms, affirming its support for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in all measures it takes to preserve its security and stability.

The ministry also expressed Kuwait's sympathy and condolences to the government of Pakistan and the families of the victims, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:00 Asr 15:23
Sunrise .. 05:23 Maghrib .. 18:15
Zohr 11:49 Isha 19:35

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind, with speeds of 20-50 km/h causing rising dust.

By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate freshening at

times over coastal areas north-westerly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	48	36
Kuwait Airport	48	37

Abdaly	48	34
Bubyan	48	31
Jahra	49	37
Failaka Island	47	33
Salmiyah	44	36
Ahmadi	45	35
Jal Aliyah	47	31
Nuwaisib	47	35

Plethora of archived documents, photos, books and magazines on display

NCCAL organizes exhibition celebrating 125 years of Kuwaiti-British trade ties

By Mubarak Al-Enezi

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28, (KUNA): The Kuwait National Council for Culture Arts and Literature (NCCAL) organized an exhibition, for Kuwaiti researcher Essa Dashti, commemorating 125 years of Kuwaiti-British trade relations with a plethora of archived documents, photos, books and magazines.

Attending the week-long exhibition at the National Library, UK Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis spoke to KUNA and Kuwait TV saying that it narrates decades of sturdy relations between Kuwait and

the United Kingdom.

The two nations worked closely on a variety of fronts including defense, education, culture, stated the ambassador adding that trade and investment relations hold a special importance, and the exhibition's featured items reflect the depth of these long-lasting relations.

As for exhibition sponsor, Sheikha Halah Al-Sabah, she commented saying that trade relations help bring people together as it paves the way for the exchange of culture and traditions.

The exhibition, offering a wide selection of photos of exchanged visits

between leaders, is an opportunity for the younger generations to get to know the rich shared history between two, she stated.

Director General of the Kuwait National Library Seham Al-Azmi told KUNA that this is the eighth exhibition of its kind, as previous ones covered diplomatic, political, historical and cultural relations.

Researcher Essa Dashti said that there are some 250 documents on display featuring letters between British commercial consulate and Kuwaiti traders back in 1961, as well as an array of photos and books he collected from various sources.



Sheikha Hala, UK Ambassador Lewis, Dashti during the opening of the exhibition.

KUNA photo

Final working day set as March 31, 2025

CSC to end contracts for 60+ expat consultants

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Council of Ministers, through the Civil Service Commission, has decided not to renew the contracts of expatriate consultants in state institutions who are 60 years and above, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting a government source.

According to the source, the CSC has determined that the final working day for these expatriate consultants in government agencies will be March 31,

2025.

The source emphasized that no exceptions will be made regarding pensions or bonuses, which are currently suspended.

However, the meetings are planned to discuss new mechanisms and amendments related to exceptional pensions, with approval pending coordination with the relevant authorities.



Al-Anba photo

Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem receiving Turkish Ambassador Sonmez.

Capital governor receives Turkish envoy

Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali recently received in his office the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez, reports Al-Anba daily.

The governor extended a warm welcome to the ambassador and engaged in talks about the bilateral relations between Kuwait and Turkey, and ways to strengthen cooperation in various fields.

Sheikh Abdullah highlighted the deep and strong Kuwaiti-Turkish ties at both official and popular levels. He

expressed hope for increased collaboration in the future under the political leadership of both nations.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Tuba Sonmez praised the Turkish-Kuwaiti relations, describing it as a model of friendly cooperation between nations.

She expressed her pride and appreciation for Kuwait, its Amir, government, and people, and thanked them for the warm welcome extended to the Turkish diplomatic mission. She also thanked the Capital Governor for his good reception.

Backlash against new labor market rule linking 'education' to job roles

Economists warn of private sector disruption

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: A recent decision by the Public Authority for Manpower to link occupational descriptions to the educational levels of workers in the private sector has sparked significant backlash from economists and industry officials, reports Al-Jarida daily.

They argue that this decision is overly rigid and fails to reflect the practical realities of the labor market, which values actual competence over formal educational credentials.

Economists and business leaders have expressed strong disapproval of what they perceive as the authority's arbitrary and impractical approach.

They argue that many roles within the private sector do not necessitate a university degree, highlighting that practical experience and skill often outweigh formal educational qualifications in these positions.

According to their perspective, the new rule threatens to disrupt the private sector by stripping it of experienced personnel and introducing unnecessary confusion into economic projects.

Criticized

Tariq Al-Mutawa, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sudair Trading and Contracting Company, criticized the decision as "illogical" and detrimental to the sector's development. He emphasized that this policy undermines the value of experience and expertise in favor of paper qualifications that may not be relevant to the job at hand.

Al-Mutawa argued that the focus should be on facilitating processes and eliminating barriers to growth, rather than imposing restrictive criteria that do not align with the sector's actual needs.

Real estate consultant Qais Al-Ghanem echoed these sentiments, calling for a more nuanced approach that considers various educational levels such as high school diplomas. He advocated for flexibility in occupational titles to better match the needs of the sector.

Al-Ghanem stressed that while regulation is important, it should not come at the expense of practical considerations and the need for experienced workers in roles that do not require advanced degrees.

Overall, the critics of the authority's decision believe that it will negatively impact the business environment and create unnecessary obstacles for companies.

They urge government agencies to adopt measures that support the private sector's development and address practical challenges, rather than enforcing

Kuwaiti-Egyptian labor panel discusses cooperation

Kuwait Assistant FM stresses importance of developing consular action with Egypt

CAIRO, Aug 28, (KUNA): Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs Ambassador Aziz Al-Daihani affirmed on Tuesday the importance of developing action with Egypt to provide full and ongoing care for the citizens of both countries.

Al-Daihani made the statement to KUNA after holding the 5th session of Kuwaiti-Egyptian joint consular committee chaired by Egypt's Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs Abroad Ismail Khairat.

This session comes in completion of the previous ones and preparation for the next meeting of the joint high committee to be co-chaired by the foreign ministers of both countries in September, Al-Daihani added.

Holding the session boosts the sisterly relations and cooperation between Kuwait and Egypt, and shows their desire to develop consular action and its mechanism, in implementation of the directives of the two countries' political leaderships, he noted.

The meeting discussed a number of consular issues, in addition to health and judicial cooperative ties, he pointed out.

It concluded a consensus on several issues of mutual interest to meet aspirations of both Egyptians and Kuwaitis, Al-Daihani elaborated.

The two sides agreed on communication between the ministries of health in the countries to activate the Memorandum of Understanding in this field, he said.

He underscored the significance of holding the committee due to its effective role in meeting aspirations of both Egyptians

and Kuwaitis, and the deep-rooted ties between the two sides.

Al-Daihani is leading a delegation from the Ministries of Interior, Health and Manpower.

Meanwhile, the second session of the Kuwaiti-Egyptian labor committee was held in Cairo, discussing issues pertaining to bilateral cooperation.

The session was chaired by Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Consulate Affairs Ambassador Aziz Al-Daihani and Egyptian Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Badri.

Speaking to KUNA, Ambassador Al-Daihani said that the meeting had touched on issues of mutual interest including the status of Egyptian labors in Kuwait.

He believes it will lead to a loss of valuable skilled workers who do not possess university degrees but have significant practical experience.

Negatively

Industrial expert Ahmed Al-Nouri and real estate consultant Qais Al-Ghanem argue that specific sectors, such as construction and real estate, rely heavily on practical skills rather than formal educational credentials. They suggest that the decision could negatively affect these sectors by disrupting the workforce.

Many respondents, including Qais Al-Ghanem, stress the need for flexibility in applying these regulations. They suggest that the private sector should have a say in regulatory changes to ensure they do not adversely affect business operations and employment practices.

While the decision has been largely criticized, some see it as a step toward better regulation of the labor market.

Proponents argue that linking job roles to educational levels can help ensure that positions are filled by individuals with appropriate qualifications, which could theoretically improve overall job performance and market standards.

The backlash against the Public Authority for Manpower's decision highlights a broader issue of balancing regulatory oversight with the practical realities of the labor market.

Many believe that while the intent may be to improve job standards, the execution needs to be more nuanced to accommodate the diverse needs of different sectors and acknowledge the value of experience in the workforce.



Al-Jarida photo

French Military Attache Francois Dekes bids farewell to Le Flecher.

'Long live French-Kuwaiti friendship'

I leave Kuwait with heart full of memories – French envoy

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: Just before boarding a Kuwait Airways flight to return to France after a more than three-year mission, former French Ambassador Claire Le Flecher expressed her deep appreciation for Kuwait on her X platform account, reports Al-Jarida daily.

She tweeted, "I leave Kuwait with a heart full of memories and gratitude," and shared photos from her time in the country, including one with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad.

Le Flecher highlighted the honor of be-

ing received by His Highness in a private courtesy visit and was moved by their discussion on the enduring friendship between France and Kuwait.

In a follow-up tweet, she posted a picture of the plane that would take her back to Paris, saying, "I was honored to serve as the French ambassador to this wonderful country."

"Thank you all for this unforgettable trip." She concluded with a heartfelt message: "Goodbye Kuwait, and long live the French-Kuwaiti friendship."

MoH opens clinic on Umm Al Maradim Island

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Ministry of Health has announced the opening of a new clinic on Umm Al Maradim Island to provide emergency and essential medical services.

This initiative is a collaborative effort with the Directorate General of Coast Guard affiliated to the Ministry of Interior.

The clinic will offer first aid and facilitate the rapid transfer of emergency cases through both air and sea ambulances.

The Ministry of Health emphasized its commitment to ensuring comprehensive medical care reaches all islands and remote

areas.

This initiative is part of ongoing tireless efforts to deliver basic healthcare services to various segments of society.

The clinic offers a range of medical services, including basic care and first aid, to the island visitors and employees working on-site.

It is affiliated with the Ahmadi Health Ambulance District, which contributes to enhancing its ability to handle emergency cases effectively. In the event of any emergency situation requiring urgent intervention, patients are quickly and efficiently transported by air ambulances or speedboats to the nearest general or specialized hospital for continued treatment.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Correcting historical details: Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad's invasion journey

"TWO weeks ago, as I reflected on the days of the invasion in August 1990, I wrote an article in which I mentioned the late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad's spontaneous dedication to Arab causes and his efforts to steer them in the right direction," columnist, former Kuwait permanent envoy to the United Nations (UN) and former Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) secretary general **Abdullah Bishara** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"I also described the profound impact the sudden invasion had on him and his journey towards the Saudi border. In that article, I mistakenly stated that the late Fahd Al-Hassawi accompanied Sheikh Sabah during this journey.

"In truth, those who were with the late Sheikh Sabah were Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad, Suleiman Al-Mutawa, and myself. I apologize for this error, which was due to a lapse in memory, leading to an unintended and unexpected mistake.

"The reality is that Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad recalled details that had slipped my mind, such as our stop at a location along the coastline. It was a journey during a time when our expectations were shaken, revealing the dangers of placing too much trust in others' intentions. From that point on, calculations shifted, and facts took precedence over the goodwill that once guided our judgments.



Bishara

Death of Sheikh Salem Al-Ali
"I extend my heartfelt condolences on the passing of Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, whose loss has left a profound void in the hearts of all who knew him. I was in Bahrain when he passed away and returned just in time to pay my respects on the final day of mourning.

"I was the last to offer condolences before the doors were closed, a moment filled with deep reflections on the many impressions formed during visits to his office in Qortuba and a profound appreciation for the position life had bestowed upon him.

"During my visits, I was always struck by his calm demeanor, his voice a quiet whisper, tinged with a subtle weariness as he spoke of the stories that circulated -- many of them mere fabrications serving those who spread them.

"He often remarked on the trivial disputes that the press highlighted, fueled by petty arguments among those who engaged in them. His thoughts on what was said in the National Assembly were much like those shared by many Kuwaitis: a concern over the ambitions of some MPs that extend beyond the framework of the constitution, and a steadfast belief in the importance of reinforcing national unity -- the very core of Kuwait's strength.

"His whispered words revealed the deep patriotism of a citizen who longed for an ideal and united Kuwait, fully aware of the dangers that threaten the country, located as it is in a region fraught with tension. There is no doubt that his overwhelming concern for Kuwait sprang from a mind not only attentive to politics but also to the nation's internal issues, especially the welfare of its citizens.

"His generosity was more than symbolic -- it was a true embodiment of his national pride. His donation of one hundred million dinars to support the needy and struggling citizens was a powerful expression of his unwavering dedication to his country and his desire to see it flourish in unity and strength.

"May his soul rest in peace, and may his legacy of selfless service and unwavering commitment to Kuwait continue to inspire us all.

"When I reflected on the magnitude of the donation, I was reminded of what such a number signifies in the context of contemporary Arab political history. In Nasserist Egypt, there was a pressing need for more Nile water, driving the ambition to build the High Dam in the south.

"The United States and Britain were initially the most interested in financing the project, which required around three hundred million dollars. However, political considerations overshadowed their support.

"Both countries were displeased with President Abdel Nasser's diplomacy, which aimed to unify the Arab position, potentially leading to confrontations with Arab nations aligned with the West.

"As tensions rose, the United States and Britain withdrew their financial support, prompting the nationalization of the Suez Canal, the subsequent Suez Crisis, and the escalation of the Arab Cold War that lasted until 1967, culminating in the defeat of the Nasserist regime in the face of Israel.

"This historical reflection highlights the profound impact that significant financial contributions can

have on the course of history.

"We ask God Almighty to grant Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah a place in His vast gardens and to bestow upon him eternal mercy."

Visit of Indian External Affairs Minister to Kuwait

"Last week, the Indian External Affairs Minister paid an official visit to Kuwait, during which he emphasized the deep historical ties between the two nations.

"He highlighted the steady growth and development of these relations, especially in the current era, where one million Indians reside in Kuwait, contributing billions of dollars to the Indian economy. He expressed satisfaction with the state of cooperation and looked forward to further expanding the scale and diversity of these relations.

"India has long been a vital partner in the growth of Kuwait's commercial fleet, providing essential goods that the people of Kuwait depended on for their daily needs.

"Historically, India served as the primary source of food supplies for the Gulf region, particularly for Kuwait, which expanded its trade connections with India to include a wide range of goods such as timber, clothing, sugar, flour, and cotton. As a result, India became the most important destination for Kuwaiti ships.

"This flourishing trade relationship inspired many Kuwaitis to engage in commerce by establishing export and import offices, with some even relocating to India to manage their businesses directly.

"Over time, the strong network of relations led to deeper cultural ties, including intermarriage between Kuwaitis and Indian women due to extended stays and increased commitments abroad. India thus became not only a source of livelihood and trade for Kuwaitis but also a second home for some.

"This enduring partnership, rooted in commerce and mutual benefit, continues to shape the economic and social landscape of both nations, reflecting the strength of their historical connection.

"Kuwaiti-Indian relations have proven resilient, enduring through global crises and even world wars. These ties facilitated the expansion of Kuwait's naval presence across Asia, reaching as far as East Africa, where Kuwaiti ships played a pivotal role in transporting African timber to the Gulf.

"The Indian institutions also contributed significantly, with schools educating Kuwaiti children residing in India, and Indian doctors making their way to the Gulf, fulfilling vital roles where their expertise was much needed.

"These historical exchanges are deeply etched in the region's history, reflected in Gulf culture and preserved in the collective memory of its people. Over time, as circumstances evolved, the Gulf region has become a prime destination for Indian citizens, who now number around nine million, serving as workers, merchants, and medical professionals.

"These shifts have underscored the necessity for sustained dialogue and cooperation with India for both security and economic reasons.

"In the mid-1980s, while serving as Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), I visited India at the invitation of the Indian government. As part of the program, I delivered a lecture at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, discussing the objectives, diplomacy, and future aspirations of the GCC.

"During the discussions, some raised the notion of India playing a security role in the region to safeguard shared interests. My response emphasized that the GCC is fully capable of maintaining stability and ensuring security within the region.

"At that symposium, I sensed concerns among some that the Gulf's stability might be threatened by crises and unrest, leading to the belief that India should assume a protective role to ensure the safety of its large expatriate community in the Gulf and to preserve its economic interests, which depend on the region's stability.

"India has undergone significant changes since then, particularly in its diplomatic approach. The country's outlook has shifted, moving away from the philosophies of Gandhi and Nehru, marked by an inclination towards a more assertive stance -- something that was previously unfamiliar in India's historical narrative.

"The principles of unity and non-violence that once defined India, transcending religious and social divides, seem increasingly overshadowed.

"In the Gulf our hope remains that India will reaffirm the foundational values established during the Gandhi-Nehru era. It is these principles that provide reassurance to all segments of Indian society and, by extension, contribute to stability in the region."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

'Appeals' obligates man to pay KD 50K to his ex-wife

50 cases filed against ex-wife dismissed

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Family Court dismissed nearly 50 lawsuits filed by a Kuwaiti citizen against his ex-wife, who had requested a divorce. The court granted her request and awarded her compensation after it became clear that it was not possible for them to reconcile.

The plaintiff's defense counsel Lawyer Hawra Al-Habib said, "It is unfortunate that some individuals have started using the courts as a tool for seeking revenge rather than seeking justice. They view litigation as a battleground rather than a means of resolving disputes. There are also some who go to great lengths to see their opponents in court, even when it is unnecessary, with the primary goal of settling scores, regardless of the time and money invested in the process."

She highlighted that her client is preparing to file lawsuits for huge civil compensation because her ex-husband misused the judicial system to harass her with many insults and overwhelm the courts with a large volume of cases.

Lawyer Al-Habib concluded by stating, "Courts are not meant for revenge. Everyone must respect judicial rulings. Misusing the law for personal vendettas will result in the law being used against those who abuse it, burdening both the public and the judiciary."

'Pay back KD 50,000 to ex-wife': The Court of Appeals has obligated the ex-husband of a citizen to pay her KD50,000 -- the amount he borrowed from her during their marital relationship, reports Al-Anba daily.

The plaintiff said her ex-husband borrowed the above-mentioned amount from her without giving her a written acknowledgment that he received the money. He later divorced her and denied borrowing the money when she asked him to pay the loan.

Lawyer for the plaintiff, Attorney Dalal Al-Mulla, presented witnesses in court to prove the debt; in addition to the proof that her client transferred the money to the account of her ex-husband.

Housemaid dies in drowning: Two Asian housemaids drowned recently at Khiran chalets area, while another is in critical condition, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Operations Unit in the Interior Ministry received a report about the incident, so the Coast Guard patrols and emergency medical technicians were immediately dispatched to the location. They rescued one of the Asian housemaids and recovered the bodies of the two others.

A security source revealed the three housemaids were with their employers who rented chalets in Khiran. He said the housemaids went to the man-made lake to swim, but after some time, their companions could no longer see them, prompting the employers to report the incident.

A case of drowning leading to injury and death was registered at Khiran Coastal Area Police Station.

PAFN shuts 6 stalls: Head of the Waterfront Center at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Mishari Al-Sulaili recently accompanied PAFN inspectors during a campaign held at the fish market, which resulted in the closure of six stalls that were found selling spoiled fish, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to sources, the fish were deemed spoiled from their appearance, smell, and texture. As a result, a report was issued, and the stalls were closed. Violations of this nature typically result in fines ranging from KD 50,000 to KD 100,000.

In a press statement issued after the inspection tour, Al-Sulaili affirmed that such inspection tours in markets will continue to prevent fraud and ensure food safety.

Traffic congestion discussed: The Ministry of Interior announced that Brigadier Jamal Al-Foudari, Director General of the General Traffic Department, chaired a meeting at the General Traffic Department headquarters to tackle the issue of traffic congestion, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The meeting was held in collaboration with representatives from the ministries of Public Works and Education, Kuwait Municipality, the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport, the Civil Service Commission, and the Fatwa and Legislation Department.

During the meeting, the participants discussed obstacles and identified potential legal, financial, and technical solutions with the goal of ensuring smoother roads nationwide.

A final report will be submitted to the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers within six months, detailing the required projects and measures as part of a comprehensive plan to resolve the traffic congestion issue.

Bedoun driver held for stunts

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: A Bedoun was arrested for continuously driving around the parking lot of a school in Jahra Governorate, while his friends took a video of his antics, reports Al-Rai daily.

A security source told the daily that as part of the on-going security efforts of the Public Security Department and Special Task Force at the Interior Ministry, a patrol car was tasked to closely monitor the security situation in the governorate at dawn. The securitymen were surprised when they noticed a vehicle that kept on going around the parking lot of a school in the governorate with the encouragement of his friends who took a video of his antics, the source revealed.

According to the source, this has prompted the securitymen to turn on the flasher and they headed towards the parking lot. However, the Bedoun speed off and the securitymen had to request for backup to pursue him. He was arrested in Taima after the securitymen closed the roads near him in order to trap him. He tried to escape, but the securitymen took control over him. It was later discovered that he was driving a vehicle without a plate number, the source added. The source confirmed that the Bedoun was referred to a nearby police station and his vehicle was impounded, while a comprehensive report on the incident was submitted to the Traffic Court.



KUNA photo
Col Ahmad Al-Humoud and Maj Thunayan Rouh Aldin.

Tunis hosts event

Kuwait participates in 1st Arab cyber-crime confab

TUNIS, Aug 28, (KUNA): Kuwait is taking part in the first Arab conference aimed at combating Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence crimes, launched Wednesday in Tunisian capital.

During his inaugural speech, Secretary General of Arab Interior Ministers Council Dr. Mohammad bin Ali Koman, called for boosting cooperation to facilitate immediate exchange of data.

He noted that Arab interest in the issue began in the early nineties explaining that the general secretariat placed QV-framework to address this type of crime, and measures including the 2014 Arab strategy, and a specialized unit for electronic security in 2020.

In 2022, the council approved an anti-IT crime strategy with a three-year execution plan to translate strategy into practicality.

Representing Kuwait in the conference Q43 Colonel Ahmad Al-Humoud and Major Thunayan Rouh Aldin.



Al-Anba photo
The car and the facade of shop destroyed by fire.

Fire destroys car, shop facade

Tuesday morning, a fire originating from an electrical cable in the Salmiya area spread to a vehicle and also damaged the facade of a store, reports Al-Anba daily.

Firefighting teams quickly responded, disconnecting the power to the cable before battling the blaze. The fire was brought under control without injuries being reported.

The ministry emphasized that the meeting aimed to unify efforts across relevant government agencies and advance the implementation of necessary actions to alleviate traffic challenges.

Depts being shifted to C. Guard HQ: The Ministry of Interior's General Administration of the Coast Guard has announced the relocation of the Maritime Transport and Auditing and Quality Departments from their current headquarters in the Shuwaikha area (Kuwait Ports Authority building) to the new Coast Guard building in Ardhiya, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This transfer will take effect at the beginning of next month.

Shepherd injured: An Asian shepherd sustained injuries when the roof of the shed in his sponsor's stable in Kadd desert collapsed on him due to the wave of dust and wind that the country witnessed the day before yesterday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Securitymen arrest three for consuming drugs

Seller of horse stalls disappears after receiving KD400

By Munif Nayef, Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: A citizen has reported a case of fraud involving an amount of KD 400 against an unknown person who promised to sell horse stalls for this amount.

According to security sources, the citizen told Jahra policemen that he had reached an agreement with an individual he did not know personally to buy horse stalls for KD 400. However, after receiving the payment, the seller disappeared and did not respond to calls.

A case has been filed and is now under investigation.

407 abandoned cars removed: The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality announced that the General Cleaning and Road Occupancy Department of Farwaniya Governorate Municipality has removed 407 abandoned and scrap cars, along with 13 motorcycles, during field tours conducted throughout August.

The removed vehicles have been



Al-Dehani being honored.

Al-Dehani honored for his dedicated service

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: Colonel Muhammad Saleh Al-Maqahta, commander of the Taima region, has honored Deputy Officer Abdulaziz Saud Al-Dehani for his years of dedicated service in the public security sector, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Dehani, known for his exemplary work and commitment, leaves behind a distinguished legacy in handling citizen and resident transactions.

transferred to the municipality's vehicles impoundment garage for further

action.

3 drug users arrested: Ahmadi securitymen arrested three individuals in Mahboula for consuming drugs with an undisclosed quantity of narcotics and drug paraphernalia in their possession, reports Al-Anba daily.

While patrolling the area at night recently, the securitymen got suspicious of the erratic movement of a car that attracted the attention of other motorists. They forced the driver to stop and they found out that there were three people in the car -- all of whom appeared to be under the influence of drugs. The three individuals were ordered to get out of the car for inspection, during which the officers found narcotics and drug paraphernalia in their possession.

In the initial investigation with the suspects, they said they attended a party in an apartment and were on their way to home.

They were referred to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) at the Interior Ministry for further interrogation and other legal measures.

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Fishermen sound alarm, diesel shortage worsens

Quota restoration urged as sector faces collapse

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Union of Kuwaiti Fishermen says the challenges facing the fishing sector are overwhelming and beyond the capacity of fishermen to manage, especially since the diesel crisis is worsening daily, with no radical solution in sight.

In a press statement, the union highlighted the various obstacles confronting the fishing sector. Despite these difficulties, they remain committed to over-

coming them and continuing to ensure food security through the provision of marine products. Unfortunately, these challenges have become increasingly severe, particularly the diesel crisis, which threatens the sector with collapse due to the migration of fishermen and the endless difficulties.

The union stressed the urgent need to address its legitimate demands, highlighting the several official correspondences sent to the Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers, the Support Committee of the Ministry of Finance, and other relevant authorities concerning the fishing sector.

They explained that the diesel issue requires an immediate solution to prevent further migration of fishing workers to neighboring countries and to avoid forcing fishing license holders to cease operations due to high costs. Such developments could lead to the extinction of the fishing profession, and adversely affect local products and prices in general.

The union affirmed that cooperation from the relevant authorities with the Kuwaiti Fishermen's Union has become an urgent necessity to prevent the local marine products from disappearing from the markets.

It acknowledged the government's genuine desire to support the local products, expressing hope that the concerned ministers will take necessary steps to rescue the fishing sector.

The union appealed to the Minister of Finance to support the fishermen, address their grievances, and resolve the issues, particularly the subsidized diesel crisis.

It also urged the minister to restore the diesel quota to its previous level prior to the decision to cut it by half, which had caused many fishing vessels to halt operations for about two weeks each month while waiting for the new quota at the beginning of each month.



Al-Seyassah photo
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Lamia Al-Melhem and Abdel Nabi discuss key issues.

Kuwait, Egypt strengthen educational cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Lamia Al-Melhem, recently met with the Acting Director of the Egyptian Cultural Office in Kuwait, Muhammad Abdel Nabi, to discuss key issues, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The discussions focused on preparations for the upcoming thirteenth session of the Kuwaiti-Egyptian Higher Education Committee and emphasized the importance of enhancing bilateral relations, particularly in the academic and educational sectors, between the two brotherly nations.



KUNA photo
Officials from Kuwait Relief Society and Al-Nouri Charity leading 'Faz'a for Sudan' campaign.

Fully-equipped ambulances arrive

Kuwait sends 8th aid plane to Sudan

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28, (KUNA): Kuwait's eighth relief aid plane departed to Sudan on Wednesday carrying on board 33 tons of food, medicine and tents, organized by the Kuwaiti Relief Society and Sheikh Abdullah Nouri Charity, to help those affected by war and floods.

In remarks to KUNA, the General Director of Kuwait Relief Society, Abdulaziz Al-Obaid said that this aid plane is part of the Kuwaiti air bridge to help Sudan in cooperation with member associations of Kuwait Relief Society's Board of Directors, including the Kuwaiti Charity, Revival of Islamic Heritage, Nama Charity, Al-Najat Charity, Abdullah Al-Nouri, Direct Aid, and others.

This flight includes 33 tons of urgent and critical needs for those affected, as

it consists of 30 tons of food supplies, 3 tons of medical supplies to meet the basic health needs of the displaced as well as 99 tents for sheltering the displaced, Al-Obaid added.

He emphasized the dismal situation in Sudan due to the ongoing internal conflicts, widespread displacement, and lack of security and stability which led to an increased demand for humanitarian needs such as food, medicine and tents due to the floods and torrents that struck northern Sudan.

The General Director of the Al-Nouri Charity Waleed Al-Saif told KUNA that the continued flights through Kuwaiti Air Bridge alongside the maritime ships for aiding Sudanese would help increase the chances of survival for the affected ones.

Al-Saif expressed his gratitude for

dispatching relief aid via Kuwaiti Air Bridge, as he praised the efforts of the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Social Affairs, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their role in this humanitarian work.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's seventh plane carrying ambulances donated by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) arrived to Sudan on Tuesday to help those affected by the war and floods.

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Sudan Dr. Fahad Al-Dhafaeri told KUNA, that this aid plane is part of the Kuwait air bridge to help Sudan upon directives from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He clarified that the plane carries fully-equipped ambulances need for rescue operations, since many areas are witnessing floods and heavy rains causing difficult transportation for paramedics.

Al-Dhafaeri added that Kuwait's charity societies operating in Sudan are implementing many humanitarian projects to support the Sudanese people, stressing Kuwait's continued support for the Sudanese people.

The ambassador also expressed his sincere condolences for the victims of the floods. This airlift is the second since the outbreak of war in Sudan back in April 2023, as the first airlift included 16 aircrafts and two ships.

KSR, APN sign pact to rehabilitate Gaza agriculture sector

AMMAN, Aug 28, (KUNA): The Kuwait Society for Relief (KSR) announced Tuesday signing a memorandum of understanding with Jordan's Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN), aiming to rehabilitate the agricultural sector in the Gaza Strip, with support from Kuwait's the Direct Aid Society.

In a statement to KUNA, KSR Director General Abdulaziz Al-Obaid said that the

project aims to support Palestinian farmers after being systematically targeted by the Israeli occupation forces, destroying their farms and consequently depriving their owners from benefiting from them.

The aim of this yearlong project is to supply agricultural and fodder seeds, various vegetable seedlings, fertilizers, pesticides, plastic greenhouse covers, agricultural ponds and extending irrigation networks in the Gaza Strip,

revealed Dr. Abdullah Al-Sumait Director General of the Direct Aid Society to KUNA.

APN is an independent, non-profit civil society organization based in Amman, Jordan, it aims to protect natural resources, rehabilitate and sustain the environmental, agricultural and food systems in Arab regions affected by wars and conflicts in coordination with Arab and international organizations to achieve this.

Bi-weekly progress report required

Ministry of Education prepares for academic year with new directive

By Abdulrahman Al Shimmari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Ministry of Education has outlined a comprehensive strategy for all its sectors to prepare for the upcoming academic year. This plan focuses on key areas such as significant maintenance work across schools and the timely completion of teaching staff appointments.

In an exclusive statement to Al-Seyassah daily, the Minister of Education revealed that is has mandated a bi-weekly progress report from each sector.

These reports are to detail any obstacles encountered during the preparation process, ensuring that challenges are promptly addressed.

The Ministry's Public Relations Department also has issued a directive consisting of 18 key tasks. Among the most critical is the organization of strategic media campaigns to highlight the Ministry's efforts, following a carefully designed work plan.

The campaigns will showcase each sector's contributions according to their specializations and will also include the coordination and execution of a media campaign for the new academic year.

This effort will be carried out in collaboration with entities like the Ministries of Information and Interior, as well as maintaining comprehensive communication with the Government Communication Center to follow up on recommendations provided to the Ministry.

Additionally, the Ministry will announce the academic calendar, including the start dates for various educational stages and school employees' working hours. Throughout the academic year, the Ministry will monitor and follow up on all school activities.

Article 4 of the resolution emphasizes the importance of future planning. It requires each sector to develop and submit a final report detailing their preparations.

This report must include information on implementation stages, completed tasks, the percentage of completion, challenges faced, solutions applied, and any proposed solutions. The aim is to ensure that these preparations are completed well before the start of the academic year.

Openings limited

CSC expedites Kuwaiti gov't job nominations

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Civil Service Commission (CSC), through its newly implemented employment plan, has facilitated the nomination of Kuwaiti candidates with various specializations for jobs in the government sector, thereby significantly reducing the waiting periods for employment, reports Al-Anba daily, quoting informed sources from CSC.

They explained that candidates in most specializations have been nominated but some specializations are still pending nomination due to a lack of job openings in the government sector currently for them. These candidates will need to wait until the relevant ministries, institutions, or government agencies require their expertise.

Some job seekers, whose qualifications match the needs of certain government agencies, choose to postpone their nominations, with the hope of securing positions in specific agencies that offer better incentives and privileges.

While CSC is exerting every effort to accommodate these preferences, it faces limitations due to the limited capacity in each ministry.

Meanwhile, other sources highlighted the need to conduct further studies for refining the employment policies.

They indicated that these studies would assist educational institutions to align their educational courses with the actual demands of the labor market, affirming that this coordination would particularly involve key entities such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health.

The sources also recommended the establishment of a specialized sector in CSC to conduct field studies on both public and private labor markets.

They said such a sector would collaborate closely with public and private educational authorities, and those responsible for foreign missions, to accurately assess the labor market needs and meet them.

Al Safa receives ISO 9001 certification

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: Chairman of Al Safa Humanitarian Association, Mohammed Al-Shaya, announced that the association has achieved a significant milestone by obtaining the international quality certification "ISO 9001" for its charitable work services, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The certification, accredited by the American Organization for Standardization and Quality (UAF) and supervised by Gravity Management Consulting Company, reflects the association's commitment to high standards in its operations.

In a press statement, Al-Shaya emphasized that this recognition marks an important step toward continuous improvement in



Al-Seyassah photo
Mohammed Al-Shaya with the Al-Safa Humanitarian Association team.

the quality of services and projects provided to those in need, both within Kuwait and abroad.

He explained that the ISO 9001:2015 system was established and activated in

alignment with American quality standards, which will enhance the association's ability to deliver its humanitarian projects with excellence and professionalism.



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KFH provides a grant of \$5m for the project

Turkish official lauds KRCS for funding Antalya fire control center

'A tribute to integrity'

Diplomatic corps mourn the loss of Lebanon's former PM Salim Al-Hoss

By Fares Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The Lebanese Embassy on Wednesday opened a condolence book at its diwaniya to receive condolences on the death of former Lebanese Prime Minister Dr. Salim Al-Hoss. The embassy's Chargé d'Affaires Ahmed Arafah warmly welcomed the mourners. Ambassadors to Kuwait and senior diplomats were also present to express their condolences. In a statement on the sidelines of signing the condolence book, Arafah said "Unfortunately, we are meeting today to accept condolences on the passing of former Prime Minister Salim Al-Hoss. He was a unifying national figure known for his integrity, honesty and patriotism. During the decades of his tenure as prime minister and other positions, he was known for his loyalty to Lebanon. At the national level, he did not have many enemies in politics, because he always based his positions on the truth and law. At the regional and international levels; he was a well-known, beloved and appreciated Lebanese figure. As Lebanese, we are proud of him." He recalled the position of Al-

Hoss during the invasion of Kuwait, as he was the first Arab and international leader to condemn this act. The fact that Lebanon is a small country in terms of area and it was suffering due to war at the time did not stop him from taking a courageous position, which might have exceeded the capacity of a country as the size of Lebanon, he added. "Today, as Lebanese, we are proud of the late Salim Al-Hoss. We are proud of the position he took at the time. Our brothers and people in Kuwait still remember this position. They appreciate it although several years have passed. "We thank Almighty Allah for statesmen like Al-Hoss. We thank Almighty Allah that our people in Kuwait are appreciative and loyal, as reflected in Lebanon and the Lebanese, especially the Lebanese community here. This is not strange for Kuwaitis, the people of loyalty, love and goodness," he stated. At the end of his speech, Arafah thanked the representatives of the heads of diplomatic missions for their presence, which he described as "evidence of the late Al-Hoss' stature in their countries, in addition to the position of Lebanon and the global interest in what is happening in the country."

ANKARA, Aug 28, (KUNA): Governor of Antalya, Turkiye, Hulusi Sahin, on Tuesday, praised the contribution of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) and the Kuwait Finance House (KFH) in establishing a fire and disaster control center project in his governorate. In a speech during the foundation stone laying ceremony, Governor Sahin thanked Kuwait, its representatives and KFH for donating USD five million for the project. He said that this project is very vital as it serves the Turkish people and the Mediterranean region, which is expected to be completed within two years. For his part, Director General of the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) Sadi Ergin said that this project includes modern units for disaster management and search as well as rescue training, which serves the



KUNA photo
KRCS participates in establishing a fire and disaster control center project in Antalya.

state and the region. He also hailed the fruitful cooperation between Kuwait and Turkiye and Kuwait's vital role, especially following the devastating earthquake in 2023. He pointed out that the grant allo-

ated for the project under the agreement signed between the Turkish Ministry of Interior and its affiliated agency AFAD as well as KRCS will enhance cooperation between the two countries. Ergin stressed the importance of the Kuwaiti contribution to the completion of this project, expressing his thanks to KRCS and KFH, which provided a grant of USD five million. In turn, the head of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society mission, Khaled Al-Mutairi, said that Kuwait's participation represented by KRCS and funded by KFH, is a continuation of Kuwait's support for Turkiye in confronting disasters, especially after the devastating earthquake that occurred last year and caused loss of life and property. Al-Mutairi explained that the project will be under the supervision and follow-up of KRCS, as it is one of the vital projects that serves Mediterranean region.

New Housing Minister vows to fast-track projects completion

Al-Mishari demands rapid updates, swift solutions

By Mohammed Al-Muslih
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: Following his appointment as the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and the Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Abdulatif Al-Mishari reviewed the ministry's plan and the ongoing housing projects during his first meeting with the leaders of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW).

He said periodic reports must be submitted regarding the progress of major housing projects in order to ensure all obstacles are identified and addressed promptly. According to sources, the minister stressed the need to expedite the implementation of housing projects and introduce new ones to provide housing care to citizens. Al-Mishari affirmed that PAHW's work plan will align with the directives of the political leadership and will involve coordinated efforts among relevant government agencies to accelerate the completion and implementation of existing projects and to address any obstacles. He highlighted the importance of a work plan that addresses the needs of citizens with pending housing requests, ensuring it is in accordance with the aspirations and directives of the political leadership, which will support the country's development goals.



KUNA photo
KRCS Vice Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi with participating banks and companies.

KRCS distributes school supplies to needy families

With the academic year fast approaching, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Wednesday the distribution of school bags filled with essential supplies to families in need. Thanks to the support of participating banks and companies, this program will distribute 2,200 school bags before the start of the academic year, KRCS Vice Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi told KUNA.

The school bags will include all the necessary tools that students might need to excel in their academic careers, such as calculators, pencil cases, notebooks, and other items, he added. Al-Hasawi emphasized that this annual initiative reflects KRCS's belief in and commitment to ensuring that everyone has access to their most basic right: education. (KUNA)



KUNA photo
Part of the reconstruction project in Gaza with the help of KRCS.

Dialysis center reconstruction in Gaza starts with help from KRCS

GAZA, Aug 28, (KUNA): Noura Al-Kaabi Dialysis Center in northern Gaza commenced Wednesday a reconstruction project with the support of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS). The center completely stopped operation after it was destroyed by Israeli occupation, stated Center Director Dr. Marwan Al-Sultan, adding that reoperation is imperative to save lives of thousands of kidney failure patients in Gaza Strip. Dr. Al-Sultan extended his thanks and appreciation for Kuwait, its leadership and people, for their role in easing

suffering and providing humanitarian aid. More than 180 patients north of the strip suffer from kidney failure and are in need of dialysis three times a week, not to mention more than 1,000 patients of kidney failure in the entirety of the strip, he explained. According to Palestinian health authorities patients of kidney failure in Gaza Strip are suffering from dire circumstances due to the destruction of five out of seven dialysis centers and the sharp decline in medication and medical supplies.

Flimsy justifications

Continued from Page 1

Electricity is not cut off in France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and even some Gulf countries because they have electricity production and distribution companies owned by their citizens for a long time. We have repeatedly highlighted that successive ministerial councils had opportunities to involve private citizens in this sector through shareholding companies. However, driven by the slogan "do not touch the citizens' pockets", which is a deceptive phrase that has hindered progress, these councils were reluctant to even consider the idea. Today, the current council has the authority to launch such a project without facing previous obstacles. When consumers have ownership stakes, they are motivated to maximize their profits. In contrast, if they rely on "government money", they will never be accused because of "the municipal bull is barren", and "don't concern yourself with money that is not in your pocket", which means the situation remains unchanged. As a result, this crisis exacerbates the suffering of citizens and increases their daily losses. We hope the Council of Ministers, from its highest officials to the lowest staff, will understand that every problem has a solution, but the key lies in learning from others. Why is there such strict enforcement in collecting dues from citizens, but when electricity is cut off due to administrative failures, the justifications are flimsy? Why do you not learn from others who have been successful in this aspect? Electricity and water services could be divided into multiple companies, with each one serving a different governorate, allowing for better oversight and management.

Kuwait names

Continued from Page 1

Dr. Rana Al-Fares has continued to hold various positions, including Minister of Public Works, Minister of State for Municipality Affairs, and later Minister of State for Communications

and Information Technology. In 2022, she was joined by Huda Al-Shajji, who was appointed as Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of State for Women and Childhood Affairs. Dr. Amani Bogammaz was appointed Minister of Public Works and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy on October 16, 2022, with Mai Al-Baghli as Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of State for Women and Childhood Affairs. In 2024, Dr. Nora Al-Mashaan was appointed Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipality Affairs on January 17, 2024. On May 12, 2024, Dr. Al-Mashaan was reappointed, alongside Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, who was appointed Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs. This latest appointment reinforces the growing influence of Kuwaiti women, highlighting their crucial role in shaping the nation's future and driving its development agenda.

Double efforts,

Continued from Page 1

His Highness the Prime Minister signaled at the instructions of His Highness the Amir following the oath-taking ceremony to put the interests of the homeland above all other considerations and do their utmost to realize the targets of development, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Abdulah Al-Mousherji said after the weekly Cabinet meeting. He asked the Cabinet members to double their efforts and work as one team with a view to speeding up the development process, realizing the aspirations of the people, maintaining the rule of law, and solving the problems of the citizens. His Highness the Prime Minister thanked the outgoing ministers of finance and economic affairs Dr. Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf; and education and higher education Dr. Ali Al-Adwani, for the efforts they have made during their tenure. The Cabinet members were apprised of the messages addressed to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah by leaders of some friendly countries

and ways to enhance the bilateral relations and cooperation in various fields. The Cabinet heard a presentation by Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan for Financial and Administrative Affairs Sheikh Abdulaziz Meshal Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on the preparations for the GCC Leaders' Summit, due in Kuwait on December 2024. He elaborated on the mandates of the higher committee on preparations for the summit and the affiliate committee, voicing hope that the summit will help push forward the GCC march towards realization of the aspirations of the member countries. Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Saud Al-Omar briefed the Cabinet meeting on the updating of the unified government application for electronic services 'Sahel app.' and the progress towards complete digitization of all government services. The Cabinet reviewed the recommendations of the ministerial committee on legal affairs regarding the blueprints of agreements and MoUs between Kuwait and several countries, and regional and international organizations. The Cabinet approved the draft documents and referred them to His Highness the Amir for endorsement. Regarding the advent of the Birthday of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Cabinet decided to declare Sunday, September 15, a public holiday. The Cabinet expressed condolences to Lebanese Parliament Speaker Najib Miqati for the demise of former prime minister Salim Al-Hoss, recalling the contributions of the late leader to the bilateral ties and his support to Kuwait's struggle against the brutal Iraqi invasion of 1990.

Kuwait trade

Continued from Page 1

during the first half of 2024, reaching 113.32 billion Saudi riyals (\$30.22 billion) compared to 99.91 billion riyals (\$26.64 billion) in the same period last year. Meanwhile, trade with the UAE grew by 22.75 percent, totaling 65.83 billion riyals (\$17.55 billion); Bahrain ranked second in GCC trade, Bahrain saw its trade volume increase by 21.8 percent to 25.74 billion riyals (\$6.86 billion); trade with Oman decreased by 17.5 percent, amounting to 14.9 billion riyals (\$3.97 billion) and trade with Qatar grew significantly by 72 percent, reaching 2.36 billion riyals (\$630.1 million). This robust increase in trade underscores the strengthening economic ties between Saudi Arabia and its GCC partners.

Social media

Continued from Page 1

Al-Sarraf highlighted that most of these fraud operations are conducted from outside Kuwait. However, if the perpetrators are located within the country, they can be apprehended within 24 hours. He also explained that repeated and provocative reports from some celebrities are sometimes not registered and

are instead referred to the Media Prosecution for a decision. The coordination between the Crime Department and the Prosecution is crucial, with the latter ultimately determining how these cases are handled. Al-Sarraf urged parents to monitor their children closely, particularly regarding the games they play and the electronic devices they use. He recounted an incident where a Kuwaiti mother sought help from the Cybercrime Department after her daughter spent approximately 20,000 dinars on the TikTok app to support various users. Despite the mother's efforts, she was unable to stop it.

Power use

Continued from Page 1

procedures and completing a large percentage of the required steps electronically in order to provide the necessary amount of electricity for these properties -- whether for individuals, companies or government buildings. Moreover, the ministry announced that three sub-feeders at the main Zahraa power transmission station went out of service on Wednesday, causing power outage in some parts of Plot One in Zahraa. It affirmed that the emergency teams rushed to the location to take the necessary measures and restore the electricity as soon as possible. The ministry also confirmed its plan to carry out certain works in the water network along Ghous Street for eight hours, starting from 8:00 pm, on Friday; indicating this will result in weak flow of fresh water in Hadiya, Riqqa, Fahad Al-Ahmad and Sabahiya. It expressed appreciation and gratitude to the customers for their cooperation during the work period, advising them to call Hotline No. 150 in case of water disruption.

which facilitated citizens' access to services either through the Sahel app, or the website. Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare announced the supply of electricity to the first batch of residential plots in the N5 and N12 suburbs of Mutlaa City. It explained that this development is part of PAHW's contract No. 1539 for the supply and installation of medium and low-voltage cables for the N1, N5, and N12 suburbs. The project covers a total of 1,018 residential plots, with 544 in the N12 suburb and 474 in the N5 suburb. This work was carried out in coordination with the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy. PAHW has finished the excavation, cable extension, and connection for these plots, while the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has completed the inspection and operation of the cables.

Israel launches

Continued from Page 1

Hamas announced that 10 of its fighters had been killed in the West Bank on Wednesday. Palestinian militant groups said they were exchanging fire with Israeli troops. Meanwhile, Secretary-General of the Arab League Ahmad Aboul-Gheit condemned on Wednesday the aggressive military operation launched by the Israeli occupation on the West Bank, which resulted in the death of more than ten martyrs. Aboul-Gheit said in a statement issued by the Arab League that the brutal attacks and killings carried out by Israeli occupation in the northern West Bank, as well as the destruction of infrastructure and the siege of hospitals, represent a dangerous trend aimed at subjugating the Palestinian people and overturning previously signed agreements. He affirmed that "Israeli occupation is waging a war of extermination against the Palestinians everywhere, and that the Israeli operation in the West Bank has nothing to do with the October seventh attacks. Rather, the goal is to make the life of the Palestinians impossible on their land, whether in the West Bank or the occupied Gaza

Strip, and to practice continuous intimidation by shedding blood. Aboul-Gheit stressed that "the international community cannot stand idly by in the face of this escalation, which deliberately pushes matters in the region to the brink of abyss, opens new fronts, and ignites fires in a way that drags the situation toward explosion." In this regard, Aboul-Gheit held Washington responsible for the continuation of this escalating Israeli aggression in the region, calling on it to take a clear position on the recent Israeli military operation undertaken by Israeli occupation forces in the West Bank. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas interrupted his visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and returned to his homeland Wednesday, to follow up on the latest developments after the Israeli aggression on the northern West Bank, said Palestine News Agency (Wafa). The Israeli occupation forces launched a military operation at dawn today in the cities of Jenin, Tulkarm and Tubas, which resulted in the martyrdom of nine young men and the injury of some others. The occupation forces are carrying out a large-scale military operation in the three cities, with the support of aircraft that launched missiles towards the Far'a and Jenin camps. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society stated in a press release that the occupation forces stormed the society's medical point in Al-Far'a, detained the medical crews, and cut off communication with them. Earlier, the Palestinian Presidency on Wednesday warned that the Israeli occupation escalating aggression on the West Bank and the war of genocide on Gaza Strip would lead to dire and dangerous consequences. The aggression that started at dawn today on the West Bank has so far resulted in the martyrdom of 10 citizens and injury of scores others, said Nabil Abu Rudainah, the official spokesperson of the Palestinian Presidency in a statement. This offensive was part of the full-scale war "on our people and land and sanctities," he said. Abu Rudainah held the Israeli occupation and the United States responsible for this dangerous escalation, accusing Washington of maintaining support for the occupation to continue "the war on our people."

World News Roundup

Europe

Russian missile strikes Ukraine prez home city: A Russian missile slammed into Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's home city on Wednesday, local authorities said, just as Kryvyi Rih was observing an official day of mourning for an attack the previous day that killed four civilians at a hotel.

The latest attack on the city struck civilian infrastructure, wounding eight people, local administration head Oleksandr Vilkul said on social media.



Zelenskyy

Tuesday's attack, which also wounded five people, was part of a barrage of dozens of missiles and drones across Ukraine that Russia launched for a second consecutive day.

"When Kryvyi Rih is in mourning, the enemy attacks again. And it once again aims at civilians," regional head Serhii Lysak said Wednesday.

Russia stepped up its bombing of Ukraine on Monday, firing more than 100 missiles and a similar number of drones in its biggest onslaught in

weeks.

The intensified bombing campaign coincided with what could prove to be a decisive period of the war, which Russia launched on Feb. 24, 2022.

Russian forces have been driving deeper into Ukraine's partly occupied eastern Donetsk region, whose total capture is one of the Kremlin's primary ambitions. Russia's army is closing in on Pokrovsk, a critical logistics hub for the Ukrainian defense in the area. (AP)

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'Ukraine kids should see selves as gen of winners': Ukraine's first lady wants her country's children to view themselves not as a generation enduring a grinding war, but rather as "a generation of winners."

On the sidelines of a day spent at a rehabilitation camp for Ukrainian children in the relatively safe western city of Uzhhorod, Olena Zelenska said Tuesday that working with the next generation was both a moral obligation and a "strategic priority" for Ukraine's future.

Many of the children will return to front-line cities after spending a few weeks at the camp, barely enough time to overcome the trauma they face over and over.

"This issue needs to be addressed immediately, as soon as it arises, before it grows into something more," Zelenska told The Associated Press in a brief interview at the camp.

The foundation that bears her name, which is funded entirely by foreign donations, created the camp along with the Voices of the Children charity. A study by the Olena Zelenska Foundation and the Kyiv School of Economics this year found that 44% of Ukrainian children show signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. (AP)

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Ukraine seizes 100 settlements in Russia: Ukrainian troops have seized 100 settlements in Russia since they broke into bordering Russia's Kursk region on Aug. 6, Oleksandr Syrsky, commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, said Tuesday.

"We continue to advance forward, inflicting significant losses on the Russian troops in manpower and equipment," Syrsky was cited as saying by the Interfax-Ukraine news agency.

According to Syrsky, Russia has redeployed about 30,000 troops from other areas to the Kursk region and is now trying to form "a defensive ring" around the Ukrainian forces.

Meanwhile, Russia's defense ministry said in a statement Tuesday that its Akhmat special forces have carried out a reconnaissance operation, securing a commanding height in the Sudzha district in the Kursk region, previously held by Ukraine. (Xinhua)

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Macron accused of denying democracy: France's main left-wing coalition on Tuesday accused President Emmanuel Macron of denying democracy after he rejected the New Popular Front's candidate for prime minister following last month's inconclusive election.

As president, Macron has the sole power to name the prime minister according to the French Constitution.

French politicians have been deadlocked over a future government since an early legislative vote in July produced no clear winner. The latest tensions include calls for major protests against Macron next week.

The New Popular Front coalition won the most seats in the National Assembly. Macron's centrist alliance came in second, and the far-right National Rally came in third, leaving France's powerful lower house of parliament with no party holding a majority. (AP)

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Network outage causes disruption in Netherlands: Flights were grounded, civil servants were locked out of their computers and police officers resorted to texting one another in the Netherlands on Wednesday as a network outage at the Ministry of Defense caused major IT failures across the country.

The extent and the cause of the problems are not yet known, but a spokesperson for the Dutch defense ministry confirmed the issue can be traced back to one of their systems.

"We are experiencing an outage in one of our networks at the defense department and it is a network that is also used by other parts of the Dutch government," Laurens Bos told The Associated Press.

The National Cybersecurity Center said it is not yet known if the outage is a result of a cyber attack. (AP)

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Superyacht capt declines to respond to questions: The captain of a superyacht that sank during a storm off Sicily last week, killing seven people, decided not to respond to prosecutors' questions Tuesday, his lawyer said.

James Cutfield, a 51-year-old New Zealand national, is under investigation for possible manslaughter and culpable shipwreck charges and was questioned for the third time by the Termini Imerese prosecutors Tuesday.

"He just exercised his right to remain silent, probably prosecutors were expecting that," lawyer Aldo Mordiglia told The Associated Press, adding that the captain's legal team has just been named and needs time to work on his defensive strategy. (AP)

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Man armed with knives killed in Germany: Police fatally shot a man who apparently threatened passersby on a street in western Germany on Tuesday after he tried to attack officers with two knives, authorities said.

The incident took place around 2.45 p.m. local time in Mors, near the larger cities of Duisburg and Duesseldorf. Police said a patrol was sent to look into reports of an unknown man having assaulted and threatened several people.

When officers located the man, he attacked them with two knives, according to a police statement. Officers fired at the 26-year-old German, and he was fatally wounded. No other people were harmed, police said. (AP)

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'Smugglers throwing migrants to avoid arrest': Smugglers ferrying migrants from Turkey to Greece's eastern islands have in two cases adopted the new and dangerous tactic of knocking some passengers off their speedboats into the sea to avoid capture by pursuing coast guards, Greek authorities say.

All eight migrants were rescued in both cases, which occurred over the weekend. The incidents come as smugglers using speedboats, instead of the flimsy inflatable dinghies with small engines they favored for years, adopt increasingly aggressive tactics to dodge Greek marine patrols.

Last week, coast guards opened fire, killing one migrant, after a speedboat allegedly rammed their vessel in the eastern Aegean Sea during a chase. (AP)



US Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris with Second gentleman Douglas Emhoff and Democratic vice presidential candidate Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz with his wife Gwen Walz celebrate during the Democratic National Convention on Aug 22 in Chicago. (AP)

Politics

Judge pauses key Biden immigration program

Harris, Walz to sit down with CNN

WASHINGTON, Aug 28, (AP) — US Vice President Kamala Harris is sitting down with CNN this week for her first interview since President Joe Biden dropped his reelection bid.

The Democratic presidential nominee will be joined by her running mate Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz in an interview with CNN anchor Dana Bash in Savannah, Georgia. The interview will air Friday at 9 p.m. Eastern time.

Harris' lack of access has become one of Republicans' key lines of attacks against her as she ascended to the top of the Democratic ticket after Biden's July 21 announcement. The CNN interview may be an opportunity for Harris to quell criticism that she is unprepared for uncontrolled environments, but it may also carry risks as her team tries to build on momentum from the ticket shakeup and Democratic National Convention.

During her three-plus years as vice president, she has done on-camera and print interviews with The Associated Press and many other outlets, often at a pace more frequent than Biden.

The Trump campaign has kept a tally of the days she has gone by as a candidate without giving an interview. On Tuesday, the campaign reacted to the news by noting the interview was joint, saying "she's not competent enough to do it on her own."

Interview

Earlier this month, Harris had told reporters that she wanted to do her first formal interview before the end of August.

Harris travels with members of the media on Air Force Two for all trips and nearly always comes to the back of the plane to speak to them for a few minutes before takeoff. Her office insists that those conversations are off the record, though, so what she says can't be used publicly.

She will rally voters in Savannah on Thursday as part of a bus tour that kicks

off on Wednesday.

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Immigration program on hold: After US President Joe Biden this summer announced a new U.S. citizenship pathway for immigrant spouses, Oscar Silva rushed to apply and was elated Monday when an email arrived confirming his appointment for a required biometric exam.

But hours later, Silva received a jolt: a federal judge in Texas was temporarily suspending the program that could benefit an estimated 500,000 immigrants in the U.S., freezing in place one of the biggest presidential actions to ease a path to citizenship in years.

Lives

"I don't know what is going to happen," Silva said Tuesday. The 23-year-old college student arrived in the US as a baby and lives in Texas with his wife, Natalie, an American citizen who provides for their family as a high school teacher.

Although the Biden administration's "Keeping Families Together" program only began accepting applications last week, families and immigration attorneys say confusion, uncertainty and frustration is already mounting following the order by US District Judge J. Campbell Barker. Couples who already applied say they are in limbo and those who haven't yet must weigh whether to wait for Republicans' court challenge over the program to play out.

Applicants must pay a \$580 processing fee. Following Barker's order, the Florida Immigrant Coalition said it was asking people "to weigh their options and to make the best decision for their families at this time."

The court order followed a challenge by 16 states, led by Republican attorneys general, who filed a federal lawsuit days after the program began taking applications on Aug. 19. Barker's order, known as an administrative stay, will

be in place for 14 days but could be extended.

"That ruling is wrong. These families should not be needlessly separated," Biden said in a statement.

The states claimed the move would cause irreparable harm and accused the administration of bypassing Congress for "blatant political purposes."

Republican Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, whose office is helping lead the lawsuit, applauded the order. "This is just the first step. We are going to keep fighting for Texas, our country, and the rule of law," he said in a statement.

On Tuesday, the Department of Homeland Security said the government would continue to take applications and defend the program in court. Any applicants whose parole was granted prior to the order will be unaffected, according to the department.

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New indictment against Trump: Special counsel Jack Smith filed a new indictment Tuesday against Donald Trump over his efforts to undo the 2020 presidential election that keeps the same criminal charges but narrows the allegations against him following a Supreme Court opinion that conferred broad immunity on former presidents.

The new indictment removes a section of the indictment that had accused Trump of trying to use the law enforcement powers of the Justice Department to overturn his election loss, an area of conduct for which the Supreme Court, in a 6-3 opinion last month, said that Trump was absolutely immune from prosecution.

The stripped-down criminal case represents a first effort by prosecutors to comply with a Supreme Court opinion that made all but certain the Republican presidential nominee won't face trial before the November election in the case alleging he tried to thwart the peaceful transfer of power.



Multiple Atlanta Fire Rescue Department units and police park outside a Delta Maintenance facility near Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport on Aug 27 in Atlanta. (AP)



Cohen



Wahl

America

Tire explosion kills 2 in Atlanta:

Two workers were killed and another seriously injured Tuesday in a tire explosion at a Delta Air Lines maintenance facility near the Atlanta airport.

Delta said the explosion occurred while wheel components were being disassembled for maintenance at a wheel and brake shop. The parts were not attached to a plane at the time, the airline said.

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration said it opened an investigation. Delta said it was working with authorities and the cause of the explosion has not been released.

Several Atlanta fire units and police responded to the maintenance hangar near Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport shortly after 5 a.m. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported. The airport said flights were not affected, and Delta said its maintenance operation was not impacted. (AP)

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San Diego officer killed in car cash:

A San Diego police officer was killed and another was critically injured when a speeding vehicle crashed into their patrol car, the police chief said Tuesday. The speeding driver also was killed.

The crash occurred late Monday after a vehicle was spotted traveling at high speed on a boulevard.

An officer tried to make a traffic stop, but the vehicle failed to stop, and a brief pursuit began, Chief Scott Wahl told reporters, noting the information was preliminary.

"Due to a high rate of speed, a supervisor terminated that pursuit," he said. "Two officers working together in one vehicle were responding to that fleeing suspect, and ultimately the suspect vehicle collided at a high rate of speed into the side of their vehicle."

The officer driving the police car died at the scene, and the other officer was hospitalized in intensive care, where he was "fighting for his life," the chief said. (AP)

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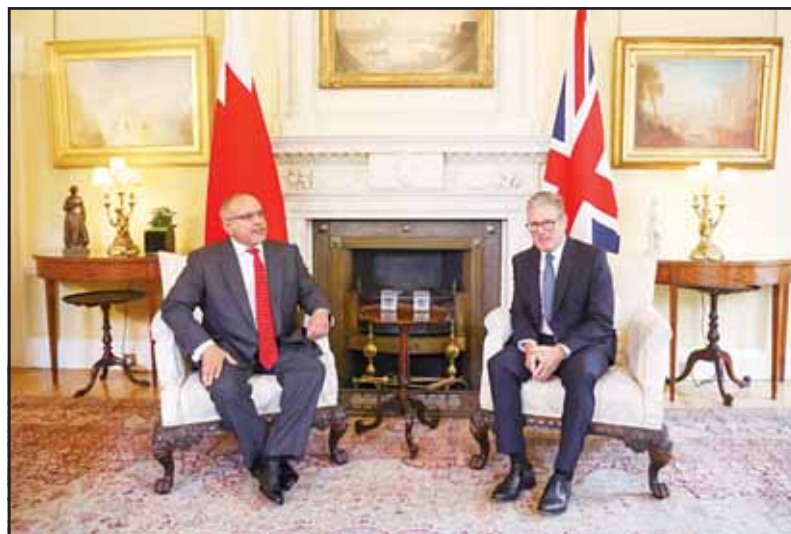
Railroad BNSF stresses safety:

Freight railroad BNSF is generally striving

to improve safety on a consistent basis, but that message doesn't always reach front-line workers who often don't feel comfortable reporting safety concerns for fear of being

disciplined, according to an assessment released Wednesday by regulators.

The Federal Railroad Administration's review of BNSF's safety culture also found



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer welcomes Bahrain's Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, (left), at Downing Street, in London, on Aug 27. A statement from the Prime Minister Office statement said Prince Salman 'noted the significance of the Prime Minister's speech and both agreed that growth was essential to ensure prosperity.' Starmer set out his personal commitment to the UK-Bahraini bilateral relationship, and the leaders looked forward to strengthening areas of shared cooperation, including trade, investment and security and defence. (AP)

that the company continues to be held back by some of the same issues that have been common across the industry for years.

This new report is the second one the agency has completed to address railroad safety concerns following the disastrous February 2023 Norfolk Southern derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, as it works to review all the major railroads. (AP)

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'Prosecutors politically motivated': Attorneys representing Republicans accused of scheming to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential race in Arizona argued Tuesday that prosecutors were politically motivated in seeking a grand jury indictment against their clients.

Their charges came on the second day of a hearing as Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Bruce Cohen considers requests from at least a dozen of the 18 people indicted in the case to dismiss charges of fraud, conspiracy and forgery. Cohen said he'll rule separately on each motion - potentially at different times - after hearing from the prosecution Wednesday.

Defense lawyers argued that Democratic state Attorney General Kris Mayes tried to use the indictment to silence their clients' constitutionally protected speech about the 2020 election and actions taken in response to its outcome. President Joe Biden won Arizona by 10,457 votes.

They said Mayes campaigned on investigating fake electors and showed a bias against former president Donald Trump and his supporters. (AP)

Africa

'Death penalty for 3'

Spain, Mauritania initial agreements

BARCELONA, Spain, Aug 28, (AP): Spain's prime minister announced a series of agreements with the West African nation of Mauritania on Tuesday to stem a surge in migrants making the dangerous Atlantic journey to the Canary Islands.

Speaking alongside Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani in Nouakchott, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said Spain will expand its circular migration program to Mauritanians and renew cooperation between the two nations' security forces to combat people smuggling and trafficking networks.

"Despite the rhetoric that is growing in Europe, migration is not a problem," Sánchez said, openly recognizing the need for migrant workers in Spain's aging society. "It is a need that involves certain problems, and for this we must push formulas that allow us to manage the phenomenon of migration in a humane, safe and orderly way, to benefit our respective societies."

Sánchez is on a three-day tour of West Africa to reinforce bilateral relations with Mauritania, Gambia and Senegal, where the majority of migrant boats reaching the Canary Islands are being launched from.

The Spanish archipelago - located close to the African coast and used as a stepping stone for migrants and refugees trying to reach continental Europe - has seen more than 22,000 people land on its shores since January, more than double the number of irregular arrivals for the same period last year, according to Spain's Interior Ministry.

Risks

"Until not long ago Spain was also a country of migrants ... they aspired to better lives, much like those who take great risks and take on this dangerous adventure," Sánchez said.

Among those making it to the Canaries are thousands of Malian refugees fleeing violence and instability in the Sahelian nation as well as youth from Senegal, Mauritania and other West African countries who are seeking better job opportunities abroad.

There are also increasingly more teenagers and children traveling alone to the Canary Islands, which has overwhelmed the local government responsible for their care. Spanish authorities say they are bracing for even more arrivals this fall when sailing conditions in the deadly Atlantic Ocean between West Africa and the archipelago are more favorable.

It's the second time that the Spanish leader has visited Mauritania this year. In February, Sánchez traveled to the largely deserted and impoverished nation alongside European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and announced 210 million euros (around \$235 million) to help the country curb migration.

'Relations with US, Canada on pause': Mexico's president told reporters Tuesday he has put relations with the United States and Canadian embassies "on pause" after the two countries voiced concerns over a proposed judicial overhaul that critics say could undermine the independence of the judiciary.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador didn't elaborate on what a pause would mean. It's not a term used in formal diplomatic codes, and Mexico's foreign ministry did not respond to an Associated Press request for comment about what it would entail.

The judicial overhaul proposal, suggested by the Mexican president during his final weeks in office, includes having judges elected to office, something analysts, judges and international observers fear would stack courts with politically biased judges with little experience. It has spurred major protests and strikes and wide criticism from investors and financial institutions.

Last week, American ambassador Ken Salazar called the proposal a "risk" to democracy that would endanger Mexico's commercial relationship with the United States. López Obrador lambasted the ambassador, saying he violated Mexican sovereignty. Salazar has since dialed back his tone, writing on X that he was open to a dialogue.

López Obrador said during his morning press briefing Tuesday he believed the sharp comments were not from Salazar, but rather from the U.S. State Department.

7 Polish citizens freed from Nigeria detention: Six Polish students and a lecturer from the Warsaw University who were detained in Nigeria during protests there have been released, the Polish foreign ministry said Wednesday. They are in good health and will be returning home this week.

The ministry's spokesman, Pawel Wronski, said the seven Polish citizens have had their passports, laptops and belongings returned and were staying at the university campus in the northern Nigerian city of Kano, waiting for the trip back.

The seven were in northern Nigeria to take part in a program to study the Hausa language. They were detained earlier this month in the state of Kano during a political protest, allegedly for carrying Russian flags, Nigeria's secret service said.

Officials in Poland, which has frosty relations with Russia, said that was unlikely and that the whole situation was a misunderstanding. The seven were held at a hotel in Kano while Warsaw was actively seeking their release. (AP)

'Death penalty for 3 Americans': Prosecutors on Tuesday called for 50 people, including three Americans, to face the death penalty for what the Congolese army says was a coup attempt earlier this year.

Military prosecutor Lieutenant Colonel Innocent Radjabu urged the judges to sentence to death all those on trial, except for one defendant who suffers from "psychological problems."

The defendants, whose trial opened in June, face a number of charges, many punishable by death, including terrorism, murder and criminal association.

Six people were killed during the botched coup attempt led by the little-known opposition figure Christian Malanga in May that targeted the presidential palace and a close ally of President Felix Tshisekedi. Malanga was fatally shot for resisting arrest soon after live-streaming the attack on his social media, the Congolese army said.

Malanga's 21-year-old son Marcel Malanga, who is a US citizen, and two other Americans are on trial for their alleged role in the attack. His mother, Britney Sawyer, has said her son is innocent and simply followed his father, who considered himself president of a shadow government in exile.



A drone photo taken on Aug 23, 2024 shows the night view of downtown Chongqing in southwest China. Renowned tourist destinations in Chongqing, a city known for its high temperatures, attract many tourists in summer. (Xinhua)



Ruling party leader Diosdado Cabello takes part in a rally in defense of President Nicolas Maduro's reelection in Caracas, Venezuela, on Aug 3. Maduro on Aug 27 appointed a ruling socialist party boss to oversee the country's police forces, empowering a hard-line loyalist who has vowed to pursue government opponents as part of a crackdown that has alarmed human rights groups. (AP)



Suu Kyi



Bishop

Asia

'Renew peace efforts in Myanmar': Britain circulated a wide-ranging United Nations resolution on Myanmar urging renewed peace efforts, condemning attacks on civilians - especially by the Myanmar military - and calling for a halt to illicit arms transfers.

The draft resolution obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press expresses "alarm at the increased violence across Myanmar," which is engulfed in civil war between the military-led regime and resistance forces.

It calls for "safe, rapid, and unhindered humanitarian access at scale," expressing "grave concern" at the deteriorating humanitarian situation and restrictions on humanitarian access in the country that led to rising food insecurity and hunger.

The proposed resolution warns that the current situation has the potential to further exacerbate discrimination, ethnically motivated violence, violations of international humanitarian law, human rights abuses, and conflict-related sexual violence.

Myanmar's military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi on Feb. 1, 2021. It was the day Parliament was to reconvene following November 2020 elections, which her National League for Democracy party won overwhelmingly - an outcome the military claims without evidence was based on fraud. Suu Kyi and party members remain under arrest.

The draft resolution urges renewed efforts by the ASEAN special envoy to Myanmar, Alounkeo Kittikhoun, and new UN special envoy, Julie Bishop, "to engage all relevant stakeholders to seek a peaceful, inclusive solution to the crisis in Myanmar." (AP)

Shanshan injures 3 in Japan: A typhoon moving at bicycle speed began dumping rain on southern Japan on a path that will bring strong winds, high waves and significant rainfall to most of the country, prompting weather officials to issue the highest-level warnings Wednesday.

Three people were injured and three others were missing due to a storm-related landslide and driving accident.

The Japan Meteorological Agency said Typhoon Shanshan is expected to reach southern Kyushu and possibly make landfall Thursday, and issued the highest-level

Lat/Am

Venezuela's Maduro taps loyalist to oversee police

Haiti army wants recruits to fight gangs

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Aug 28, (AP): The announcement that Haiti's military wanted recruits crackled through a small radio perched on a street stall in downtown Port-au-Prince where Maurency Clerge repairs and sells smartphones.

It was early morning, and the 21-year-old paused, eager to hear the details. He envisioned earning enough to afford his own food and rent. Two weeks later, he completed the required paperwork and stood in line with hundreds of other Haitians under a brutal sun for the chance to join up.

"It's the moment I have been waiting for," said Clerge, who stays with a friend who also provides him with food. "I want to serve as a citizen of this country and also to move up and upgrade my life."

Thousands of young Haitians are jumping at the chance to become soldiers as widespread gang violence creates a rare job opportunity in a deeply impoverished country where work is scarce. Brushing aside the possibility they could be kidnapped, tortured or killed, Haiti's youngest generation is answering the call of a government seeking to rebuild a once-reviled military, reinstated just years ago with the aim to crush gangs.

"I thought about it a lot because I know that being a soldier requires a lot of sacrifice," said Samuel Delmas, who recently applied. "Everything that you're doing is risky."

Repair

The 20-year-old is taking computer repair courses but doesn't have a job. He heard about the recruitment via a Facebook group.

"I have always wanted to be useful to my country," he said.

Gangs forced Delmas and his family to flee their home two years ago, with only enough time to grab a handful of clothes amid a barrage of gunfire.

"I want to protect citizens who are on the run like me," he said.

Haiti's government has not said how many soldiers it aims to hire nor how many have applied so far, but documents published online by the Defense Ministry show that at least 3,000 people were selected in mid-August and asked to submit documents as they await physical and mental tests.

If all were hired, that would more than double the force strength of 2,000 of early last year.

About 60% of Haiti's population of nearly 12 million people earn less than \$2 a day, with inflation soaring to double digits in recent years.

"Most young kids are not working," said Emerson Celadon, a 25-year-old mechanic who applied and was selected for the next round. "I was making some money, but ... that is still not enough for a family of four."

Return

It's not clear how much soldiers earn. Defense Minister Jean-Marc Bernier Antoine did not return messages for comment. However, Celadon said friends in the army told him they make about \$300 a month.

On a recent afternoon, Celadon joined hundreds of mostly young men lined up outside a former U.N. base, a yellow envelope under his arm, waiting to take the first of several required tests to join the army.

Maduro appoints loyalist: Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro on Tuesday appointed a ruling socialist party boss to oversee the country's police forces, empowering a hard-line loyalist who has vowed to pursue government opponents as part of a crackdown that has alarmed human rights groups.

Maduro named Diosdado Cabello interior minister as part of a Cabinet shuffle following last month's contested presidential election.

Along with Maduro, Cabello is one of the most fervent stalwarts of the so-called Bolivarian revolution started by the late Hugo Chávez and has long been considered the second most powerful person in Venezuela after Maduro. A retired army lieutenant, he fought alongside Chávez in a failed military uprising in 1992 and later served as acting president when Chávez himself was removed in a brief coup a decade later.

However, Chávez passed him over when he picked Maduro - a civilian with no military pedigree - as his successor shortly before he died of cancer in 2013. Since then, Cabello has served in a number of roles, including National Assembly president and head

of the ruling socialist party. Until now, he never served in Maduro's Cabinet, an omission that has long fueled speculation of an unspoken rivalry between them.

Human rights groups fear that Cabello's appointment to interior minister, with oversight of Venezuela's police forces, will intensify the government's heavy-handed response to protests that erupted after last month's presidential election, when Maduro was declared the winner despite strong evidence presented by the opposition that its candidate prevailed by a 2-to-1 margin.

Chilean lawyer detained: One of Chile's most powerful lawyers was ordered detained Tuesday pending trial on money laundering and tax fraud charges in a case that has rocked the country's corporate and political elite.

After five days of hearings, a court in the capital accepted the prosecution's request to transfer criminal lawyer Luis Hermosilla to state custody.

It was the latest development in a high-profile corruption scandal that blew up last November when leaked audio recordings appeared to show Hermosilla telling a former client about bribes he planned to pay officials at Chile's two main market regulators.

Hermosilla has denied all charges, but he isn't disputing the authenticity of the recording. His lawyer this week said he was "manipulated" into discussing the illicit payments.

The wider investigation has entangled judges, politicians and prominent businessmen, shocking a country consistently ranked among the least corrupt in the region and threatening to stain Chile's long-standing reputation as a darling of international finance institutions.

Also on Tuesday, the court charged another Chilean lawyer, María Leonarda Villalobos, and her husband, Luis Angulo, with money laundering and tax crimes in the same case. Both deny the allegations.

The judge ordered Hermosilla and Villalobos to be held pending trial, citing "a serious and well-founded suspicion that the accused might obstruct the investigation." Angulo was placed under nightly house arrest.

warning for violent winds, high waves and heavy rain for the Kagoshima prefecture, as well as an emergency storm surge warning. It forecast up to 60 centimeters (23.6 inches) of rainfall in 24 hours for southern Kyushu. Shanshan was about 120 kilometers



From left: Tyler Thompson Jr, Marcel Malanga and Benjamin Reuben Zalman-Polun, all American citizens, face the court in Kinshasa, Congo, with 52 other defendants, June 7, 2024, accused of a role in the attempted coup in Congo led by little-known opposition figure Christian Malanga in which six people were killed. Prosecutors on Aug 27 called for 50 people, including three Americans, to face the death penalty for what the Congolese army says was a coup attempt earlier this year. (AP)

(75 miles) south of the southern island of Yakushima on Wednesday morning as it headed north toward Kyushu, packing winds of up to 180 kilometers (112 miles) per hour, according to the agency.

The warm, humid air around the typhoon and a separate high-pressure system caused heavy rain in the central Japanese city of Gamagori, where a landslide buried a house with five people inside. Two of them were rescued alive and workers were searching for the other three, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. (AP)

Boats sink in Philippines: At least 10 people went missing after two motorboats sank off the coast of Romblon province in the central Philippines, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said Tuesday.

Coast Guard Lieutenant Junior Grade John Laurence Banzuela, station commander of PCG in Aklan province, told Xinhua by phone that the two boats departed Boracay island, a world-famous beach resort in Malay town in Aklan province, at around 4 am Monday.

He said the boats were heading west to their hometown in Caluya, an island town in Antique province, when powerful waves sank the boats off San Jose, an island town in Romblon.

Banzuela said one of the boats carried 14 people while the other carried six. He said 10 people have so far been rescued. (Xinhua)

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
↑ JAPAN	Nikkei 225	+83.14	38,371.76	↓ SAUDI	TASI	-65.05	12,117.15
	EGYPT	EGX 30	+346.44		DUBAI	DFMGI	-19.02
				PHILIPPINES	PSEi	-15.40	6,958.01
				PAKISTAN	KSE 100	-80.31	78,040.88

Business

CMA proposes zero-pct trading fees, sparking industry debate

Brokerage firms warn of financial strain

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: In a move that echoes trends seen in global financial markets, the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) has proposed a dramatic shift in trading fee structures for brokerage firms, suggesting they could potentially reduce their fees to zero percent, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This proposal would leave it up to the brokerage companies to decide their own fee levels, but it has sparked significant debate among local market players.

Many brokerage firms have voiced strong concerns over the proposal. They argue that eliminating or drastically reducing fees could jeopardize their ability to invest in service development and maintain their financial stability.

Currently, their fee structure supports essential operations and helps them comply with new regulatory requirements, including obtaining the coveted "qualified broker" license.

In comparison to international markets where zero-percent trading fees are common, such systems often involve interest payments on client funds.

The Kuwaiti market, however, lacks such mechanisms, making a zero-fee model challenging to implement. Moreover, some local brokerages are independent and rely heavily on trading fees to cover their operational expenses.

The potential reduction in fees could also impact the financial health of brokerage firms, complicating their efforts to enhance their services and meet new regulatory standards. As they work towards compliance and improving their systems, the proposed fee cuts could create additional financial strains, potentially hindering their ability to offer high-quality services and protect client interests.

Industry stakeholders are calling for a thorough examination of the proposal's implications. They emphasize the need for a balanced approach that considers both the financial sustainability of brokerage firms and the goal of fostering a competitive and effective market environment.

While the CMA's proposal is part of a broader trend to align with international practices, it underscores the necessity of carefully navigating the unique challenges and conditions of the local market.

New Sharia standards may lead to sukuk restructuring

Sukuk defaults remain rare despite global issuance surge

By S&P Global Ratings

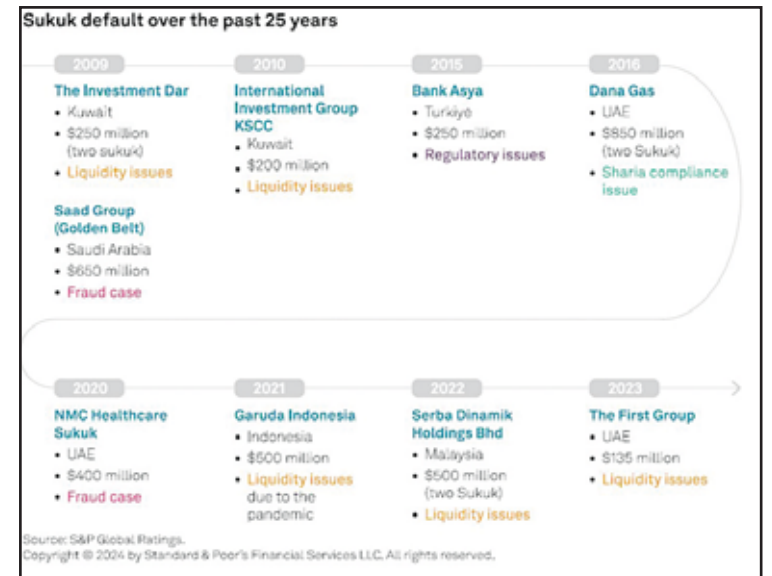
Sukuk defaults remain rare, particularly for sukuk issued in hard currencies, such as USD, EUR, or GBP. Only 12 foreign currency-denominated sukuk defaulted over the past two decades. In most cases, these defaults were linked to the default of sukuk sponsors--who were unable to meet their financial obligations--and fraud cases. That relatively low default rate results from the fact that most sukuk are issued by creditworthy governments and their related entities, as well as large companies and financial institutions. In most default cases we observed, sukuk creditors were treated equally to conventional creditors. Yet this dynamic could change if Sharia Standard 62 comes into force.

What's Happening

Only 0.2% of sukuk defaulted over the past 24 years. Of the 22,794 sukuk issued for a total amount of about \$2.1 trillion since Jan. 1, 2000, only 62 sukuk worth \$5.2 billion defaulted. Foreign currency-denominated sukuk defaults are even rarer. Between Jan. 1, 2000, and Aug. 15, 2024, only 12 sukuk worth \$3.7 billion defaulted out of the 1,267 sukuk that were denominated in hard currencies and issued for a total amount of \$527.5 billion.

Why It Matters

Sukuk defaults are often linked to liquidity issues and sukuk sponsors' inability to meet their financial obligations. For example, Investment Dar defaulted on its \$100 million sukuk in 2009 as it was reportedly unable to refinance upcoming maturities due to difficult market conditions. Garuda Indonesia defaulted on its \$500 million sukuk in 2021 because the COVID-19 pandemic impaired the company's business activity. Su-



kuk defaults also resulted from financial fraud, as was the case with NMC Healthcare Ltd.'s default on a \$400 million sukuk in 2020 and Saad Group's default on the \$650 million Golden Belt sukuk in 2009. We understand that sukuk creditors were mostly treated similarly to other creditors and according to their ranking when the sukuk defaulted.

What Comes Next

The potential change in Sharia standards requires close surveillance. The Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions' proposed Sharia Standard 62 could lead to a significant overhaul of sukuk structures. Generally, the adoption of new standards does not affect existing sukuk as any changes in the terms and conditions of sukuk are subject to investors' consent.

The timeline for the adoption of Sharia Standard 62 and its definitive version remain uncertain. If Sharia Standard 62 is adopted as proposed, we think the treatment of sukuk holders in a default sce-

nario could differ from that of other creditors. We consider that the treatment could ultimately depend on the nature of the underlying assets and sukuk holders' capacity to liquidate them.

We envisage that Sharia Standard 62, if adopted as proposed, could lead to some instances of restructuring of outstanding sukuk. Companies with financial difficulties or unsustainable debt levels, as well as companies that are less reliant on the sukuk market or that face imminent liquidity issues, could use the change in Sharia requirements as an argument to restructure their outstanding sukuk. That was the case when Dana Gas PJSC restructured its two sukuk after it defaulted on them in 2016. That said, we expect companies will avoid restructuring their sukuk based on Sharia changes because it could restrict their market access or even trigger cross defaults. At Aug. 15, 2024, 9% of the sukuk rated by S&P Global Ratings were in the speculative-grade category ('BB+' and below.)

Officials propose law amendments for SME fund revival

SME fund explores 6 scenarios for resuming operations

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: Senior officials at the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises development and care have begun consultations with officials from banks, companies, and government institutions to determine the best financing solutions for resuming the Fund's operations, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Fund, which has been inactive since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, has been asked by the Council of Ministers to present specific scenarios for resuming its activities within a 100-day timeline, which began a month ago.

According to sources, the following six scenarios are under consideration:

Resuming financing and lending requests with modifications -- This would involve addressing the financial

and structural complexities currently hindering the Fund's operations.

Distributing capital into portfolios managed by private sector entities -- This would involve breaking down the Fund's capital, which totals two billion dinars, into smaller funds managed by private sector professionals.

Transferring the management of small projects to the Industrial Bank -- Given its expertise in managing small and medium enterprises, the Industrial Bank is considered a viable option for taking over the Fund's portfolio.

Assigning the Fund's financing to a government company specializing in investment or real estate -- Potential candidates include the Wafra Investment Company and the Wafra Real Estate Company, both of which are affiliated

with the General Insurance Corporation.

Insuring all loans to mitigate the risk of default -- This would involve insuring loans provided by the Fund to protect against defaults by entrepreneurs.

Amending the law to align with current business conditions -- To ensure the Fund's activities meet contemporary needs and effectively support SMEs, legislative changes are also being considered.

Since its inception in February 2016, the Fund has financed 1,084 entrepreneurs and 760 existing projects, with total financing amounting to approximately 220 million dinars. The proposed scenarios aim to revitalize the Fund and ensure it can continue to support entrepreneurs in Kuwait effectively.

Impairments drop to 33-year low, indicating improved credit quality

GCC banks post record net income of 14.8 billion dollars in Q2-2024

By KAMCO Invest

Net income reported by listed banks in the GCC reached a new record high during Q2-2024 after four out of the six country aggregates showed growth as compared to Q1-2024. Aggregate net profits reached USD 14.8 Bn during the quarter as compared to USD 14.4 Bn during the previous quarter, resulting in a q-o-q growth of 2.6%. The y-o-y growth was also healthy at 9.2% when compared to Q2-2023. The biggest support to bottom-line performance for the sector came from a steep decline in quarterly impairments booked by banks in the region. Total loan loss provisions (impairments) reached the lowest level in at least 33 quarters at USD 1.9 Bn reflecting double-digit q-o-q declines in most countries in the GCC. The decline in impairments indicates improving health of the economy as well as overall credit quality. It also shows improving loan portfolios over the past several years as shown by a steadily declining non-performing loan rate.

Moreover, since central bank interest rates in the GCC remained unchanged during the quarter, net interest income reached a new peak during the quarter at USD 21.5 Bn, a slight improvement when compared to USD 21.3 Bn during Q1-2024. Non-interest income reported a small decline to reach a three-quarter low level of USD 10.1 Bn during Q2-2024. As a result, aggregate bank revenue reached USD 31.6 Bn during Q1-2024, registering a marginal q-o-q growth of 0.4%.

Meanwhile, lending growth continued in the region despite higher borrowing costs. Data from central banks in the GCC showed higher q-o-q lending for all the GCC country aggregates. The data on listed banks showed gross loans for UAE banks registering the strongest quarterly growth during Q2-2024 at 3.4% followed by Saudi Arabian banks with a slightly smaller growth of 3.1%. Data from central banks also highlighted a similar picture with Saudi Arabia witnessing credit growth of 3.1% followed by Oman, Kuwait and Qatar with quarterly growth of around 1.0%. On the other hand, customer deposits for GCC-listed banks declined by a marginal 0.5% during the quarter mainly led by fall in customer deposits reported by SNB as well as a decline in deposits in Bahrain after the delisting of Al Baraka Banking Group. These declines were partially offset by higher customer deposits reported by banks in Kuwait, Oman and Qatar.

Highlights - GCC Banking Sector

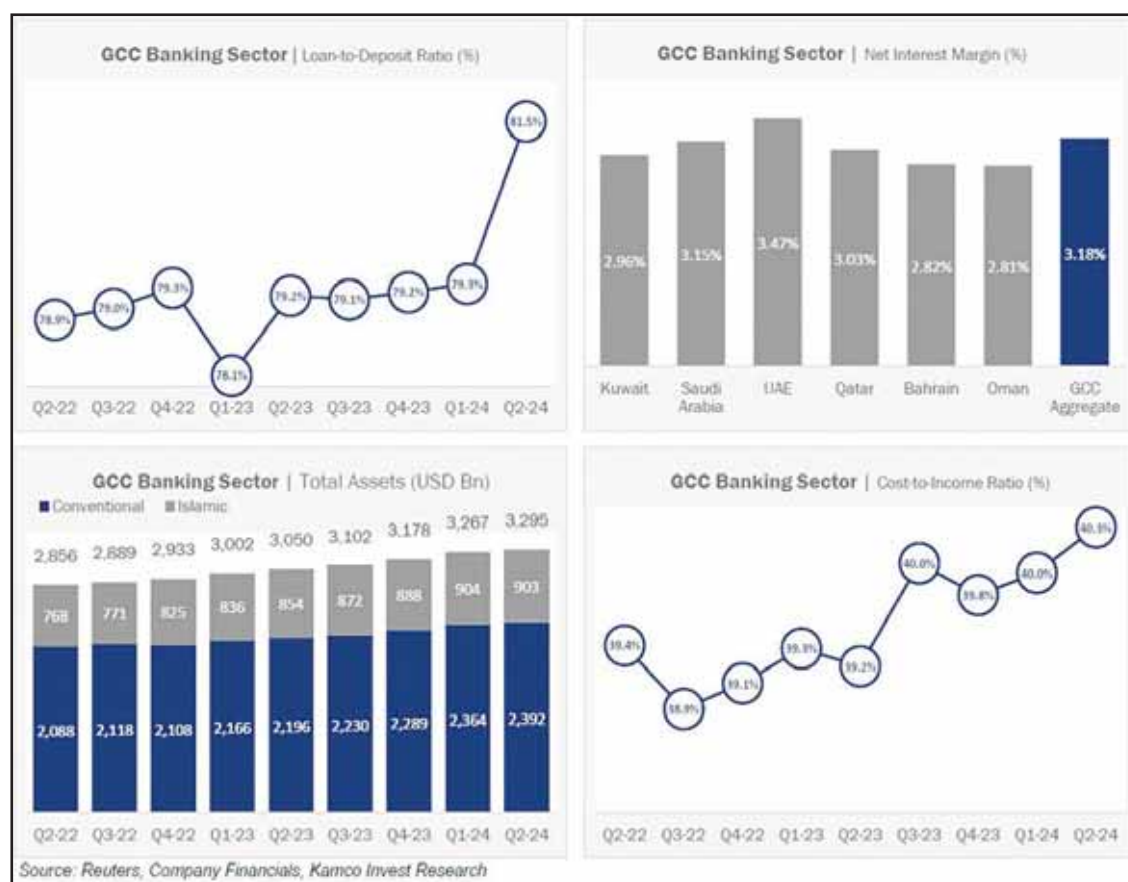
This report analyzes the financials reported by 56 listed banks in the GCC for the quarter ended Q2-2024. Data for individual banks have been aggregated to the country level. Some of the key observations from the most recent financial quarter for the GCC Banking Sector includes the following:

Listed banks see broad-based lending growth

Aggregate lending by listed banks in the GCC continued to show q-o-q growth during Q2-2024 backed by growth in almost all GCC markets. Aggregate gross loans reached a new record high of USD 2.1 Trillion after registering a four-quarter high q-o-q growth of 2.1% while the y-o-y growth came in at 7.9%. Banks in UAE reported the biggest q-o-q gross loan growth during Q2-2024 at 3.4% mainly led by strong retail lending. Gross loans growth for Saudi-listed banks came in next at 3.1% to reach USD 711.1 Bn during Q2-2024 reflecting healthy growth in lending in almost all sectors. Omani and Kuwait banks reported lending growth of around 2% while Qatari banks registered a growth of 1.3%. In terms of type of banks, conventional banks were leading in the GCC with a gross loan growth of 2.6% reaching USD 1.4 Trillion, whereas Islamic banks registered a q-o-q growth of 0.9% to reach USD 612 Bn.

Loan-to-deposit ratio finally breaches the 80% mark

The aggregate loan-to-deposit ratio for the GCC banking sector witnessed a strong increase during the quarter and reached above the 80% mark at 81.5%. The growth was led by a higher loan-to-deposit ratio for all the country aggregates in the GCC. Saudi Arabian banks witnessed the biggest growth during the quarter with aggregate loan to deposit ratio reaching 93.6% for listed banks in the Kingdom as compared to 90.2% during Q1-2024. The increase was mainly led by an improvement in the ratio, mainly in the case of SNB. UAE-listed banks also registered a solid



increase of 2.5% with the ratio reaching 69.0%, still the second lowest in the GCC after Bahrain which recorded the ratio at 65.8%. Qatar and Oman registered loan-to-deposit ratio of over 80% while Kuwaiti bank aggregate reached 77.5% at the end of Q2-2024.

Net interest income reached a new record high despite higher cost of funds

Aggregate net interest income reported by banks listed in the GCC reached a new record high of USD 21.5 Bn during Q2-2024, up 0.91% q-o-q. The increase came after a decline recorded during the previous quarter and was mainly led by growth in four out of the six country aggregates in the GCC. Kuwaiti banks recorded the biggest increase of 6.3% during the quarter with net interest income reaching USD 2.5 Bn during the quarter. Saudi-listed banks were next with a growth of 2.5% to register net interest income of USD 7.3 Bn. Omani and UAE-listed banks also reported growth of 2.3% and 1.5%, respectively, during the quarter while Qatari banks reported a sharp decline in net interest income that reached USD 3.3 Bn, declining by 4.3% as compared to Q1-2024. In terms of y-o-y growth at the GCC level, the growth in net interest income was strong at 7.6% reflecting elevated interest rates levels in the GCC, in line with most other global economies.

The impact of elevated central bank rates was reflected in the increase in net interest income for listed banks in the GCC. The quarter reported one of the highest quarterly total interest incomes that reached USD 52.2 Bn with yield on credit averaging at 4.3%, in line with the trend over the last four quarters, whereas a relatively smaller increase in interest expense from USD 29.3 Bn in Q1-2024 to USD 30.7 Bn in Q2-2024 resulted in the overall growth in net-interest income. The increase in total interest expense was also reflected in the cost of funds that reached 4.8% at the end of Q2-2024, one of the highest levels on record for the GCC banking sector, from 4.5% during Q1-2024 and a much smaller 3.2% during Q2-2023.

Total bank revenues show marginal q-o-q growth

After seeing a quarterly decline during Q1-2024, total bank revenue for GCC-listed banks witnessed marginal q-o-q growth during Q2-2024 reaching USD 31.6 Bn during the quarter as compared to USD 31.4 Bn during Q1-2024. The growth was led by higher net interest income during the quarter that was partially offset by a fall in non-interest

income. The growth highlighted an increase in most countries in the GCC that was partially offset by a fall in total revenues for Qatari and Bahraini-listed banks. Total bank revenues for Qatari listed banks declined for the second consecutive quarter by 3.6% q-o-q to reach USD 4.6 Bn in Q2-2024 as compared to USD 4.8 Bn in Q1-2024. The decline was led by a fall in both net interest income and non-interest income for banks in Qatar. On the other hand, Kuwait recorded the biggest growth in total bank revenues that reached USD 3.4 Bn after increasing by 3.4% as compared to the previous quarter. The increase registered by Saudi-listed banks was similar at 3.37% to reach USD 10.5 Bn while UAE-listed banks reported a relatively smaller growth of 1.0% to reach USD 11.5 Bn, the highest in the GCC.

Aggregate non-interest income declined for the second consecutive quarter during Q2-2024 to reach USD 10.1 Bn vs. USD 10.2 Bn in Q1-2024. The decline reflected a fall in non-interest income in four countries in the GCC that was partially offset by a healthy growth of 5.4% reported by Saudi-listed banks.

LLP reaches one of the lowest quarterly levels

Impairments booked by banks in the GCC continued to slide during Q2-2024 to reach one of the lowest levels in at least 33 quarters. Aggregate impairments also went below the USD 2.0 Bn mark for the first time in several quarters to reach USD 1.9 Bn during Q2-2024. The decline was broad-based and was seen in four out of six GCC banking aggregates. The biggest decline was seen in the UAE with impairments declining to USD 0.38 Bn during the quarter as compared to USD 0.52 Bn in Q1-2024, registering a decline of 26.8%. Saudi Arabian banks were a close second with aggregate impairments declining by 26.2% to reach USD 0.49 Bn in Q2-2024 as compared to USD 0.66 Bn during Q1-2024. Kuwaiti and Omani banks also recorded a fall in loan impairments by 17.8% and 9.8%, respectively. On the other hand, Bahraini and Qatari banks registered increase in loan impairments during Q2-2024 by 10.2% and 1.3%, respectively.

Meanwhile, the cost of risk (ratio of 12-month provisions vs. average loans) continued to remain low as compared to recent quarters at 0.50% for the aggregate GCC banking sector. The low ratio as compared to historical levels indicate recoveries, strong economic indicators as

well as stable asset quality. The ratio was highest in the case of Omani banks at 0.89% in Q2-2024 followed by Qatari banks at 0.80%. The ratio was the lowest in the case of Saudi and Kuwaiti banks at 0.33% and 0.38%, respectively, while UAE-listed banks showed slightly higher cost of risk of 0.50%.

Operating costs inch up during the quarter

Aggregate operating expenses for listed banks in the GCC increased during Q2-2024 after recording a decline during the previous quarter. Total operating expenses reached USD 12.55 Bn during Q2-2024 with a q-o-q increase of 0.8% that came after a fall of 4.5% in the previous quarter. The increase was mainly led by higher expenses reported by banks in Saudi Arabia that increase by 7.5% to reach USD 4.2 Bn in Q2-2024 as compared to USD 3.9 Bn in the previous quarter. Banks in Kuwait, UAE and Oman also reported marginal growth during the quarter that was partially offset by a 4.4% q-o-q fall in operating expenses reported by Qatari banks.

The increase in operating expenses during the quarter also caused the cost-to-income ratio for GCC banks to show a marginal growth during Q2-2024 led by higher costs for the last twelve-month period. The cost to income ratio for the aggregate sector reached 40.3% in Q2-2024 as compared to 40.0% during Q1-2024. The increase reflected an increase in the ratio for five of six country aggregates. The biggest increase was seen in Qatar and Kuwait while Saudi Arabian banks showed a marginal growth. On the other hand, UAE-listed banks reported a marginal drop in the ratio that reached 38.2% in Q2-2024 vs. 38.4% during Q1-2024. The cost to income ratio was the lowest in the case of UAE-listed banks at 38.2% followed by Qatar and Saudi Arabian banks at 39.7% and 39.8%, respectively.

NIM stayed flat and elevated at 3.2%

The aggregate net interest margin reported by GCC-listed banks have remained stable for the last five quarters at 3.2% indicating the peak for the ratio as the higher interest rates over the last four quarters are fully priced. The ratio showed minimal changes at the country level, with only Kuwaiti banks showing a small increase of close to 10 basis points, while the rest of the GCC countries showed minimal changes indicating a saturation point for the sector as both lending and cost of deposit and funding reflect elevated interest rate levels. UAE banks once again ranked first in the GCC in terms of NIMs that reached 3.47% in Q2-2024 as compared to 3.49% during Q1-2024. The higher margins as compared to gulf peers reflect ample liquidity that allows UAE banks to capitalize on the tightening interest rate cycle with more modest asset growth. Saudi Arabian banks were next with a NIM of 3.15% followed by Qatari and Kuwaiti banks at 3.03% and 2.96%, respectively. We expect NIM to come under pressure as the cost of funding in the local markets remains high as banks make efforts to attract depositors. Moreover, with the expected rate cuts in the coming quarter, NIMs could come under pressure and slide downwards until cheaper sources of funding and well as continued growth in lending offsets the downward pressure.

GCC banking RoE sees consistent growth

Aggregate return on equity (RoE) for the GCC banking sector continued to show improvement during Q2-2024 reaching one of the highest levels over the last few years at 13.6% as compared to 13.5% at the end of Q1-2024, reaching pre-pandemic levels. The ratio also improved in terms of y-o-y comparison by a strong 70 bps supported by an increase in aggregate 12-month profitability coupled with a relatively smaller growth in shareholders' equity. Total shareholder equity reached USD 421.5 Bn at the end of Q2-2024, registering a growth of 2.7% as compared to Q1-2024.

At the country level, UAE-listed banks once again topped in the region with the highest RoE at the end of Q2-2024 at 16.9% followed by Saudi Arabian and Qatari banks with RoEs of 12.8%. The biggest y-o-y growth in RoE was also seen for UAE-listed banks at 160 bps which was mainly led by elevated profits as well as a relatively smaller growth in total shareholders' equity. ROEs for Kuwaiti banks stayed elevated at a double-digit level of 10.4% while Bahraini and Omani banks reported RoEs at 9.6% and 9.0%, respectively.

BUSINESS

traders observe a daylong strike across Pakistan

Traders in Pakistan went on strike Wednesday, shutting down their businesses in all major cities and urban areas to protest a rise in electricity costs and new taxes imposed on shop owners.

The government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has steadily raised electricity prices since Pakistan last month struck a deal with the International Monetary Fund for a new \$7 billion loan. The higher cost of living and price hikes have triggered widespread discontent and drawn protests.

Most of the public markets across Paki-

stan were closed on Wednesday, though pharmacies and grocery stores selling basic food items remained open. Kashif Chaudhry, a strike leader, said those were not closed so as not to inconvenience the general public.

Stores were shuttered in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, the nearby garrison city of Rawalpindi, as well as in the city of Lahore, the country's culture capital, and the main economic hub of Karachi.

The strike was called by Naeem-ur-Rehman who heads the religious Jamaat-

e-Islami Pakistan party and endorsed by most of the various traders' unions and associations.

However, traders in the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the southwestern Balochistan provinces observed a partial strike, keeping some stores open while closing others.

The strike is aimed at forcing the government to reverse the recent hikes in power bills and the controversial tax that followed the recent talks with the IMF, which wants to see Pakistan broaden its tax base. (AP)



A man reads a morning newspaper in a market, which closed due to strike called by traders to protest a rise in electricity costs and new taxes imposed on shop owners, in Peshawar, Pakistan, Wednesday, Aug. 28, 2024. (AP)

Americans' optimism about future improves

US consumer confidence rises in August

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28, (AP): American consumers felt more confident in August as their outlook for the future improved.

The Conference Board, a business research group, said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index rose to 103.3 in August from 101.9 in July.

The index measures both Americans' assessment of current economic conditions and their outlook for the next six months.

The measure of Americans' short-

term expectations for income, business and the job market rose to 82.5. July's figure was revised up to 81.1 from its initial reading of 78.2, ending a five-month stretch below 80. A reading under 80 can signal a potential recession in the near future.

Consumers' view of current conditions rose to 134.4 in August from 133.1 last month.

Consumer spending accounts for nearly 70% of U.S. economic activity and is closely watched by econo-

mists for signs how the American consumer is feeling.

Though the report's topline numbers all improved slightly from July, consumers continued to have mixed feelings about the economy.

"Consumers' assessments of the current labor situation, while still positive, continued to weaken, and assessments of the labor market going forward were more pessimistic," said Dana Peterson, the Conference Board's chief economist.

Peterson said that dreary view was likely spurred by the July jobs report, which showed slowing job growth and a rise in the unemployment rate to 4.3%.

On top of the weak July jobs data, the government reported last week that the U.S. economy added 818,000 fewer jobs from April 2023 through March this year than were originally reported. The revised total added to evidence that the job market has been steadily slowing.

Though inflation has largely receded from 2022 highs, the cost of essentials continues to chip away at American consumers' savings and optimism.

Write-in responses to the Conference Board's survey were still focused on prices and inflation, even as 12-month inflation expectations fell to their lowest level since March of 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic upended the U.S. economy.

The Federal Reserve began raising

its benchmark lending rate in March of 2022 in an attempt to fight the inflation that took hold in the wake of the pandemic. Higher borrowing costs, combined with rising prices, had consumers in a foul mood for the better part of the past two years.

Some help could be on the way though. Fed officials have strongly suggested that an interest rate cut is coming at its September meeting, giving some relief to consumers and businesses.

100% tariffs on EVs

China accuses Canada of being 'protectionist'

BEIJING, Aug. 28, (AP): China on Tuesday accused Canada of protectionism after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government imposed a 100% tariff on imports of Chinese-made electric vehicles, matching U.S. duties on Chinese EVs.

The Chinese Commerce Ministry said the tariffs would disrupt the stability of global industrial and supply chains, severely impact China-Canada economic and trade ties and damage the interests of enterprises in both countries.

"China is strongly dissatisfied and firmly opposes this," it said in a statement.

"Canada claims it supports free trade and the multilateral trading system based on (World Trade Organization) rules, but it blatantly violated WTO rules and announced it will take unilateral tariff measures by blindly following individual countries. It is typical trade protectionism," it added.

The ministry urged Canada to "immediately correct its wrong practices" and said that Beijing would take any necessary measures to defend the rights and interests of Chinese companies.

Canada's announcement came after encouragement by U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan during a meeting with Trudeau and Cabinet ministers on Sunday. Sullivan began his first visit to Beijing on Tuesday.

Chinese officials are likely to raise concerns about the American tariffs with Sullivan as Beijing continues to repair its economy, which was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. In May, U.S. President Joe Biden slapped major new tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, advanced batteries, solar cells, steel, aluminum and medical equipment.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson on Tuesday urged Canada to

"not politicize economic and trade issues."

"China's burgeoning electric vehicle industry is the result of continuous technological innovation, a well-established industrial and supply chain and full market competition," spokesperson Lin Jian said.

Trudeau said that Canada also would impose a 25% tariff on Chinese steel and aluminum.

"Actors like China have chosen to give themselves an unfair advantage in the global marketplace," he said.

One of the Chinese-made EVs imported into Canada is from Tesla, made at the company's Shanghai factory, though the U.S. company could avoid the tariff by switching to supplying Canada from factories in the U.S. or Germany.

Chinese brands aren't yet a player in Canada. However, Chinese EV company BYD established a Canadian corporate entity last spring and has indicated that it intends to try and enter the Canadian market as early as next year.

Chinese firms can sell EVs for as little as \$12,000. China's solar cell plants and steel and aluminum mills have enough capacity to meet much of the world's demand. Chinese officials argue their production keeps prices low and would aid a transition to a green economy.

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said that Canada also will launch a 30-day consultation about possible tariffs on Chinese batteries, battery parts, semiconductors, critical minerals, metals and solar panels.

"China has an intentional state-directed policy of overcapacity and oversupply designed to cripple our own industry," Freeland said. "We simply will not allow that to happen to our EV sector, which has shown such promise."

German economy shrinks a bit in Q2, slowing recovery

BERLIN, Aug. 28, (Xinhua): The German economy saw a slight contraction in the second quarter (Q2) of the year, according to new data released on Tuesday. This was primarily due to decreased investments and a downturn in the construction industry, said the country's official statistics office.

The gross domestic product (GDP) of Europe's largest economy fell by 0.1 percent in Q2 compared to the previous three months, confirming preliminary figures.

"After the slight increase in the previous quarter, the German economy slowed down again in spring," said Ruth Brand, president of the statistics office. Meanwhile, the increase in the first quarter was 0.2 percent.

The Q2 slowdown was largely driven by a significant decline in investment, particularly in machinery and equipment, which dropped by 4.1 percent quarter-on-quarter. The construction industry also faced challenges during this period, with gross value added down 3.2 percent. However, overall, economic sectors only saw a minimal drop of 0.1 per-

cent.

Germany's foreign trade performance in Q2 further weighed on quarterly economic growth. Total imports of goods and services were stagnated compared with the first quarter, while exports fell by 0.2 percent. The decline was consistent with a persistent deterioration in export sentiment observed in recent months.

The ifo Institute for Economic Research's German export expectations have been on a downward trend since June, with the latest figures for August showing further decline. "Exporters are not currently benefiting from the economic growth in other European countries," ifo expert Klaus Wohlrabe noted on Tuesday. Germany's export industry is unlikely to drive economic growth in the short term, he added.

Looking ahead to the third quarter, Germany's central bank anticipates only a slight rise in economic output, which would further delay the country's economic recovery. In its August report, the bank mentioned that a significant and broad-based recession is unlikely, barring any new negative shocks to the economy.

UK PM: new budget will be painful

LONDON, Aug. 28, (KUNA): The next state budget will be "painful" and the government will have to make "big asks" of the public, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer warned on Tuesday.

Starmer has given a major Downing Street speech today about his plans for government ahead of parliament's return from recess next week, BBC reported.

He said people would have to "accept short-term pain for long-term good".

During the speech, Starmer claimed things were "worse than we ever im-

agined", accusing the Conservatives of creating a 22 billion Sterling pounds black hole in the public finances.

He argued that people who took part in the recent riots "saw the cracks in our society after 14 years of failure and they exploited them".

Looking to the future, Starmer said "tough action" would be needed to "fix the foundations of the country". The speech comes one week ahead of parliament opening.

He repeated his pledge, made during the election campaign, that the government would not raise National Insurance, income tax or VAT.

High rents are forcing US small businesses into 'tough choices'

NEW YORK, Aug. 28, (AP): While many costs have come down for small business, rents remain high and in some cases are still rising, forcing many owners into some uncomfortable decisions.

"Every time the rent goes up, we have to raise prices, to keep up with the cost," said Adelita Valentine, owner of HairFreek Barbers in Los Angeles. "But with the cost of living, it makes it difficult on our customers."

Other owners are choosing to be late on payments or seeking out new locations where the rent is lower. A few are pushing back against their landlord.

Although inflation is easing, it remains a top concern for small businesses. According to Bank of America internal data, rent payments per small business client rose 11% year-over-year in July. That's more than twice the increase for renting and owning a residence, a metric known as shelter, according to the government's monthly Consumer Price Index. That figure rose 5.1% in July.

And although the situation has improved since the height of the pandemic, a survey by business networking platform Alignable of more than 6,000 small business owners found that 41% could not pay their July rent on time and in full. And 52% said they've encountered rent spikes in the past six months. The rent for Valentine's barbershop rose to \$4,000 in January from \$3,600 in December, the fifth increase in the past eight years. She had to raise the price for her cuts from \$35 to \$40.

Two months ago, she moved locations for a cheaper \$3,200 rent, but her space is smaller now and she sees fewer families coming in.

"A lot of people can't afford to take a whole family to get haircuts," after the price increase, she said.

Peter Yu has owned iPAC Automotive, an auto repair and detailing shop in Ontario, Canada, for six years. He said the rent on the shop typically went up about 4% a year. But when his landlord sold the property to a new owner, Yu's rent jumped from about \$1,800 (2,500 Canadian dollars) to about \$2,700 (3,700 Canadian dollars) after three months.

He contemplated moving, but decided that the cost of a move would be more than just paying the extra rent.

Yu tried to raise prices a month ago, but customers would come in and say "Oh, it's too expensive," and leave, he said. So, he had to drop the price increase in order to get those customers back.

"When we do try to raise our prices, consumers don't have the money to pay for it. They're looking for financing options," he said. Yu's services run the gamut from paint correction that costs a few hundred dollars to trouble-

Raising prices or changing location?



Adelita Valentine, owner of HairFreek Barbers, stands for a photo outside her barbershop in Los Angeles, Wednesday, Aug. 21, 2024. (AP)

Questions about the safety of Tesla's 'Full Self-Driving' system are growing

DETROIT, Aug. 28, (AP): Three times in the past four months, William Stein, a technology analyst at Truist Securities, has taken Elon Musk up on his invitation to try the latest versions of Tesla's vaunted "Full Self-Driving" system.

A Tesla equipped with the technology, the company says, can travel from point to point with little human intervention. Yet each time Stein drove one of the cars, he said, the vehicle made unsafe or illegal maneuvers. His most recent test-drive earlier this month, Stein said, left his 16-year-old son, who accompanied him, "terrified."

Stein's experiences, along with a

Seattle-area Tesla crash involving Full Self-Driving that killed a motorcyclist in April, have drawn the attention of federal regulators. They have already been investigating Tesla's automated driving systems for more than two years because of dozens of crashes that raised safety concerns.

The problems have led people who monitor autonomous vehicles to become more skeptical that Tesla's automated system will ever be able to operate safely on a wide-scale spread. Stein says he doubts Tesla is even close to deploying a fleet of autonomous robotaxis by next year as Musk has predicted it

will. The latest incidents come at a pivotal time for Tesla. Musk has told investors it's possible that Full Self-Driving will be able to operate more safely than human drivers by the end of this year, if not next year.

And in less than two months, the company is scheduled to unveil a vehicle built expressly to be a robotaxi. For Tesla to put robotaxis on the road, Musk has said the company will show regulators that the system can drive more safely than humans. Under federal rules, the Teslas would have to meet national standards for vehicle safety.

shooting problematic EV battery and electric drive units for out-of-warranty Teslas that can cost up to \$15,000.

So instead, he's going to try to improve his marketing, close more sales, and find a way to offer more financing.

Standing firm against a landlord sometimes works. Janna Rodriguez has run her home-based The Innovative Daycare Corp. in Freeport, New York, since 2018. When she first signed her lease, she paid \$3,500, plus costs including landscaping and maintenance. In 2020, the pandemic began, and her

landlord raised her rent to \$3,800 and also made her start paying half of the homeowner's insurance. Last year, the landlord raised her rent to \$4,100, plus the additional expenses.

Rodriguez raised her prices for the first time, by \$10 per child per week, to help offset the rising rent.

This year she successfully pushed back when the landlord wanted to raise the rent yet again.

"I said to them, if you do that, then I'm going to find another property to move my business to, because at this

point now you're trying to bankrupt a business, right?"

It's worked - so far. But Rodriguez is worried about the future.

For others, negotiating a late payment is an option. Nicole Pomije owner of Minneapolis-based The Cookie Cups, which makes cookie kits for kids, has a 4,000-foot office space along with a warehouse where she develops her line of baking kits. Her rent rose 10% this year to \$4,000 monthly. Then there are unanticipated bills, such as a \$1,500 for snow plowing.

Intelligent weeding machines showcased

AI speeds up industrial revolution in China

HARBIN, Aug. 28, (Xinhua): In the scorching summer heat, a green weeding machine is advancing steadily along rows of corn at a farm of the Beidahuang Group in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, without a single operator in sight.

"This intelligent weeding machine has been developed by our team using artificial intelligence (AI) technology, and relies on AI models and edge intelligence decision-making techniques to accurately differentiate between corn plants and weeds," said Cheng Siyao, vice dean of the School of Computer Science and Technology at Harbin Institute of Technology.

Cheng added that this machine can

significantly improve the efficiency of weeding operations as its identification accuracy reaches over 95 percent. She also revealed that this new technology can be widely applied in vast stretches of farmland.

From the Go champion defector of DeepMind and AlphaGo to the mighty ChatGPT, AI technology has brought about tremendous changes to China and many other countries in the world.

On farms, in factories and cyberspace, AI technology and algorithms have become efficiency multipliers and new engines of development across many sectors in China.

At the factories of Harbin Electric Corporation, an AI-powered intelligent

welding system has been implemented for welding nuclear power equipment.

"The intelligent welding system can automatically detect the inner diameter, appearance and defects of weld seams, adjusting the welding method as needed," said Liu Xinxin, deputy general manager of the innovation and digitalization department at the corporation.

"The system can also record and improve its performance via AI models, reducing human labor by 50 to 75 percent, doubling the efficiency while maintaining the same welding standard," Liu added.

While empowering traditional industries, AI is also creating brand-new application scenarios, driving the rapid

growth of emerging industries.

"With our expertise in the Internet of Things, big data processing and other technologies, we launched an AI imaging-assisted diagnosis platform to help more patients access better healthcare services close to home," said Wang Yunan with BOE Technology Group Co., Ltd. at a forum of the just-concluded 2024 Sun Island Annual Conference for Entrepreneurs.

Wang explained that this platform, which integrates smart medical devices, telemedicine platforms and health management systems to optimize the allocation of medical resources, was recognized as one of the top 10 AI achievements showcased at the forum.

Ghanaian Counsellor praises KTUF's educational initiative

Kuwait Labour Union hosts educational workshop for Ghanaian community on labour law

By Elvis Osei

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: Migrants Labour Office, in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Ghana on 23rd August, organized a workshop for the Ghanaian community in Kuwait. The event, centered around Kuwait's private sector Labour Law (No. 6/2010), took place at the main auditorium of the Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF) office.

Mr. Nasser Al-Azimi, General Secretary of the KTUF, opened the workshop with a speech expressing his gratitude for this important initiative. He commended the Ghanaian Embassy and all participants for their efforts in mobilizing the community for such an educational event. Mr. Al-Azimi emphasized the Federation's ongoing commitment to educating workers in Kuwait about their rights under the labour laws, stating that the education of labourers remains a top priority.

Mr. Husin-Mubarak Andani, Counsellor to the Republic of Ghana, also expressed his appreciation to the KTUF for their continued support in educating expatriates living in Kuwait. He echoed the sentiments of the Ghanaian community, quoting the popular phrase "Oliver Twist asks for more," and humbly requested that the Federation continue to offer such educational opportunities.

The workshop was led by Mr. Mohammed Al-Arada, a consul-



Group photo during the workshop.

tant for KTUF and head of the Migrants' Office. He guided a group of 35 participants through the key aspects of Kuwait's labour law, covering topics such as workers' rights, the employment of women, work contracts, obligations of labourers,

indemnities, working hours, health and safety, workplace injuries, and labour disputes. Mr. Al-Arada encouraged participants to regularly visit the KTUF website, accessible via a QR code, to stay informed about their rights and obligations

under the law. He noted that a lack of familiarity with labour laws often leads to violations and exploitation by unscrupulous employers.

Addressing the issue of passport confiscation by employers, Mr. Al-Arada clarified that it is illegal for

employers to retain a worker's passport. However, if a mutual agreement is reached between the worker and employer, a letter of consent must be signed by the worker whose passport is being held.

The workshop concluded with a

Q&A session, allowing participants to seek clarification on issues that concerned them. Many attendees expressed their gratitude for the detailed and informative workshop, calling for more such training sessions in the future.



Photos during the campaign.



Campaign aims to provide free textbooks to students in need

LuLu Hypermarket supports community giving with 'Donate a Book, Earn Happiness' campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: LuLu Hypermarket, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, has launched a heartwarming 'Donate a Book, Earn Happiness' campaign to coincide with the back-to-school season.

The campaign aims to encourage customers to donate their pre-loved books, fostering a culture of sharing knowledge and supporting educational needs. From 28 August to 15 September, parents

and children can donate school textbooks for 1st to 12th Grade at any LuLu Hypermarket outlet in Kuwait.

For every book donated, the generous donor will be rewarded with 1,000 LuLu Happiness points, which can be redeemed for exciting rewards and discounts.

The donated books will be collected and students who may not have access to necessary text-

books can secure them without any charges or obligations. This aims to ensure that all students have the opportunity to pursue their education without financial constraints.

The region's leading retailer urges customers to participate in this noble cause by donating their pre-loved textbooks. Join LuLu Hypermarket in spreading knowledge, and making a positive impact in the lives of students in Kuwait.

The Conversation

Advancements in stratospheric tech could enhance global connectivity

High-altitude platform stations aim to bridge global internet gaps

By Mariette DiChristina
Boston University

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

About one-third of the global population, around 3 billion people, don't have access to the internet or have poor connections because of infrastructure limitations, economic disparities and geographic isolation.

Today's satellites and ground-based networks leave communications gaps where, because of geography, setting up traditional ground-based communications equipment would be too expensive.

High-altitude platform stations - telecommunications equipment positioned high in the air, on uncrewed balloons, airships, gliders and airplanes - could increase social and economic equality by filling internet connectivity gaps in ground and satellite coverage. This could allow more people to participate fully in the digital age.

One of us, Mohamed-Slim Alouini, is an electrical engineer who contributed to an experiment that showed it is possible to provide high data rates and ubiquitous 5G coverage from the stratosphere. The stratosphere is the second lowest layer of the atmosphere, ranging from 4 to 30 miles above the Earth. Commercial planes usually fly in the lower part of the stratosphere. The experiment measured signals between platform stations and users on the ground in three scenarios: a person staying in one place, a person driving a car and a person operating a boat.

My colleagues measured how strong the signal is in relation to interference and background noise levels. This is one of the measures of network reliability. The results showed that the platform stations can support high-data-rate applications such as streaming 4K resolution videos and can cover 15 to 20 times the area of standard terrestrial towers.

Early attempts by Facebook and Google to commercially deploy platform stations were unsuccessful. But recent investments, technological improvements and interest from traditional aviation companies and specialized aerospace startups may change the equation.

The goal is global connectivity, a cause that brought the platform stations idea recognition in the World Economic Forum's 2024 Top 10 Emerging Technologies report. The international industry initiative HAPS Alliance, which includes academic

partners, is also pushing toward that goal.

Platform stations would be faster, more cost-effective and more flexible than satellite-based systems.

Because they keep communications equipment closer to Earth than satellites, the stations could offer stronger, higher-capacity signals. This would enable real-time communications speedy enough to communicate with standard smartphones, high-resolution capabilities for imaging tasks and greater sensitivity for sensing applications. They transmit data via free-space optics, or light beams, and large-scale antenna array systems, which can send large amounts of data quickly.

Satellites can be vulnerable to eavesdropping or jamming when their orbits bring them over adversarial countries. But platform stations remain within the airspace of a single country, which reduces that risk.

High-altitude platform stations are also easier to put in place than satellites, which have high launch and maintenance costs. And the regulatory requirements and compliance procedures required to secure spots in the stratosphere are likely to be simpler than the complex international laws governing satellite orbits. Platform stations are also easier to upgrade, so improvements could be deployed more quickly.

Platform stations are also potentially less polluting than satellite mega-constellations because satellites burn up upon reentry and can release harmful metals into the atmosphere, while platform stations can be powered by clean energy sources such as solar and green hydrogen.

The key challenges to practical platform stations are increasing the amount of time they can stay aloft to months at a time, boosting green onboard power and improving reliability - especially during automated takeoff and landing through the lower turbulent layers of the atmosphere.

Platform stations could play a critical role in emergency and humanitarian situations by supporting relief efforts when ground-based networks are damaged or inoperative.

The stations could also connect Internet of Things (IoT) devices and sensors in remote settings to better monitor the environment and manage resources.

In agriculture, the stations could use imaging and sensing technologies to help farmers monitor crop health, soil conditions and water resources.

Their capability for high-resolution imaging could also support navigation and mapping activities crucial for cartography, urban planning and disaster re-

sponse.

The stations could also do double duty by carrying instruments for atmospheric monitoring, climate studies and remote sensing of Earth's surface features, vegetation and oceans.

Platform stations could be based on different types of aircraft.

Balloons offer stable, long-duration operation at high altitudes and can be tethered or free-floating. Airships, also known as dirigibles or blimps, use lighter-than-air gases and are larger and more maneuverable than balloons. They're especially well suited for surveillance, communications and research.

Gliders and powered aircraft can be controlled more precisely than balloons, which are sensitive to variations in wind speed. In addition, powered aircraft, which include drones and fixed-wing airplanes, can provide electricity to communication equipment, sensors and cameras.

Platform stations could make use of diverse power sources, including increasingly lightweight and efficient solar cells, high-energy-density batteries, green hydrogen internal combustion engines, green hydrogen fuel cells, which are now at the testing stage, and eventually, laser beam powering from ground- or space-based solar stations.

The evolution of lightweight aircraft designs coupled with advancements in high-efficiency motors and propellers enable planes to fly longer and carry heavier payloads. These cutting-edge lightweight planes could lead to platform stations capable of maneuvering in the stratosphere for extended periods.

Meanwhile, improvements in stratospheric weather models and atmospheric models make it easier to predict and simulate the conditions under which the platform stations would operate.

Commercial deployment of platform stations, at least for post-disaster or emergency situations, could be in place by the end of the decade. For instance, a consortium in Japan, a country with remote mountainous and island communities, has earmarked US\$100 million for solar-powered, high-altitude platform stations.

Platform stations could bridge the digital divide by increasing access to critical services such as education and health care, providing new economic opportunities and improving emergency response and environmental monitoring. As advances in technology continue to drive their evolution, platform stations are set to play a crucial role in a more inclusive and resilient digital future. (AP)

'Gas prices drop, airfares fall'

Labor day weekend travel expected to break records

WASHINGTON, Aug 28: Many children have gone back to school in the U.S., and the days are getting shorter, but there is still one more excuse to use the swimsuits and beach towels before packing them up: Labor Day.

Airports, highways, beaches and theme parks are expected to be packed for the long holiday weekend - as a lot of Americans mark the unofficial end of summer the same way they celebrated the season's unofficial start: by traveling.

The Transportation Security Administration anticipates screening more than 17 million people between Thursday and next Wednesday - a record for the Labor Day period.

AAA says bookings for domestic travel are running 9% higher than last year for the holiday weekend, while international trips are down 4%.

American Airlines plans to have its largest Labor Day weekend operation ever and expects a 14% increase in passengers compared to last year.

If you are traveling to get a last blast of summer, here is a rundown of what you need to know.

Motorists are getting a break on gasoline compared with last year. The nationwide average was recently \$3.44 per gallon, compared to \$3.86 a year ago, according to AAA.

For electric vehicles, the average price for a kilowatt of power at an L2 commercial charging station is about 34 cents. The average is under 25 cents in Kansas and Missouri but tops 40 cents in several states, including New Hampshire, Tennessee and Kentucky. Hawaii is the costliest, at 56 cents.

Average airfares in July were down 7.1% from June and 2.8% from July 2023, according to the government's consumer price index. The trend appears to be accelerating as the peak summer-vacation season comes to an end.

"Now we're falling into that traditional fall season when demand slumps, and you're also seeing that in airfares," said Steve Hafner, CEO of the travel metasearch site Kayak. "Airfares are down from the summer about 26% already, and they're down even from the previous fall, about 4%."

If you plan to start your drive on the Thursday or Friday before Labor Day, you will be sharing the road with commuters. You might want to leave before morning rush hour or even in the evening to avoid jams.

Transportation-data provider INRIX says the worst time to travel by car on Thursday will be between 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and on Friday between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. That flips on Saturday, when you'll want to avoid driving between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.

For the return trip, pretty much all day Monday - from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. - will be a slog, according to INRIX.

And watch out for risky drivers. New data from Arity, part of insurance giant Allstate, indicates that speeding over 80 mph is up 83% and "very high speeding" - faster than 100 mph - is up more than 50%.

In a surprising twist, however, Arity says distracted driving has dropped on the last three Labor Days.

Friday, according to the TSA.

The agency expects to screen 2.86 million people that day. While an impressive number, it would not even rank in the top 15 days in TSA's history. The single-day record of 3.01 million was set on July 7, the Sunday after Independence Day.

TSA says it has enough screeners to keep the time it takes to get through regular lines to 30 minutes or less and to no more than 10 minutes for PreCheck lines.

American Airlines says Thursday and Friday will be its busiest days, with 6,400 flights per day, followed by Labor Day itself, when the carrier has 6,300 scheduled flights.

First, check your itinerary before leaving for the airport. It's better to be stuck at home than stranded at the airport.

If your flight is canceled, the airline might automatically rebook you. That might not be the best option.

"Get on the phone (to the airline's help center), get in front of an agent, reach out to the airline via social media if you have to, but find out what the other options are," says Julian Kheel, the founder and CEO of Points Path, a browser extension that lets users compare fares with deals available using frequent-flyer points. "You can almost always find another option that may work better than the one offered by the airline."

Kheel said agents at the airport have more leeway to help, but they might be inundated if there are many canceled flights. DIY rebooking on the airline website or app might be faster, he said.

Phone tip: Some experts say if the airline has international help numbers, call one of those to get through more quickly than on the U.S. line.

Airlines are required to provide refunds - including for extra fees paid - to passengers whose flights are canceled for any reason. However, they are not required to pay cash compensation, and no major U.S. airlines do. Only Alaska, Southwest and JetBlue even promise travel vouchers if the cancellation is their fault.

If you're stuck overnight, ask the airline about covering the costs of a hotel, meals and ground transportation. All major U.S. airlines except Frontier promise to help with all three for "controllable" disruptions, according to the Transportation Department's airline-policy dashboard. However, those commitments don't apply to cancellations caused by weather.

Keep receipts for all out-of-pocket expenses in case you can file a claim later.

- Leave early. Everything will take longer than you expect, including getting through airport security. If you plan to park at the airport, make sure there will be spaces available when you arrive - many airports now post that information online.

- Watch the weather. Even if skies are clear at home, there could be storms at your flight's destination or along your road route. Have a backup route.

- Be nice. Flight cancellations and bumper-to-bumper traffic are frustrating, but you won't be the only one who is stuck. Customer-service agents are busy during peak travel periods, so it's important to be patient and respectful while they try to help you. (AP)

Parton sending free books to children around the world

LOS ANGELES, Aug 28, (AP) — Dolly Parton's father grew up poor and never got the chance to learn to read.

Inspired by her upbringing, the 78-year-old country music legend has made it her mission over the past three decades to improve literacy through her Imagination Library book giveaway program. It has expanded statewide in places like Missouri and Kentucky, two of 21 states where all children under the age of 5 can enroll to have books mailed to their homes monthly.

To celebrate, she made stops Tuesday in both states to promote the program and tell the story of her father, Robert Lee Parton, who died in 2000.

"In the mountains, a lot of people never had a chance to go to school because they had to work on the farms," she said at the Folly Theater in Kansas City, Missouri. "They had to do whatever it took to keep the rest of the family going."

Parton, the fourth of 12 children from a poor Appalachian family, said her father was "one of the smartest people I've ever known," but he was embarrassed that he couldn't read.

And so she decided to help other kids, initially rolling out the program in a single county in her home state of Tennessee in 1995. It spread quickly from there, and today over 3 million books are sent out each month. Since the program started, books have been sent to more than 240 million to kids in the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Australia.

Missouri covers the full cost of the program, which totaled \$11 million in the latest fiscal year. Most of the other states chip in money through a cost-sharing model.

"The kids started calling me the 'book lady,'" Parton said. "And Daddy was more proud of that than he was that I was a star. But Daddy got to feeling like he had really done something great as well."

In Kentucky, the Imagination Library reaches children in all 120 counties, Gov. Andy Beshear said at an event Tuesday with Parton. More than 120,000 Kentucky children - nearly half of all preschoolers in the state - are currently enrolled to receive books through the program, first lady Brittainy Beshear said.

Encourage

It encourages families to read together, and it allows children to have their own personal library before starting kindergarten, at no cost to their families, the first lady said.

"It's really a great way to teach children when they're very young to learn to love books and to learn to read," Parton said during the event in Lexington, Kentucky.

Parton, who earned the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award a decade ago, said she eventually wants to see the program in every state. While there is a presence in all of them, 21 have legislation ensuring all kids under 5 can enroll. She said she is proud that her dad lived long enough to see the program get off the ground.

"That was kind of my way to honor my dad, because the Bible says to honor your father and mother," she said. "And I don't think that just means, 'just obey.' I think it means to bring honor to their name and to them."

Parton is an author herself whose titles include the 1996 children's book "Coat of Many Colors," which is part of the book giveaway program.

As she prepared to sing her famous song by the same name, she explained that it is about a coat her mother made her from a patchwork of mismatched fabric, since the family was too poor to afford a large piece of a single fabric. Parton was proud of it because her mother likened it the multicolored coat that is told about in the Bible - a fantastic gift from Jacob to his son Joseph.

Classmates, however, laughed at her. For years, she said the experience was a "deep, deep hurt."

She said that with writing and performing the song, "the hurt just left me." She received letters over the years from people saying it did the same thing for them.

"The fact," she explained, "that that little song has just meant so much not only to me, but to so many other people for so many different reasons, makes it my favorite song."

Asked in Kentucky about her lasting legacy, Parton said she'd like to be remembered as "a good ole girl" who worked hard and tried to make people happy and the world a better place.

People

Variety



Catherine O'Hara, (from left), Winona Ryder, and Jenna Ortega pose for photographers upon arrival for the press conference of the film 'Beetlejuice Beetlejuice' during the 81st edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Wednesday, Aug. 28. (AP)

Film

Hollywood icons and major premieres set the stage

'Beetlejuice' to open Venice Film Fest

VENICE, Italy, Aug 28, (AP) — The 81st edition of the Venice Film Festival is kicking off in Hollywood fashion with the world premiere of "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice" Wednesday. Michael Keaton, Winona Ryder, Jenna Ortega, Catherine O'Hara and Monica Bellucci are among the cast expected to grace the red carpet.

The film is a sequel to Tim Burton's 1988 horror-comedy, which brings the Deetz family back to the family's country home after the death of Charles. Ryder's sullen Lydia is now mother to her own "surly" teenage daughter, Astrid, played by Ortega, the star of Netflix's popular series "Wednesday." And like Lydia did a few decades ago, Astrid stumbles upon that old model city in the attic and unleashes Keaton's mischievous ghoul.

A Warner Bros. release, "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice" is premiering out of competition before opening in theatres worldwide next week. The evening will kick off a busy 10 days on the Lido, the barrier island across the Venetian lagoon where the festival has been headquartered since 1932.

The festival will bring George Clooney and Brad Pitt back later in the week, with the out of competition premiere of "Wolfs" and close out with Kevin Costner's "Horizon: An American Saga-Chapter 2" on Sept. 7 before the awards are announced.

Major films vying for the Golden Lion include Todd Phillips' "Joker: Folie à Deux," with Lady Gaga and Joaquin Phoenix; Pablo Larrain's Maria Callas film "Maria," starring Angelina Jolie; the thriller "Babygirl" starring Nicole Kidman and Harris Dickinson from filmmaker Halina Reijn; Luca Guadagnino's William S. Burroughs' adaptation "Queer," with Daniel Craig; and Pedro Almodóvar's first English-language film, "The Room Next Door," starring Julianne Moore and Tilda Swinton.

Here's everything you need to know. One of the most prestigious film festivals in the world, second only to Cannes, Venice's festival is also technically the oldest. It is now a reliably starry affair, gathering some of the best films in international cinema. It was established in 1932, then a non-competitive event, by the La Biennale di Venezia, hosting films like "Grand Hotel" and "It Happened One Night." By 1935,

they decided to make it an annual happening.

The Golden Lion award wouldn't be introduced until 1949 ("Rashōmon" won in 1951). Other winners throughout history include "Belle de jour" (1967), "Au revoir les enfants" (1987), "Brokeback Mountain" (2005), "Somewhere" (2010) and, last year: "Poor Things." A film market was added in 2012, also a year that festival director Alberto Barbera attributes to its turnaround as an important destination for awards hopefuls.

The festival kicks off on Aug. 28 with the premiere of "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice" and runs through Sept. 7, when the awards will be announced.

The private water taxis are going to be packed with some of Hollywood's biggest stars. Angelina Jolie, Lady Gaga, George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett, Daniel Craig, Tilda Swinton, Jude Law, Julianne Moore, Kevin Costner and Joaquin Phoenix are just a few of the names expected to grace the festival this week.

Moments

It is a relief to many after last year's festival took place amid the Hollywood strikes, leaving the red carpets more muted than usual. While this year doesn't have much in the way of teenage idols, we can be assured of some great movie star moments.

There are also a few big Hollywood films playing out of competition: "Wolfs," with Pitt and Clooney, "Horizon: An American Saga-Chapter 2," and "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice." The AP's most anticipated films list is here.

Behind the scenes, there might be some competition for private water taxis to shuttle the A-listers between their various engagements, or for the best suites at the Belmond Cipriani, but so far no "Don't Worry Darling" intrigue has bubbled up. Remember, though, "spitgate" happened in the middle of the festival. Something is bound to catch the internet's eye.

The pair are legally single but are still fighting over issues like custody, finances and a winery in France. And the festival has taken care to schedule their films (and arrivals and departures) days apart to avoid any overlap. As Barbera told Vanity Fair: "Angelina will

be on the first day, on Thursday the 29, and she will leave right after with Pablo Larrain to go to Telluride. So Brad will arrive only on Saturday, to Venice. There is no way that they can cross each other at the Lido."

Venice had difficulty competing with Cannes and Toronto to get the biggest films for a long time. There were always stars and significant films, some of which got Oscar nominations and wins. But Barbera thinks things really changed in 2012, when they hosted the premiere of "Gravity," which went on to win a leading seven Oscars that March and established Venice as a place to launch a campaign. It's only intensified as the membership of the academy has gotten more international. Since 2014, they've hosted four best picture winners ("Birdman," "Spotlight," "The Shape of Water" and "Nomadland") and 19 nominees.

When people think of Venice, they usually think of landmarks like the Rialto bridge and St. Mark's Square. The festival actually takes place on a different island, a nearly 7-mile (11-kilometer) barrier island called the Lido - about a 20-minute ferry (vaporetto) away where motorized vehicles, including cars and buses, and bikes are allowed.

A military outpost in the 12th century, it transformed into a seaside resort, a favorite of European aristocrats, by the end of the 19th. In 1932, the Venice Film Festival decided to make the island its headquarters.

On the Lido the five-star hotel of choice is the Hotel Excelsior, which dates back to 1908 and where Quentin Tarantino has stayed. But rooms go quickly, and there are so many luxury hotels on the different islands that offer a bit more privacy away from the frenzy of the festival and the photographers.

Perhaps the most famous of the bunch is the Belmond Hotel Cipriani, on Giudecca, home of one of Clooney's favorite bars. There's the Hotel Danieli, which has been featured in films like "Moonraker" and "Casino Royale," and regularly hosts kickoff parties for the festival, with trade publication Variety, to welcome the jury. Another favorite is the Gritti Palace, where everyone from Pitt to Elizabeth Taylor has stayed. There's also a St. Regis and the Aman Venice, where George and Amal Clooney were married.

Features

ARABIC TIMES

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2024

Superior Court, is asking the judge to issue an injunction that would force the studio to stop production on the new series, and they are also seeking punitive and compensatory damages.

Warner Bros. began developing a reboot of "ER" for HBO's streaming service, Max, in 2020 without Sherri's knowledge, ac-



Crichton



Shkreli

ording to the lawsuit. (AP)

NEW YORK: Martin Shkreli, once dubbed "Pharma Bro" for doubling the price of a life-saving drug, was ordered by a federal judge Monday to turn over all copies of Wu-Tang Clan's unreleased "Once Upon a Time in

Shaolin" album to his lawyers by Friday.

Judge Pamela K. Chen in Brooklyn wrote that Shkreli must produce all copies of what is sometimes referred to as the world's rarest album and report the names of anyone he distributed the music to by Sept. 30, along with any revenues he received from it.

In June, Shkreli was sued by a cryptocurrency collective that bought the only known copy of the album for \$4.75 million.

The collective, PleasDAO, accused Shkreli of retaining digital copies of the album in violation of their deal and disseminating them widely among his social media followers. (AP)

People & Places

Gaming

'Honor of Kings'

Roblox game boosts empathy in children

NEW YORK, Aug 28, (AP) — The notion that online gaming could help players develop charitable habits seemed bold when the anti-poverty nonprofit Comic Relief US tested its own multiverse on the popular world-building app Roblox last year.

As philanthropy wrestles with how to authentically engage new generations of digitally savvy donors, Comic Relief US CEO Alison Moore said it was "audacious" to design an experience that still maintained the "twinkle" of the organization that's behind entertainment-driven fundraisers like Red Nose Day.

But the launch was successful enough that Comic Relief US is expanding the game this year. Kids Relief's second annual "Game to Change the World" campaign features a magical new Roblox world, an exclusive virtual concert and a partner in children's television pioneer Nickelodeon.

The goal is to instill empathy and raise money through a scavenger hunt across various realms, including SpongeBob SquarePants and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Users travel through portals to collect magical tools that will improve their surroundings. The net proceeds from in-game purchases will be donated.

The community-building inherent in collaborative gaming is intended to subtly encourage off-screen acts of kindness.

"It's a little bit like me helping you, you helping me - all of us together. I love the idea of doing that in a game space," Moore told The Associated Press. "It's not meant to be a banner ad or a sign that says, 'Do Good.' It's meant to be emblematic in the gameplay itself."

Nickelodeon is also promoting an instructional guide for kids to start their own local projects in real life such as backpack drives.



Tennant

The fit comes naturally, he said, considering that young people value experiences such as gaming over the material possessions that past generations might have bought at a charitable auction.

"It just makes sense," Howard said.

But he finds that partners must overcome the negative stigma associated with online chat rooms. To its credit, Howard said, Roblox combines the creativity of popular competitor Fortnite with less "toxicity" because of its emphasis on cooperation over competition.

Comic Relief US kept in mind the need to build a game that appeals to both children and their parents, Moore said.

To navigate that tricky balance, the nonprofit has adopted a mindset that she credits Nickelodeon with originating: Include parents in the conversation but speak to their children.

Charitable donations are increasingly being made through gaming, according to business strategist Marcus Howard.

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Jury member Zhang Ziyi (left) and jury president Isabelle Huppert pose for photographers at the photo call for the Jury during the 81st edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on Wednesday, Aug. 28. (AP)

—Details Page 11



Obituary

Publishing mogul nurtured culture of reading

Barnes & Noble founder Riggio dies

NEW YORK, Aug 28, (AP) — Leonard Riggio, a brash, self-styled underdog who transformed the publishing industry by building Barnes & Noble into the country's most powerful bookseller before his company was overtaken by the rise of Amazon.com, has died at age 83.

Riggio died Tuesday "following a valiant battle with Alzheimer's disease," according to a statement issued by his family. He had stepped down as chairman in 2019 after the chain was sold to the hedge fund Elliott Advisors.

"His leadership spanned decades, during which he not only grew the company but also nurtured a culture of innovation and a love for reading," reads a statement from Barnes & Noble.

Riggio's near-half-century reign began in 1971 when he used a \$1.2 million loan to purchase Barnes & Noble's name and the flagship store on lower Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. He acquired hundreds of new stores over the next 20 years and, in the 1990s, launched what became a nationwide empire of "superstores" that combined a chain's discount prices and massive capacity with the cozy appeal of couches, reading chairs and cafes.

"Our bookstores were designed to be welcoming as opposed to intimidating," Riggio told The New York Times in 2016. "These weren't elitist places. You could go in, get a cup of coffee, sit down and read a book for as long as you like, use the restroom. These were innovations that we had that no one thought was possible."

Bestseller

He grew up working class in New York City, liked to say he preferred socializing with childhood pals over fellow business leaders and was informal enough among associates to be known as "Lenny." But in his time no one in the book world was more feared. With the power to make any given book a bestseller, or a flop, to alter the market on an idle whim, Riggio could terrify publishers simply by suggesting prices were too high or that he might sign up such top sellers as Stephen King and John Grisham and publish them himself. He even tried to buy the country's biggest book wholesaler, Ingram, in 1999, but backed off after facing government resistance.

By the end of the 1990s, an estimated one of every eight books sold in the U.S. were purchased through the chain, where front table displays were so valuable that publishers paid thousands of dollars to have their books included. Thousands of independent sellers went out of business even as Riggio insisted that he was expanding the market by opening up in neighborhoods without an existing store. Instead, independent owners spoke of being overwhelmed by competition from both Barnes & Noble and Borders Book Group, the ri-

val chains sometimes setting up stores in close proximity to each other and to the locally owned business.

Barnes & Noble became so identified as an overdog that one of the 1990s' most popular romantic comedies, "You've Got Mail," starred Tom Hanks as an executive for the "Fox Books" chain and Meg Ryan as the owner of an endangered independent store in Manhattan.

"We are going to seduce them with our square footage, and our discounts, and our deep arm chairs, and our cappuccino," Hanks' character confidently declares. "They're going to hate us at the beginning, but we'll get 'em in the end."

For a time, it seemed industry conversation was an ongoing response to Barnes & Noble. Publishers were known to change the cover or title of a book simply because a Barnes & Noble official had objected. "Angela's Ashes" author Frank McCourt found himself condemned by the American Booksellers Association, the trade organization for independents, after agreeing to appear in a Barnes & Noble commercial. On the floor of the industry's annual national trade show, long hosted by the ABA, independent store employees would hiss at attendees wearing Barnes & Noble badges.

When novelist Russell Banks, addressing Barnes & Noble's annual shareholder meeting in 1995, declared that he was both a stock holder and a happy B&N customer, some independent sellers stopped offering his books.

"You must know that I'll never read, buy or sell another word you write," Richard Howarth, owner of Square Books in Oxford, Mississippi, wrote to him. "These are the kindest things I can think of to say to you."

Action

Tensions led to legal action when the ABA - on the eve of the 1994 convention - announced it was suing Barnes & Noble and five leading publishers for unfair trade practices. Some of the publishers were so angered they boycotted the gathering the following year and only returned after the ABA sold the show to Reed Exhibitions. In 1998, the ABA sued Barnes & Noble and Borders for unfair business practices (both cases were settled out of court).

Riggio began the 2000s at the height of power, with more than 700 superstores and hundreds of others outlets. But internet commerce was growing quickly and Barnes & Noble, with its roots in physical retail, lacked the imagination and flexibility of the startup from Seattle that called itself "Earth's Biggest Bookstore," Amazon.com. The online giant launched in 1995 by Jeff Bezos gained business throughout the 2000s and by the early 2010s had displaced Barnes & Noble through such innovations as the Kindle e-book reader and the Amazon Prime sub-

scription service.

Bezos would liken himself to David taking down Goliath, although the contrast between the leaders also had the feel of an Aesop's fable: The muscular, mustachioed Riggio, a boxer's son, upended by the quick and clever Bezos.

"We're great booksellers; we know how to do that," Riggio acknowledged to the Times in 2016. "We weren't constituted to be a technology company."

Barnes & Noble started its own online site in the late 1990s, but such initiatives as the Nook e-book reader and a self-publishing platform failed to stop Amazon. Not even the collapse of Borders after the 2008-2009 economic crisis mattered for Barnes & Noble, which after decades of expansion closed more than 100 stores between 2009 and 2019.

Retirement

By the time of Riggio's retirement, independent sellers regarded the chain not as a threat, but as an ally in the fight against Amazon to keep physical stores alive. At the 2018 booksellers convention, Riggio and ABA CEO Oren Teicher, once enemies in business and in court, praised each other during a joint appearance.

"My standing here, doing what I'm about to do (introduce Riggio) would have been impossible to imagine several years ago," Teicher said at the time. "The simple fact is that our business is stronger and American readers benefit when there is a vibrant and healthy network of brick-and-mortar bookshops all across the country."

During the 2010s, Barnes & Noble seemed unleadable and unwanted. The board announced in 2010 that the company was for sale, but no one offered to buy it. Four CEOs left in five years and Barnes & Noble's stock dropped 60% between 2015 and 2018. New rumors of a sale lasted for months before Elliott Advisors, which had previously purchased the British chain Waterstones, bought Barnes & Noble for \$638 million and hired Waterstones chief executive James Daunt to lead B&N.

"I don't miss being a business person, I had enough of that. But I do miss the bookselling part, helping to find books to recommend to customers," Riggio told Publishers Weekly in 2021.

Bookselling and family often overlapped for Riggio. His brother Steve Riggio served for years as vice chairman of Barnes & Noble and another brother, Vincent "Jimi" Riggio, helped run a trucking company that shipped the store's books. After being interviewed in 1974 by the trade publication College Store Executive, Leonard Riggio met for coffee with the editor, Louise Gebbia, who seven years later became his second wife (Riggio had three children, two with his first wife, one with his second).



Leonard Riggio, chairman of Barnes & Noble, is seen in New Orleans, Feb. 26, 2008. (AP)

Variety

LAS VEGAS: A judge on Tuesday again rejected a request to free an ailing former Los Angeles-area gang leader ahead of his murder trial in the 1996 killing of hip-hop star Tupac Shakur, saying she suspects a cover-up related to the source of the funds for his bond.

The decision from Clark District Court Judge **Carl Kierny** came after an attorney for **Duane "Keffe D" Davis** said he would provide additional records to prove that the music record executive offering to underwrite Davis' \$750,000 bail had obtained the money legally. But Kierny said she was skeptical after receiving two identical letters apparently from an entertainment company that Cash "Wack 100" Jones says wired him the funds as payment for his work.

One letter was signed with a name that has no ties to the company, the judge said, while the second letter included a misspelled name and a return address tied to a doctor's office.

"I have a sense that things are trying to be covered up," Kierny said.

The hearing took a turn when Davis' lawyer, **Carl Arnold**, told the judge that the bail bond agent used by Davis had provided the entertainment company with copy-and-paste instructions on the language for the letters and could therefore testify about their legitimacy. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Disbarred celebrity lawyer **Tom Girardi** was convicted Tuesday of embezzling tens of millions of dollars from his clients, including several with severe physical injuries and families of people killed in accidents.

After a 13-day trial and less than a full day of deliberations, the federal jury in Los Angeles found the 85-year-old Girardi guilty of four counts of wire fraud.

Girardi is the estranged husband of "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills" star **Erika Jayne** and appeared on the show himself dozens of times between 2015 and 2020.

He was once among the most prominent lawyers in the nation, often representing victims of major disasters against powerful companies. One lawsuit against California's Pacific Gas and Electric utility led to a \$333 million settlement and was portrayed in the 2000 **Julia Roberts** film "Erin Brockovich." (AP)

LOS ANGELES: **Sidney Raymond Eudy**, a professional wrestler known as **Sid Vicious** who was known for his intense persona and imposing stature, has died, his son announced Monday. He was 63.

Gunnar Eudy, one of the wrestler's two sons, wrote on Facebook that his father died after "battling cancer for several years." "He was a man of strength, kindness, and love, and his presence will be greatly missed," his son wrote. "We appreciate your thoughts and prayers as we grieve this loss."

The 6-foot-9-inch Eudy went by many names in the ring, including Sid Justice and Sycho Sid, and rose to prominence at

the height of the WrestleMania craze in the 1990s. He was a two-time champion in the World Wrestling Federation (now World Wrestling Entertainment) and also performed for its '90s rival World Championship Wrestling and the United States Wrestling Association. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: **Sean "Diddy" Combs** asked a federal judge Monday to throw out a lawsuit from a music producer who ac-



Shakur



Girardi

used the music mogul of a broad pattern of sexual abuse and other misconduct.

The lawsuit filed in February by **Rodney "Lil Rod" Jones** - one of many filed against Combs in the past year - is overruled with "tall tales," "lurid theatrics," "legally meaningless allegations" and "blatant falsehoods" whose intent is only to "generate media hype and exploit it to extract a settlement," according to the motion to dismiss filed in federal court in New York. (AP)

First confirmed polio case inside Gaza in 25 years

Palestinian baby suddenly stops crawling as polio hits Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip, Aug 28, (AP) — Born into the devastating Israel-Hamas war, 10-month-old Abdel-Rahman Abu El-Jedian started crawling early. Then one day, he froze — his left leg appeared to be paralyzed.

The baby boy is the first confirmed case of polio inside Gaza in 25 years, according to the World Health Organization.

Abdel-Rahman was an energetic baby, said the child's mother, Nevine Abu El-Jedian, fighting back tears. "Suddenly, that was reversed. Suddenly, he stopped crawling, stopped moving, stopped standing up, and stopped sitting."

Health care workers in Gaza were warning of the potential for a polio outbreak for months, as the humanitarian crisis unleashed by Israel's offensive on the strip only grows. Abdel-Rahman's diagnosis confirms health workers' worst fears.

Before the war, Gaza's children were largely vaccinated against polio, the WHO says.

But Abdel-Rahman was not vaccinated because he was born just before Oct. 7, when Hamas militants attacked Israel and Israel launched a retaliatory offensive on Gaza that forced his family into near-immediate flight. Hospitals came under attack, and regular vaccinations for newborns all but stopped.

The WHO says that for every case of paralysis due to polio, there are hundreds more who likely have been infected but aren't showing symptoms. Most people who contract the disease do not experience symptoms, and those who do usually recover in a week or so. But there is no cure, and when polio causes paralysis, it is usually permanent. If the paralysis affects breathing muscles, the disease can be fatal.

The Abu El-Jedian family, like

many, now live in a crowded tent camp, near heaps of garbage and dirty wastewater flowing into the streets that aid workers describe as breeding grounds for diseases like polio, spread through fecal matter. The United Nations has unveiled plans to begin a vaccination campaign to stop the spread and protect other families from the ordeal the Abu El-Jedian family now faces.

The family of 10 left their home in the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya, moving from shelter to shelter until finally settling in a tent in the central city of Deir al-Balah.

"My son was not vaccinated because of the continued displacement," his mother said. "We are sheltering here in the tent in such health conditions where there is no medication, no capabilities, no supplements."

The mother of eight said she was "stunned" to find out that her boy had contracted polio.

The WHO says that there are at least two other children with paralysis reported in the strip, and samples of their stool have been sent to a lab in Jordan.

In order to vaccinate most of Gaza's children under the age of 10, UNICEF spokesperson Ammar Ammar said a cease-fire is necessary. The health agencies seek a pause in the fighting, which in recent days has sent thousands of Palestinian families fleeing under successive Israeli evacuation orders. Many children live in areas of Gaza that ongoing Israeli military operations make difficult to reach.

"Without the polio pause or cease-fire, it would be impossible," Ammar said. "This is due to the continued evacuation orders and continued displacement of the children and their families. In addition, it can be extremely dangerous for teams as well, to be able to reach the children."

The United Nations aims to vacci-



Displaced infant Abdel-Rahman Abu El-Jedian, who suffers from polio, sleeps at a makeshift tent camp in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip, Tuesday, Aug 27. (AP)

nate at least 95% of more than 640,000 children, beginning Saturday. Already 1.2 million doses of vaccine have arrived in Gaza, with 400,000 more doses set to arrive in the coming weeks, according to UNICEF. Israel's military body in charge of civilian affairs, COGAT, said it allowed U.N. trucks carrying over 25,000 vials of the vaccine through the Kerem Shalom crossing Sunday.

"If this is not implemented, it could have a disastrous effect, not only for the children in Gaza, but also neighboring countries and across the borders in the region," Ammar said.

Back in the family's tent in Deir Al-Balah, Nevine Abu El-Jedian gazed at her youngest boy, lying still in a plastic car seat-turned bassinet as her seven other children gathered around.

"I hope he returns to be like his siblings, sitting down and moving," she said.

Lack of resources worsens crisis

Neglect and global inaction fuel Africa's mpox outbreaks: experts

Philippines confirms 2 new cases with total at 5

Africa sees almost 4,000 new mpox cases in a week, but wait for vaccine continues



This image provided by NASA, shows a selfie of their Perseverance Mars rover, on July 23, 2024. (AP)

NASA rover begins climb to Mars crater rim

NASA's Perseverance rover is tackling a steep new challenge on Mars.

The six-wheeled rover has spent the last 3 1/2 years roaming around the bottom of a crater. On Tuesday, it began climbing to the top.

The rover will go up 1,000 feet (305 meters) to the rim of Jezero Crater to dig up rock samples. Since landing on the red planet in

2021, Perseverance has collected 22 rock core samples from the floor of the crater, which was once filled with water.

The rover's samples may help scientists piece together what the planet's climate looked like billions of years ago — and learn whether any ancient Martian life lurked. NASA is exploring ways to bring the rock samples to Earth. (AP)

US doctors warned

Oropouche virus: Some facts about sloth fever

NEW YORK, Aug 28, (AP) — More than 20 people returning to the US from Cuba have been infected with a virus transmitted by bugs in recent months, federal health officials said Tuesday. They all had Oropouche virus disease, also known as sloth fever.

None have died, and there is no evidence that it's spreading in the United States. But officials are warning US doctors to be on the lookout for the infection in travelers coming from Cuba and South America.

Here's a look at the illness and what sparked the alert:

Oropouche is a virus that is native to forested tropical areas. It was first identified in 1955 in a 24-year-old forest worker on the island of Trinidad, and was named for a nearby village and wetlands.

It has sometimes been called sloth fever because scientists first investigating the virus found it in a three-toed sloth, and believed sloths were important in its spread between insects and animals.

The virus is spread to humans by small biting flies called midges, and by some types of mosquitoes. Humans have become infected while visiting forested areas and are believed to be responsible for helping the virus make its way to

towns and cities, but person-to-person transmission hasn't been documented.

Beginning late last year, the virus was identified as the cause of large outbreaks in Amazon regions where it was known to exist, as well as in new areas in South America and the Caribbean. About 8,000 locally acquired cases have been reported in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, and Peru.

Some travelers have been diagnosed with it in the US and Europe. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Tuesday said 21 US cases have been reported so far — 20 in Florida and one in New York — all of whom had been in Cuba. European health officials previously said they had found 19 cases, nearly all among travelers.

Symptoms can seem similar to other tropical diseases like dengue, Zika or malaria. Fever, headaches and muscle aches are common, and some infected people also suffer diarrhea, nausea, vomiting or rash.

Some patients suffer recurring symptoms, and 1 in 20 can suffer more severe symptoms like bleeding, meningitis and encephalitis. It is rarely fatal, though there are recent reports of deaths in two healthy young people in Brazil.

LONDON, Aug 28, (AP) — The growing mpox outbreaks in Africa that triggered the World Health Organization's emergency declaration are largely the result of decades of neglect and the global community's inability to stop sporadic epidemics among a population with little immunity against the smallpox-related disease, leading African scientists said Tuesday.

According to Dr. Dimie Ogoina, who chaired WHO's mpox emergency committee, negligence has led to a new, more transmissible version of the virus emerging in countries with few resources to stop outbreaks.

Mpox, also known as monkeypox, had been spreading mostly undetected for years in Africa before the disease prompted the 2022 outbreak in more than 70 countries, Ogoina said at a virtual news conference.

"What we are witnessing in Africa now is different from the global outbreak in 2022," he said. While that outbreak was overwhelmingly focused in gay and bisexual men, mpox in Africa is now being spread via sexual transmission as well as through close contact among children, pregnant women and other vulnerable groups.

And while most people over 50 were likely vaccinated against smallpox — which may provide some protection against mpox — that is not the case for Africa's mostly young population, who Ogoina said were mostly susceptible.

Emergency

Mpox belongs to the same family of viruses as smallpox but causes milder symptoms like fever and body aches. It mostly spreads through close skin-to-skin contact, including sex. People with more serious cases can develop prominent blisters on the face, hands, chest and genitals.

Earlier this month, WHO declared the surging mpox outbreaks in Congo and 11 other countries in Africa to be a global emergency.

On Tuesday, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said there were more than 22,800 mpox cases and 622 deaths on the continent and that infections had jumped 200% in the last week. The majority of cases and deaths are in Congo, where most mpox infections are in children under 15.

Dr. Placide Mbala-Kingebeni, a

ABUJA, Nigeria, Aug 28, (Agencies) — Africa is seeing a rapid increase in mpox cases with nearly 4,000 reported in the past week, the continent's public health body said Tuesday as it repeated a plea for long-awaited vaccines whose arrival this week in the most affected country, Congo, has been delayed.

Eighty-one deaths from mpox were reported in Africa in the past week, bringing the total cases and deaths to 22,863 and 622, respectively, Dr. Jean Kaseya, head of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told an online briefing.

About 380,000 doses of mpox vaccines have been promised by Western partners such as the European Union and the United States, he said. That's less than 15% of the doses authorities have said are needed to end the mpox outbreaks in Congo, the epicenter of the global health emergency.

Following mpox outbreaks outside the African continent in 2022, wealthy countries quickly responded with vaccines and treatments from their stockpiles. However, only a few doses have reached Africa despite pleas from its governments.

At the earliest, the first batch of vac-

cine doses promised to support the new outbreaks in Congo will arrive on Sept. 1 after delays caused by documentation and emergency authorization issues, Kaseya said.

The batch would include 50,000 doses promised by the US government and 15,000 from vaccines alliance GAVI, said Dr. Ngashi Ngongo, the Africa CDC incidents manager on mpox.

"It is just a matter of now waiting on the US government on the transfer of those vaccines," Ngongo said.

Congo has also requested at least 2 million doses from Japan of vaccines that are particularly effective in protecting children, he said, with negotiations "quite advanced."

The new mpox variant first detected in Congo and blamed for the ongoing outbreaks is already triggering "significant" community-level transmission elsewhere, Ngongo said.

For example, in neighboring Burundi, nearly 800 mpox cases have been recorded in the last month, he said.

The US on Tuesday donated 10,000 doses of mpox vaccines to Nigeria, where the disease has been common. Nigeria has recorded 40 mpox cases this year, according to Nigeria's CDC.

The Africa CDC said it is working on a unified response plan for the outbreaks which will be presented to African heads of state for consideration at a meeting in September.

So far, African countries are promoting health measures and hygiene practices that would slow the spread of the mpox virus, Kaseya said.

Experts, however, have said such measures are difficult to enforce in Congo, where millions fleeing violence are crammed in displaced camps amid a decadelong humanitarian crisis.

Also:

MANILA: The Philippines has detected two new monkeypox (mpox) cases, bringing the total number of active mpox cases in the country to five, the Department of Health (DOH) said on Wednesday.

Philippine Health Secretary **Teodoro Herbosa** said the new cases include a 26-year-old female from Metro Manila and a 12-year-old male from a region south of Manila. Both patients are recovering at home.

Like the three mpox patients the DOH reported earlier, Herbosa said the new patients have the milder MPXV clade II.

The new variant has been detected in four other African countries as well as Sweden, where health officials said they have identified the first case of a person this month with the more infectious form of mpox. The person had been infected during a stay in Africa.

WHO said that available data to date does not suggest that the new form of mpox is more dangerous but that research is ongoing.

Marion Koopmans, a virologist at Erasmus Medical Centre in the Netherlands who has been studying mpox, said scientists were now seeing some significant impacts of the disease, not-

ing that pregnant women were miscarriage or losing their fetuses and that some babies were being born infected with mpox.

Ogoina, a professor of infectious diseases at Niger Delta University in Nigeria, said that in the absence of vaccines and drugs, African health workers should focus on providing supportive care, like ensuring patients have enough to eat and are given mental health support, given the stigma that often comes with mpox.

"It's very, very unfortunate that we have had mpox for 54 years and we are only now thinking about therapeutics," he said.

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Taurasi-Griner pairing amazing

Combo working for one more deep WNBA playoff run with Mercury

PHOENIX, Aug 28, (AP)—They have become the faces of the Phoenix Mercury through a dozen years together, sharing the elation of a WNBA championship in 2014, the pride of winning three Olympic gold medals together and the heartbreak of losses, injuries and off-the-court issues.

Diana Taurasi and Brittney Griner.

"It's been amazing," Griner said with a wistful grin. "I don't want it to come to end."

Now the pair might be down to its last, best chance to make one more basketball memory. The Mercury have a 16-15 record, they're relatively healthy and they're focused on building momentum as they prepare for a potentially deep run in the WNBA playoffs that begin in late September.

We definitely feel like we can,"

Griner said. "When we're clicking, we're clicking good. We're working out the kinks here and there before we get to the playoffs. And once you get to the playoffs, anything can go down."

The 42-year-old Taurasi continues to defy age, averaging nearly 16 points per game in her 20th WNBA season. The 33-year-old Griner keeps

BASKETBALL

rolling as well, making her ninth All-Star team while anchoring the middle of the offense and defense.

"She's the most dominant post player in our league, hands down," Taurasi said. "For us, it's always finding that balance of making sure we're going inside to her enough, and getting enough movement on the out-

side. It's always a work in progress."

First-year coach Nate Tibbetts isn't oblivious to the finite nature of basketball careers. Neither player has indicated a plan to retire, but Tibbetts knows there aren't many chances left.

"Heck yeah, no question," Tibbetts said. "You pointed out me coming to a new league, a new organization. Those were two of the reasons why I got so excited about it, to hopefully give them that opportunity one more time."

"They've seen everything in this league. The good and - unfortunately lately - the bad. So just with the new additions, the new staff, it's given them a sense of life. Seeing the goal again. I don't know if this is their last run together, but if it is, let's end it in a great way."

The Taurasi-Griner partnership

has certainly had its share of interesting storylines through the years.

The Mercury hit an apex during the 2014 season, steamrolling through the regular season with a 29-5 record and then putting together a dominant playoff run that culminated in a three-game sweep over the Chicago Sky in the WNBA Finals.

At the time, it looked like the Mercury might be a budding dynasty. It never materialized.

"You always think everything's going to be good, the band's going to stay together," Griner said. "But I think that was my young, immature thinking. Not realizing it's a business. As much as I love this game, things change and it's just hard."

"Each year, it gets harder and harder."

Taurasi ended up sitting out the

2015 season because the team she played for in Russia - UMMC Ekaterinburg - offered her a lucrative deal to rest instead of play in the U.S. At the time, the salary for a four-month WNBA season peaked at around \$108,000. Top Americans who played overseas in the winter could earn as much as \$2 million.

Taurasi returned to the WNBA in 2016 and the Mercury continued to be a playoff-caliber team, making the Finals in 2021 and losing to Chicago in four games. It looked like the franchise was back on the rise, but then Griner went through her well-publicized ordeal in Russia, when she was detained for eight months and missed the entire 2022 season.

Those are a few of the many developments that have taken the Taurasi-Griner combo on a ride. The pair looked like it might fizzle out

without another playoff opportunity, but then the Mercury hired Tibbetts, added veteran Kahleah Copper and the franchise was back in business. Copper is averaging a career-high 22.9 points per game and was also a part of the United States' gold medal run in France.

Griner praised Tibbetts and the front office for injecting new optimism.

The 6-foot-9 center said the coach encouraged her to spend more time away from the basket, which was new. But she's thrived in the new role, averaging 18.3 points, 6.4 rebounds and 2.4 assists per game.

"Something new, something fresh," Griner said. "He wasn't too familiar with our league and that's a good thing sometimes. Sometimes you fall into familiar things. He came in with a different perspective, a different outlook on things."

Premier League teams enjoy 'big' victories in League Cup



Oxford United's Matt Ingram and Coventry City's Norman Bassette, right, battle for the ball during the League Cup at the Coventry Building Society Arena, Coventry, England. (AP)

Ayew opens account for Leicester

LONDON, Aug 28, (AP)—Premier League teams Brighton, Everton, Crystal Palace and Leicester enjoyed big wins over lower-league opponents in the second round of the English League Cup.

Brighton has opened its league campaign with wins over Everton and Manchester United under new manager Fabian Hürzeler, and built on those results by overwhelming third-tier Crawley in a 4-0 victory at Amex Stadium thanks to goals by Simon Adingra, Jeremy Sarmiento, Adam Webster and Mark O'Mahony.

The negative on the evening for Brighton was the sight of new signing Matt O'Riley - who arrived from Celtic on Monday - needing to be helped off the field in the sixth minute because of injury.

SOCCER

Everton had goals by Tim Iroegbunam, Iliman Ndiaye and Beto in a 3-0 win over fourth-tier Doncaster, Jean-Philippe Mateta and Eberachi Eze were among the scorers for Palace in a 4-0 thrashing of second-tier Norwich, and Leicester won by the same score line at home to fourth-tier Tranmere with new signing Jordan Ayew opening the scoring at King Power Stadium.

Everton and Palace have started the Premier League with back-to-back losses, while Leicester has just one point from its opening two matches back in the top flight.

Fulham was the other Premier League team in action and also won, 2-0 at third-tier Birmingham. Mexico striker Raul Jimenez scored the first goal.

The second round sees top-flight clubs entering the competition, except for those involved in European competition this season.

Italy winger Federico Chiesa expressed his happiness at starting a "new adventure" amid reports he is about to join Liverpool from Juventus.

There was footage in the Italian media of Chiesa arriving at an airport ahead of reportedly getting on a private flight to England.

"I'm really happy and ready for this new adventure," he said. "I want to

Young Boys stuns Galatasaray in Champions League playoffs

LONDON, Aug 28, (AP)—Galatasaray followed Jose Mourinho's Fenerbahce in getting eliminated from Champions League qualifying, losing in the playoffs to Young Boys of Switzerland to ensure there will be no Turkish representation in the revamped league stage of Europe's elite competition.

thank the Juventus fans, thanks for all the affection over the years, I'll keep you in my heart, thanks Juventus.

"I'm really, really happy, we can't wait, me and my family."

Neither Liverpool nor Juventus have commented publicly on any deal involving Chiesa.

British media are reporting Liverpool will pay 13 million euros (\$14.5 million) for Chiesa, who starred for Italy in its run to the European Championship title in 2012.

Chiesa, the son of former Italy striker Enrico Chiesa, would be the first outfield player signed by Liverpool since the arrival of new manager Arne Slot.

Liverpool signed Georgia goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili from Valencia on Tuesday in a deal that will see him stay at the Spanish team for the remainder of the season.

Brighton signed Turkey left back Ferdi Kadioglu from Fenerbahce on Tues-

day to take its spending in this transfer window to more than \$250 million.

The 24-year-old Kadioglu, who has played 20 times for Turkey and was a starter at the recent European Championship, has signed a four-year deal and will cost Brighton a reported 30 million euros (\$33.5 million). The transfer is subject to international clearance and a successful work permit application.

"I'm very excited because we are getting an excellent player and a great character. He has great ability, is a strong runner and very good at passing." Brighton manager Fabian Hürzeler said. "He is predominantly a full back and can play on the right or left side. He can also play in the center of midfield."

"He is someone who is very keen to learn and develop and with that in mind, I'm confident he will adjust to the Premier League and adapt quickly to English football."



Fulham's Sasa Lukic, center, and Birmingham City's Willum Willumsson, right, battle for the ball during the English League Cup soccer match between Fulham and Birmingham City at St Andrew's at Knighthead Park, Birmingham, England. (AP)

two weeks ago.

Salzburg and Sparta Prague also advanced to the 36-team league stage by ousting Dynamo Kiev and Malmö, respectively.

Salzburg drew 1-1 with Dynamo to progress 3-1 on aggregate, while Sparta secured a second straight 2-0 win over Malmö.

Brighton has backed the 31-year-old Hürzeler for his first season at the club since arriving from St. Pauli, with Georginio Rutter, Yankuba Minteh, Mats Wieffer, Brajan Gruda and Matt O'Riley all joining for between \$30-60 million each.

Also, Chelsea has agreed to sign of 19-year-old goalkeeper Mike Penders from Belgian side Genk. He will join the Blues next summer on a contract until 2032.

Arsenal signed Spain international Mikel Merino from Real Sociedad on Tuesday to strengthen its midfield options for its latest bid to win the Premier League title.

Merino has reportedly joined for a fee of 32 million pounds (\$42 million) on what Arsenal said was a "long-term contract," four days after Sociedad coach Imanol Alguacil gave the player a public farewell.

Merino helped Spain win the recent European Championship. His goal late in extra time secured a 2-1 win over host nation Germany in the quarterfinals.

A well-rounded attacking midfielder, Merino has been a key player for Sociedad after joining the Basque club in 2018. He helped it win the 2020 Copa del Rey and reach the Champions League's round-of-16 last season.

Merino will provide competition for Declan Rice and Martin Odegaard in the two central midfield positions at Arsenal under manager Mikel Arteta, who had a brief playing stint at Sociedad and is from San Sebastian - where the club is based in northern Spain.

Merino effectively replaces Portuguese midfielder Fabio Vieira, who has left Arsenal to join Porto.

Arsenal, which was last English champion in 2004, has finished as runner-up to Manchester City in the last two seasons in the Premier League. The team has started this season with two straight wins.

WI tops South Africa by 8 wickets for series sweep

TAROUBA, Trinidad, Aug 28, (AP)—Nicholas Pooran blasted 35 runs from 13 balls to lead the West Indies to an eight-wicket win over South Africa in the rain-shortened third Twenty20 cricket international Tuesday, securing a 3-0 series sweep.

Rain delayed the start of play by an hour and returned in the fifth over of the South Africa innings, reducing the match to 13 overs per innings.

South Africa was 23-0 when the rain started and Tristan Stubbs dashed 40 from 15 balls to help the visitors post 108-4 after a slow start. Stubbs hit five fours and three sixes for 38 runs from boundaries. He finished the series with 144 runs at a strike-rate of 178.

Pooran almost matched him, hitting two fours and four sixes. The West Indies was 60-2 when Pooran was out to the fifth ball of the fourth over and coasted to victory with 22 balls remaining.

CRICKET

Shai Hope made an unbeaten 42 from 24 balls and Shimron Hetmyer scored 31 from 17 deliveries in an unbroken partnership of 56 for the third wicket.

"Obviously coming out on top is what we wanted. We wanted to win the series 3-0," West Indies captain Roston Chase said in a television interview.

"Before the match, at the team meeting after everyone had spoken, I just asked the boys to give me the victory because you want to start well and I just want to thank the guys for the support and the way they played with their heart today."

No overs were lost when rain delayed the toss. The West Indies eventually won the toss and chose

to bowl, with an eye on the threat of further rain.

South Africa began cautiously in humid conditions and the first boundary of its innings didn't come until the fourth over, hit by Ryan Rickelton on the bowling of Matthew Forde. The first six of the innings came from the next ball.

The rain returned and forced the players from the field for 70 minutes, leaving South Africa on the back foot when it resumed. Reeza Hendricks was out three balls after the resumption, but that brought Stubbs to the crease and he did his best to blast South Africa to a competitive total.

Stubbs hit 6, 4, 4, 6 from consecutive balls in the 11th over bowled by Obed McCoy and 4, 6, 4 in the final over bowled by Forde. He was out with two balls left in the innings.

Pooran then blasted the West Indies into an winning position with his brilliant 13-ball cameo. He finished with a strike rate of 269.

Hope hit four sixes in his innings and Hetmyer hit four fours and a six as the West Indies completed a comprehensive win.

The West Indies beat South Africa 3-0 in a Twenty20 series prior to this year's T20 World Cup, which it co-hosted with the United States, and now has swept South Africa again. But in between, South Africa eliminated the West Indies from the World Cup.

"It was a tough one today. Obviously it was stop-start with the rain which hurt us quite a bit," South Africa captain Aiden Markram said. "Conditions changed quite a bit throughout the game as well."

"I think we got the tougher of the conditions. That being said I think there are several areas we can improve on as a team to play better cricket in tough conditions."

Bravo retires from soccer

Uruguayans banned after brawl

ASUNCION, Paraguay, Aug 28, (AP)—South American soccer body CONMEBOL suspended on Wednesday several Uruguayan internationals due to incidents at the Copa America semi-final against Colombia in July.

Liverpool striker Darwin Núñez will be out for five Uruguay fixtures, while Tottenham midfielder Rodrigo Bentancur was banned for four matches. Mathías Olivera, Ronald Araújo and José María Giménez will miss three games apiece.

Uruguay's next games in World Cup qualifying will be as host to Paraguay on Sept. 6 and four days later at Venezuela. Núñez will also miss the matches against Peru and Ecuador in October and the home game with Colombia in November.

The incident took place at the Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, with Uruguayan players involved in a brawl with fans after their team lost 1-0 to Colombia. Núñez will also pay a fine of \$20,000, Bentancur \$16,000 and Olivera, Araujo and Giménez \$12,000 each.

Seven other Uruguayan players will also pay a fine of \$5,000 apiece.

Giménez told journalists after the incident the team were trying to protect their families from Colombian supporters.

SOCCER

Chile goalkeeper Claudio Bravo, who was part of his country's golden generation that won two Copa America titles, retired from soccer on Tuesday at age 41.

Bravo had also played for Manchester City, Barcelona and Real Sociedad. He won two Spanish league titles and one Champions League trophy with Barcelona and lifted three Premier League trophies with Man City.



In this file photo, Uruguay's Mathías Olivera during a Copa America semifinal soccer match against Colombia in Charlotte, N.C. (AP)

"It is the moment to close a very important cycle in my life," Bravo said in his social media channels. "I think I have made the right decision, a decision I thought long about."

The Chilean helped his national team win the Copa America titles in 2015 and 2016, both after penalty shootout victories against Lionel Messi's Argentina in each final.

The goalkeeper started his professional career in 2002 at local giant Colo Colo. He played for Real Sociedad between 2006 and 2014, moved to Barcelona and left in 2016 to join Man City. The Chilean spent four seasons at the Premier League club and signed for Real Betis in 2020.

Bravo's last match with Chile's national team was at the latest Copa America in the United States. He played 150 matches for "La Roja" after his debut in 2004.

SPORTS

Kuwait shooting club president credits political leadership for sporting success

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: Kuwait Shooting Sports Club President Duaij Al-Otaibi emphasized that the strong backing from Kuwait's political leadership has been pivotal in the club's numerous achievements.

In a statement to journalists following the conclusion of the Summer Shooting Championship for the Distinguished, held in collaboration with the Public Authority for Sports, Al-Otaibi highlighted the significance of the event in identifying promising talents in pistol, rifle shooting, and Olympic archery. He referred to these young athletes as the future of Kuwaiti shooting.

Speaking at the club's headquarters in the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex, Al-Otaibi noted that the championship, which saw the participation of about 70 promising young male and female shooters over three days, was the culmination of an extensive summer training camp that had attracted significant interest.

He expressed his gratitude for the strong collaboration between the club and the Public Authority for Sports, which made it possible for a large number of young participants to engage in this event. He also praised the efforts of all coaches and organizers from both the club and the Authority, whose hard work contributed to the success of the championship.

Al-Otaibi further mentioned that the club has already started preparations for the 2024/2025 sports season, which will kick off with the His Highness the Crown Prince Shooting Championship. This will be followed by a series of local championships, culminating in the prestigious His Highness the Amir International Grand Shooting Championship, the most significant annual event in Kuwaiti shooting.

SHOOTING

He also highlighted that the Kuwaiti national team shooters are gearing up for several major international, continental, and regional events. Notably, shooter Muhammad Al-Daihani has been selected among the top 12 shooters to compete in the World Champions Final Championship in Skeet shooting, scheduled to be held in India this October.

Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Sports, Hamid Al-Hazeem, added that the Authority's support for this event aligns with its goal of promoting non-competitive community sports among the public, especially the youth, and encouraging children to engage in sports due to its numerous benefits.



Officials present certificate to a future 'star'.

Barcelona edges Rayo to stay unbeaten



Rayo's Alfonso Espino, centre, in action against Barcelona's goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen, right, during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Rayo Vallecano and Barcelona at the Vallecas stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

Olmo scores in his debut

MADRID, Aug 28, (AP): Dani Olmo got his dream debut with Barcelona, scoring a late winner to keep the Catalan club with a perfect record to start the Spanish league.

Olmo found the net in the 82nd minute with a low left-footed shot into the far corner after an assist by Lamine Yamal to give Barcelona a 2-1 come-from-behind win at Rayo Vallecano.

Barcelona is the only team with three wins after three rounds this season.

SOCCER

Olmo, who was only registered with the first team Tuesday morning after signing from Leipzig, entered the match at halftime to replace Ferran Torres.

"I was anxious to debut and it couldn't have been better," Olmo said. "I'm glad I finally got to play and that I was able to help the team."

The 26-year-old Spain international, a former member of Barcelona's famed La Masia youth academy, had come close to scoring in the 58th with a shot that hit the crossbar.

"Yeah, he scored the goal, this is why we are happy that he is in our team," new Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said. "We deserved these three points."

Rayo, celebrating its centennial this season, opened the scoring nine minutes into the match with Unai López finding the net from close range with a right-footed strike.

Two minutes after Olmo hit the crossbar, Pedri evened the match with a shot from near the penalty spot following an assist from Raphinha.

Barcelona striker Robert Lewandowski thought he had put Barcelona ahead in the 71st but his goal was disallowed by video review after a foul by Barcelona defender Jules Koundé in the buildup.

Flick said it was a "sad" victory because of a knee injury to 17-year-old midfielder Marc Bernal late into second-half stoppage time.

"We win, it's OK, but when you see the dressing room, no one is happy," Flick said.

The game came a day after Rayo announced it signed Colombia playmaker James Rodríguez, who watched the match from the tribunes at Vallecas Stadium.

The 33-year-old Rodríguez had his contract with Brazilian club Sao Paulo rescinded after he led Colombia to a runner-up finish in the Copa America, where he had six assists and was named the tournament's most valuable player. He returns to the Spanish league four years after he left Real Madrid to join Everton in the Premier League.

Barcelona had started the season with victories at Valencia and against Athletic Bilbao at home. Rayo had opened with a 2-1 win at Real Sociedad and a 0-0 draw at Getafe.

Sevilla drew 0-0 at Mallorca in a result that left both teams winless after three rounds. They had lost their opening matches this season.

Sevilla midfielder Saúl Ñíguez was sent off in the 89th for complaining with the referee.



Barcelona's Gerard Martin challenges for the ball with Rayo's Jorge de Frutos during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Rayo Vallecano and Barcelona at the Vallecas stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

'A tough evening'

Stuttgart eases past Preussen Munster in German Cup

BERLIN, Aug 28, (Xinhua): Stuttgart advanced to the second round of the German Cup after a 5-0 thrashing of second-tier side Preussen Munster.

Sebastian Hoeness' men took charge right from the kick-off, making a strong start with Munster failing to clear the ball from a corner, allowing Angelo Stiller to fire home from six meters in the seventh minute.

SOCCER

Munster was undeterred and went close soon after, but Charalambos Makridis couldn't beat goalkeeper Alexander Nubel from the edge of the box.

The goal came at the other end of the pitch, however, as Stiller's pinpoint cross into the box found Ermedin Demirovic, who slotted home from five meters.

Stuttgart showed no mercy, and Preussen Munster couldn't offer any resistance when Pascal Stenzel headed home Demirovic's inswinging cross in the 35th minute to triple the lead.

Munster continued to press and made their next promising move after the restart when Makridis fired over from nine meters seven minutes into the second half.

The relentless visitor extended its lead in the 72nd minute when Nick Woltemade scored his first Stuttgart goal after exchanging passes with Deniz Undav.

Stuttgart continued to dominate

West Asian Fencing Championship begins in Amman with 26 Kuwaiti athletes competing

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The West Asian Fencing Championship for the youth is set to begin in Jordan, and will run until September 2.

Hamad Al-Awadhi, Secretary of the Kuwait Fencing Federation and Chairman of the National Teams Committee, announced that Kuwait will participate with 26 male and female athletes competing in sabre, foil, and epee categories. The team, led by national coaches

FENCING

Qaisar Al-Zamel and Abdulaziz Awad, aims to secure top positions and achieve first-place finishes across all championship events.

Al-Awadhi emphasized that the Federation's comprehensive talent development plan, designed to discover and nurture champions, has significantly boosted Kuwait's presence in international, regional, and continental fencing champion-

ships. This plan is vital for enhancing the sport's development and fostering competitiveness on the global stage. He added, "We are committed to preparing a distinguished

generation of talented youth and anticipate continued success in upcoming international competitions. We will ensure they are fully equipped with everything needed to excel and achieve success."

and wasn't done yet when Atakan Karazor converted a handball penalty to make it 5-0.

"We know what the Cup is like. It was our aim to make a statement. We are very happy that it worked

out like this. We actually expected our opponents to be even more aggressive, but we made it extremely difficult for them," said Stuttgart new arrival Demirovic.

"We had a different idea. We wanted to keep the game open for longer, but we had little access. Stuttgart is a great team. It was a tough evening for us. We conceded the first goal too early," said Munster goalkeeper Morten Behrens.

Should he not reach 900 goals during these international fixtures, Ronaldo will have another chance to secure the achievement on October 13, when Al-Nassr faces Al-Ahli Jeddah in the third round of the Roshan League.

In other league action, Al-Fateh edged out Al-Ahli with a 1-0 victory, and Al-Qadisiyah also won 1-0 against Al-Raed. Today, Al-Riyadh will face Al-Khulud, Al-Itihad will take on Al-Taawoun, and Al-Khaleej will compete against Al-Shabab.



Hamad Al-Awadhi

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Ronaldo on verge of 900 career goals

RIYADH, Aug 28: Portuguese soccer legend Cristiano Ronaldo, captain of Al-Nassr, is on the brink of a historic milestone in his career after in Al-Nassr's 4-1 victory over Al-Fayha in the Saudi Professional League, bringing his season tally to 4 goals and 899 career goals. He is now just one goal away from reaching 900.

The iconic forward will have the opportunity to achieve this landmark when he plays for Portugal against Croatia and Scotland on September 5 and 8, respectively, in the European



Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring.

Soccer world mourns

Izquierdo passes away after cardiac arrest during game

SAO PAULO, Aug 28, (AP): Uruguayan soccer player Juan Izquierdo died Tuesday at a hospital in Brazil five days after collapsing during a game at Sao Paulo. He was 27.

Hospital Albert Einstein in Sao Paulo said in a statement that the Nacional defender died at 9:38 p.m. local time following "cardiorespiratory arrest associated with his cardiac arrhythmia." Izquierdo was taken to the hospital after he collapsed late in a Copa Libertadores soccer match between Nacional and Sao Paulo at the Brazilian city's Morumbi Stadium last Thursday.

The Uruguayan club posted a statement on social media saying Izquierdo's death is felt "in deep pain and impact in our hearts" and "all Nacional is in grief for his irreplaceable loss." South American soccer's governing body also posted a tribute. CONMEBOL president Alejandro Domínguez said he's "deeply sorry about the early departure of Juan Izquierdo."

"South American soccer is in mourning," he said. Other federations, including Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina, also expressed their condolences.

In a statement Monday, doctors at the hospital said Izquierdo was put into neurological critical care because of increased intracranial pressure. He had been on a ventilator since Sunday.

Uruguayan media said Izquierdo's parents and Nacional executives were at the hospital in Sao Paulo. Izquierdo was married and had two children - the youngest, a boy, was born earlier in August.

Uruguayan national team players were among those expressing their condolences.

"Pain, sadness, it is hard to explain," Inter Miami striker Luis Suárez said. "May he rest in peace. I wish a lot of strength for his family and friends." Uruguay's first- and second-division soccer leagues were postponed last

weekend due to concerns over Izquierdo's health. Sao Paulo players wore a shirt in support of the Uruguayan footballer before the team's 2-1 Brazilian league win against Vitoria on Sunday.

The Brazilian club also posted a message after Izquierdo's death.

"We had days of prayers, union and hope, and today we are in deep sadness with the news of the death of Juan Izquierdo," Sao Paulo's club statement said. "Our condolences to family, friends, teammates, Nacional fans and all the Uruguayan people in this moment of grief." Izquierdo's professional career began in 2018 at local club Cerro. He joined Peñarol the following year, but didn't get much playing time.

"Peñarol is deeply sorry about the passing of Juan Manuel Izquierdo. We express our heartfelt condolences and we embrace his family, his friends and Nacional in this moment of so much pain," Peñarol said in its social media channels.

After leaving Peñarol, Izquierdo moved to Montevideo Wanderers.

His athletic form and sharp tackles caught the attention of Mexico's San Luis in 2021, but he quickly returned to the Montevideo Wanderers. Izquierdo was signed by Nacional in 2022, played one match and then was transferred to the local Liverpool club.

The defender was one of Liverpool's best players in the campaign that led to a Uruguayan league title in 2023, the club's first in more than a century.

Izquierdo returned to Nacional this year and was vying for a position in the starting lineup with veteran Sebastián Coates, who played for Uruguay's national team. He played 23 matches this year and scored one goal.

Almost two decades ago, Sao Caetano defender Serginho died hours after collapsing at Morumbi Stadium during a Brazilian league match against Sao Paulo.



Sparta's Kaan Kairinen, right, duels for the ball with Malmö's Lasse Berg Johnsen during the Champions League play-off second leg soccer match between Sparta Praha and Malmö at the Letna stadium in Prague, Czech Republic. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Dominant Kuwait wins KCC T20I Tri Nations Cup

Sandaruan hits explosive 102

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, Aug 28: Kuwait clinched the title of the KCC T20I Tri Nations Cup 2024 with a commanding performance in the final against Hong Kong China, thanks to a brilliant unbeaten century by Ravija Sandaruwan. Sandaruwan's remarkable innings of 102 off just 48 balls, which included nine fours and seven sixes at a strike rate of 212.5, propelled Kuwait to a decisive victory as it chased down



Ravija Sandaruwan

a target of 147 runs in just 13.5 overs. His performance was a highlight of the match, showcasing his exceptional skill and playing a key role in Kuwait's triumph.

CRICKET

Earlier, Hong Kong China had set a target of 147 runs, scoring 146-5 in their 20 overs. Kuwait's bowlers delivered a disciplined performance, with key contributions from Shafeeq, Adnan, Yaseen Patel, Shiraz, and Captain Aslam. Yaseen Patel's two crucial wickets, along with the collective effort of the bowling unit, effectively restricted Hong Kong China's scoring rate and prevented significant partnerships from forming.

Kuwait's victory in the final was a testament to their all-round excellence, with both their batting and bowling departments performing superbly. Ravija Sandaruwan's century was a standout moment in the tournament and was instrumental in securing the championship for Kuwait. This win represents a significant achievement for Kuwait, underscoring its dominance in the KCC T20I Tri Nations Cup 2024.



Kuwait team cricket celebrates with the championship trophy.

Kuwait draws with South Korea in friendly

Kuwait Club drawn in Group A for Arab Club Championship

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 28: The draw for the 39th Arab Clubs Championship, set to take place from September 15-26 at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex Hall, has placed the host team, Kuwait Club in Group A, which also includes Al-Ahly of Qatar, Al-Karkh of Iraq, Al-Qoton of Yemen, Mudhar of Saudi Arabia, and Al-Salmiya of Kuwait. Meanwhile, Group B features Al-Bank Al-Ahly of Egypt, Al-Gharafa of Qatar, Malha of the UAE, Al-Qadisiya of Kuwait, and Al-Hashd of Iraq.

Prior to the draw, Algerian clubs Mouloudia Bordj, Bou Areridj and Olympique El Wadi, along with Al-Huda of Saudi Arabia and Al-Sha'la of Yemen, announced their withdrawal from the tournament.

The draw ceremony, held in Kuwait,

was overseen by Fakher Al-Ghashi, Secretary-General of the Arab Handball Federation, and Sameh Al-Hajri, Director of the Handball Department at Kuwait Club. The ceremony was attended by representatives from the participating clubs.

Sameh Al-Hajri extended a warm welcome to the participating Arab clubs, stating, "The club's board of directors, led by Khaled Al-Ghanim, is committed to overcoming any obstacles in organizing the championship and ensuring everything is prepared to reflect the club's and Kuwaiti handball's dedication to this important event." He expressed confidence that the championship would be showcased at a high level of competition due to the historical strength of the participating clubs.

Kuwait Club is the reigning champion. This win followed its successes

in the Gulf Clubs Championship and the Asian Championship.

In other news, the Kuwait drew 27-27 with South Korea's Habayeb in a friendly match held at the Federation Hall in the Martyr Fahad Al-Ahmad Center in Al-Daiya. This match is part of the teams' preparations for the 10th Asian Junior Championship, which serves as the 2025 World Cup Qualifiers, scheduled to be held in Amman, Jordan, from September 3-14.

HANDBALL

Kuwait is in Group D alongside teams from China, Iran, and Chinese Taipei. The Kuwaiti team will face South Korea again in a friendly match scheduled for Friday.

Vice President of the Kuwait Handball Federation Shabib Al-Hajri em-

phasized the team's commitment to achieving its goals and representing Kuwaiti handball with distinction. He noted that the preparation camp included friendly matches with high-caliber teams, aiming to ensure the team are in peak technical, physical, and mental condition for the upcoming Asian events. Al-Hajri praised the efforts of the administrative and technical staff, including team manager Yousef Al-Shaheen and coach Marco Martino Vecchi, along with national coach Hussein Habib, for their role in overcoming challenges and supporting the national teams.

In the summer handball transfer window, Kuwait Club signed goalkeeper Hassan Al-Hajri from Salamiya and circle player Fawaz Abdul Hadi from Burgan. Qadisiya has also added Fawaz Yousef to their squad for the 2024-2025 season.

Kuwait focuses on mental 'toughness' and cohesion

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DUBAI, Aug 28: Team manager Abdulrahman Al-Mousa has expressed his optimism for Kuwait's performance in the third round of the 2026 World Cup qualifiers, set to be held in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The Blues have been conducting an external training camp in Abu Dhabi, UAE, since last Saturday. Their schedule includes two daily training sessions: a morning session in the hotel hall and an evening session at the Police Officers Club stadium in Dubai. The team is set to depart next Sunday for Amman, Jordan, in preparation for its first-round match against Jordan on September 5.

SOCCER

Al-Mousa stated, "We hope to showcase a level worthy of Kuwait's reputation. We will play with determination and competitiveness, aiming to be a formidable opponent in the quest for qualification."

He emphasized that the camp's focus is on enhancing the players' mental readiness and fostering team cohesion, with the ultimate goal of advancing as far as possible in the qualifiers.

Al-Mousa concluded by acknowledging the leadership of Argentine coach Juan Pizzi, who is overseeing the camp. He expressed confidence in Pizzi's

experience to guide the team towards their ambitions and praised the players' fighting spirit.

He added, "We hope the technical staff's strategies and instructions are well-received by the players, so we can present the best possible performance in the qualifiers."

Hamad Al-Harbi highlighted the team's ambition to perform well and satisfy the sports community, acknowledging that recent results had been disappointing.

However, he noted that the qualification campaign had reignited the spirit and optimism among Blues fans.

"We are determined to deliver our best performance," Al-Harbi said. "We have players who are ready to fight in the qualifiers and work hard to bring joy to the Kuwaiti fans."

Similarly, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri expressed hope that the preparation period would be sufficient to ready the team for the qualifiers, especially with the arrival of the new technical staff.

He expressed confidence that the players are capable of reaching their highest potential.

The delegation celebrated the birthdays of team captain Khaled Ibrahim and physical therapist Raul during their camp in Dubai, UAE.

The team continues their daily training sessions in two periods, where Coach Pizzi has been experimenting with various strategies and rotating player positions to refine their approach and apply it effectively in upcoming matches.



Kuwait players prepare to score during the friendly match against South Korea.



The draw for the 39th Arab Clubs Championship in progress.

Osaka eliminates Ostapenko

Alcaraz extends winning streak in majors to 15

NEW YORK, Aug 28, (AP): Carlos Alcaraz extended his winning streak to 15 straight Grand Slam matches with a 6-2, 4-6, 6-3, 6-1 victory over Li Tu in the first round of the U.S. Open.

The No. 3 seed from Spain won the French Open and Wimbledon titles earlier this year, giving him four major championships. If he can add another U.S. Open title to the one he captured in 2022, Alcaraz would join Rod Laver (1969) and Rafael Nadal (2010) as the only men to capture those three Grand Slam titles in the same year during the Open era.

Alcaraz played just one match since losing to Novak Djokovic in the final of the Paris Olympics, then cut short a practice session before the U.S. Open as a precaution after twisting his right ankle. But he seemed to move fine over the final two sets against the qualifier from Australia and moved on to a second-round matchup Thursday against Botic van de Zandschulp.

A year ago, still on maternity leave and still unsure when she would play elite tennis again, Naomi Osaka visited the U.S. Open to appear with Michael Phelps for a discussion about mental

health. While at the site, she sat in the stands to watch one of Coco Gauff's matches.

Osaka also already was thinking about being back on a court at Flushing Meadows, so much so that she was pondering what she might want to wear to compete. And there she was Tuesday at Louis Armstrong Stadium, overpowering No. 10 seed Jelena Ostapenko 6-3, 6-2 while decked out, from her visor to her dress to the bows on her back and attached to her shoes, in lime green - the color of this "Brat" summer, as it happens (IYKYK) - and playing very much like a two-time champion at the place and a former No. 1-ranked star.

TENNIS

Osaka claimed titles in New York in 2018 and 2020, along with a pair of trophies at the Australian Open in 2019 and 2021, and her matchup against 2017 French Open champion Ostapenko marked the first time two past major champs faced off in the opening round at the U.S. Open since Serena Wil-



Italy's Jasmine Paolini returns a shot to Canada's Bianca Andreescu during a first-round match of the U.S. Open tennis championships in New York. (AP)

liams defeated Maria Sharapova five years ago. Another such contest came Tuesday night, when 2020 Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin beat 2021 U.S. Open winner Emma Raducanu 6-1, 3-6, 6-4.

Next time will be Thursday against 2023 French Open runner-up Karolina Muchova, a 6-3, 7-5 winner against Katie Volynets of the U.S.

Other women moving into the second round included No. 1 Iga Swiatek, who got past Kamilla Rakhimova 6-4, 7-6 (6) by taking the last five points because she trailed 6-3 in the tiebreaker, and past major champions Elena Rybakina and Caroline Wozniacki. No. 5 Jasmine Paolini, a finalist at the French Open and Wimbledon this year, beat 2019 U.S. Open champion Bianca Andreescu 6-7 (5), 6-2, 6-4, while No. 11 Danielle Collins' Grand Slam singles career ended with a 1-6, 7-5, 6-4 loss to Caroline Dolehide in an all-American matchup. The 30-year-old Collins is retiring after this season.

Another American who recently announced her retirement, Shelby Rogers, lost the final match of her career by a 6-4, 6-3 score to No. 6 Jessica Pegula. Pegula meets Kenin next.

Earlier in Ashe, No. 1 Jannik Sinner played his first match since news came out that he was cleared in a doping case involving two failed tests in March.



Al-Dhafiri and Al-Harbi in the last training sessions of Kuwait.